

health sense



Fall/Winter 2013

Your flu shot could save a life

The flu shot is the best protection from the flu—for you and the people around you.

Why is it so important to get your flu shot?

■ **It's safe.** Some people believe the vaccine causes the flu. But it can't.

■ **Can save lives.** About 36,000 people die every year from the flu and the illnesses it can cause. So getting a shot gives you a shot at saving lives.

■ **Less sick time.** Some people may still catch the flu. But you're likely to be less sick—and get better sooner—than if you didn't get a shot.

■ **Avoid getting even sicker.** The shot can help you avoid illnesses that often come after catching the flu. One of these is pneumonia. It can be deadly.

■ **Keeps others well.** Some people say, "I never get the flu, so I don't need the shot." In fact, lots of people with the flu don't feel very sick so they don't know they have it. But they can still spread the flu. Which is why getting the flu shot helps protect others.

Be sure to make an appointment with your doctor to get your flu shot.



Who needs it? Everyone 6 months and older should get a shot every year. You should get the shot when it arrives in your area. That's often in the fall. If you forget, a winter shot is OK too, because flu season lasts for months. Get the shot before people around you start getting sick with the flu.

Sources: American Lung Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

How to wash your hands

The best way to reduce the number of germs on your hands is to wash with soap and water.

- 1 Wet hands with clean running water—warm or cold.
- 2 Apply soap.
- 3 Work up a lather and scrub—fronts, backs, between fingers and under nails.
- 4 Wash for 20 seconds or more (the time it takes to hum "Happy Birthday" twice).
- 5 Rinse with clean running water.
- 6 Dry with a clean towel, or air dry.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



» WHERE CAN YOU GET A FLU SHOT? Find out at flushot.healthmap.org

Standard
U.S. Postage
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CP

Older kids need shots too

Many things change as kids grow up. But there's one thing that doesn't change. Older kids still need to get shots. Shots can help keep them from getting sick.

Kids pass around lots of germs. And some of the things they can catch could make them very sick.

So talk with your child's provider. You can find out which shots your child needs. These may include:

Meningococcal. This shot helps prevent a serious illness called meningitis. Boys and girls need their first shot at age 11 or 12. Then they need a booster shot at age 16.

Human papillomavirus (HPV). These shots protect children from the types of HPV that most often cause:

- Cervical cancer.
- Genital warts.

Girls and boys need three shots at age 11 or 12.

Flu. This shot helps prevent the flu. Most people should get this shot. Kids should get one every year. They can get it starting at 6 months old.

Tdap. This shot helps protect kids from:

- Tetanus.
- Diphtheria.
- Whooping cough.

This shot should be given at the 11- or 12-year checkup. Students are required by schools to have Tdap.

Keep shots current. Also check that your child has had all other needed shots. Shots they should already have had include:

- Hepatitis B.
- Polio.
- Chickenpox.
- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).

If your child has missed certain shots, it's possible to catch up. Your child's provider can help you with this.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Your provider can help decide which shots your child needs.

Water: The best fuel for thirsty kids

When kids play, they sweat—and they need water. It replaces lost fluids and helps kids stay cool.

Active kids should:

- Drink about 2 cups of water before any physical activity.
- Keep a water bottle handy to drink from during breaks.
- Drink more when they're done. The more they sweat, the more water they need to drink.

Sports drinks are OK in small doses. But they are high in sugar. This can cause problems like weight gain, cramps, nausea and diarrhea.

Water is the best choice.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

How to hydrate

Thirsty? That's your body's way of telling you it wants water. After all, it needs water to function properly—water helps cells transport nutrients and blood carry oxygen, remove waste and control body temperature.

More than half the body's weight is made up of water

The **brain** is composed of **70%** water.

Lungs are nearly **90%** water.

Fat contains **10%** water.

Bones contain **22%** water.

About **83%** of our **blood** is water.



Sources: ACE Fitness; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Institute of Medicine; U.S. Department of the Interior

CASE MANAGERS

Guides for your good health

Would you like help with your health needs? That's what our case managers do.

They are a team of nurses and social workers. These health care experts can help you get the care you need. They will work with you, your family and your doctor. Plus, they can refer you to local resources. The service is for Contra Costa Health Plan members.

Ask for a case manager if you have:

- A hard time getting to your doctor visits, taking your meds as you should or eating well.
- Gone to the emergency room often.
- Gone to, or had to stay in, the hospital often.
- A hard time with housing, getting places you need to go, buying food or other things that can hurt your health.
- Changes in your memory, mood, personality or behavior.
- Health issues that need to be watched closely.
- Any worries about caring for yourself or your loved ones.



Call now

Get in touch with a case manager. Call **925-957-7453**.

- Please leave a message.
- Be sure to tell us what time we can reach you.
- We will return your call.
- You have the right to decline or stop the service at any time.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Measuring and improving



How we compare to other plans	
Immunizations for children and teens	Better
Diabetes blood tests	Better
Eye tests for diabetics	As good
BMI (body mass index) Height and weight measurement	Better
Care of pregnant women	As good
Getting care quickly	Needs improvement*

Contra Costa Health Plan works to meet our members' health care needs. Our Quality Management (QM) Program helps with this. We work to make sure you get the right care at the right time.

This chart shows some of the things we measure and how we compare to other plans like us.

You can learn more about the QM Program. Visit cchealth.org/healthplan/about-us.php or call **925-313-6917** to have a copy of the QM description sent to you.

* We understand getting care quickly can sometimes be a struggle. CCHP is opening new clinics and adding new doctors to its networks.

5 tips for better sleep

Good sleep is essential for good health. But sound sleep doesn't always come easily.

You can help yourself get more rest by developing good sleep habits. Here are 5 ways to get started:

1. Get up and go to bed at the same times every day. Our bodies are regulated by an internal clock. It helps us know when it's time to sleep and be awake. Getting up at the same time each day helps train your body to be ready for sleep at night. That means you should aim for a set sleep schedule—even on weekends.

2. Have a relaxing bedtime routine. It helps to wind down before heading to bed. So try to do

Test your sleep savvy

1. A glass of wine before bed helps you sleep well.

FALSE. Alcohol may make you go to sleep faster. But it will also wake you up more often in the night.

2. I can catch up on sleep on the weekends.

FALSE. Sleeping in on Sundays won't pay off your sleep debt. And it can be a costly debt. Adults who don't sleep 7 to 9 hours each night of the week are at higher risk for some health conditions. These include depression, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and stroke. Their risk for problems such as substance abuse and car accidents is higher too.

something calming that will help you relax. Try reading or taking a warm bath.

3. Set the stage for sleep. People tend to sleep best in a room that's dark, quiet and cool. It might be helpful to get rid of a noisy clock or to hang dark curtains that block outside light.

4. Avoid habits that can keep you awake. Tobacco, caffeine or alcohol too close to bedtime can keep you up and lead to poor sleep.

5. Time your workouts. Regular exercise improves sleep. But try to get it at least 3 hours before turning in. Activity too close to bedtime may make sleep more difficult.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

3. Not getting enough sleep can make you eat more.

TRUE. Lack of sleep can disrupt the hormones that control appetite. This can lead to both hunger and weight gain.

4. Working on your laptop until bedtime won't affect your sleep.

FALSE. Looking at the light of the screen after dusk keeps you from making enough melatonin. That's the hormone that helps you go to sleep.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

» **TAKE ACTION.** To learn more about healthy sleep, visit the National Sleep Foundation website at www.sleepfoundation.org



Sleepyheads: How much rest do kids need?

You need sleep to be at your best.

And so do your kids. In fact, sleep does more for them than you might realize.

Why sleep matters.

During sleep, the body releases hormones that help kids grow and develop. Children have a lot of growing to do. This means they need more sleep than adults do. And it's why babies spend much of their time at rest.

If your kids aren't sleeping enough, you may find that they:

- Are moody.
- Disobey you.
- Feel anxious or depressed.
- Struggle to pay attention.

Lack of sleep can lead to long-term problems too. It may cause kids to gain weight, for example. That can result in health problems such as diabetes.

If you need tips to help your kids get more sleep, talk with your provider.

What's enough?

The amount of sleep kids need depends on their age. Here's what experts recommend:

Age	Sleep needed per day
Newborn to 2 months	Up to 18 hours
3 to 11 months	9 to 12 hours, plus naps
1 to 3 years	12 to 14 hours, including naps
3 to 5 years	11 to 13 hours
5 to 12 years	10 to 11 hours
13 to 18 years	8½ to 9¼ hours

Source: National Sleep Foundation

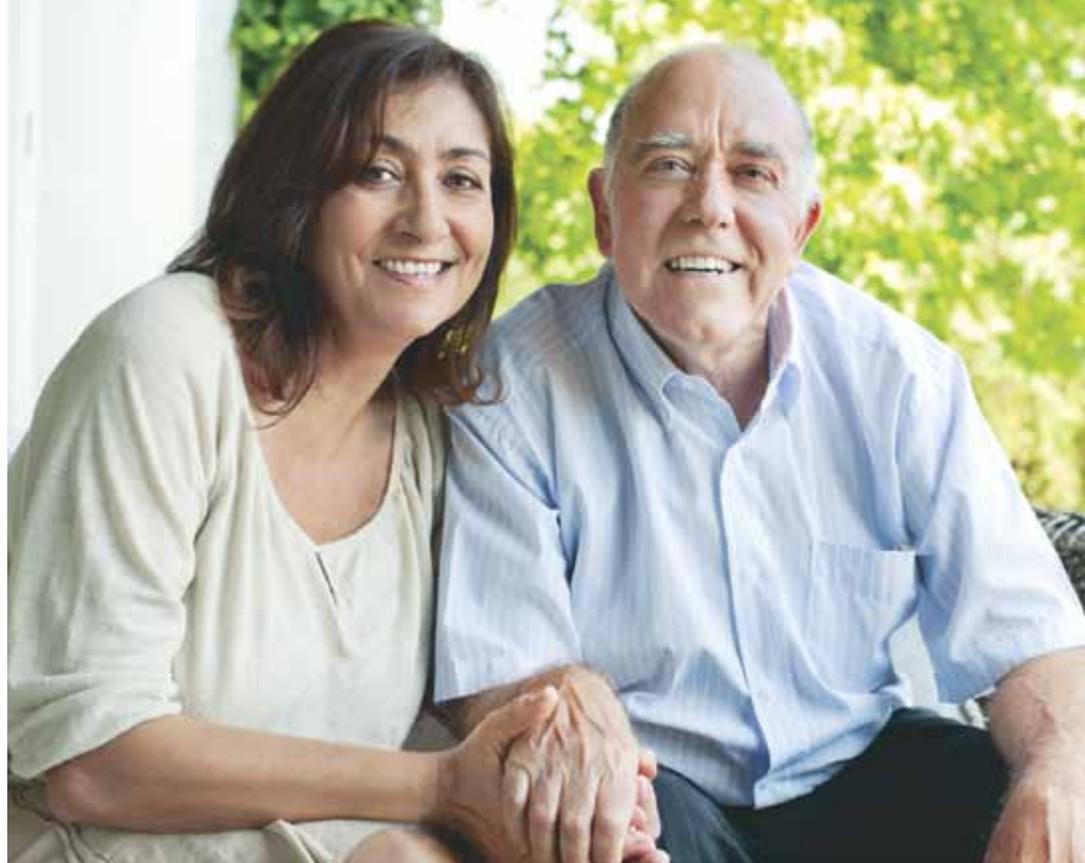
To your good health: Simple tips for healthy aging

Have you noticed that the numbers in the phone book seem to be getting smaller? Is it harder lately to kneel down to look under the bed—and to get up again?

It's true that age brings changes to our lives. And yes, some of them we would prefer to avoid.

For example, stiffer joints can make it harder to get around. And the short-term memory might not be as sharp as it used to be. Often, hard times, such as the death of a spouse, can add to the negative changes.

But age can bring positive changes too. One survey found that many older people say they have



less stress and more time for family, interests and hobbies than they used to. In fact, the vast majority of older people say they are satisfied with their lives.

To a great extent, what older age will be like for you depends on how you live now. It also depends on how you cope with the changes that come your way. You can't turn back time. Still, you can take steps to help make getting older easier

and more pleasant. Here are a few tips:

Decide to have an active mind and body. Remember the saying, “use it or lose it.”

Opt to be involved. Being alone all the time can add to depression and other health problems. So keep in close contact with family and friends. These people will support you as you age.

Choose a healthy lifestyle. Try to:

- Eat well.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Get enough rest.
- Quit smoking, if you do.
- Do what you can to stay safe.
- See your doctor often.

Make the most of your spare time. Do things that you enjoy and help you relax. Too much stress can bring on a host of health problems.

Practice healthy ways to cope. Believe in yourself. And remember: You can handle whatever comes your way.

Sources: AGS Foundation for Health in Aging; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Mental Health America; Pew Research Center

Keep in touch with your doctor

Risks for a number of health problems go up as people age. These include:

- Arthritis.
- Cataracts.
- Certain cancers.

And your genes, lifestyle and environment may put you at risk too.

By working with your doctor, you can find out your risks. What's more, you can learn what steps to take to lower your risk. For instance, your

doctor might advise you to:

- Stop smoking.
- Eat better.
- Be more active.
- Have certain screening tests.
- Take medicine if you need it.

If you have a health problem, be sure to work closely with your doctor. Doing so can help you manage your condition. And that can help you live a healthier life.

Sources: AGS Foundation for Health in Aging; National Institutes of Health

Facing your fears

GET HELP FOR AN ANXIETY DISORDER

Your heart beats fast at a new job. Your palms sweat during a date.

This is anxiety. It's the way you deal with stress. It can help you stay alert and ready.

But do you often feel on edge? Is each day filled with worry? If so, you could have an anxiety disorder.

There are 5 main types:

- **Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).** With GAD, you feel worried all the time. It might be about things like work, health or money.
- **Panic disorder.** This is when you have attacks of fear. You may feel short of breath. Your heart might race. It may seem like a heart attack.
- **Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).** With OCD, you can't stop thinking about a thing that bothers you, such as germs. To cope, you may repeat an action, like washing your hands, all the time.
- **Phobia.** This is fear of a thing or situation. The fear gets out of hand.



» **TAKE ACTION.** If you have an anxiety attack or need care right away, please call the Advice Nurse. Call 877-661-6230 and press 1.

You can also talk to your doctor about your feelings.

You might go far out of your way to avoid what you fear.

■ **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).** PTSD can happen after trauma, such as war or abuse. It may cause bad dreams or flashbacks.

Do you think you may have one of these? Talk with your provider. Treatment can often help.

Sources: American Psychiatric Association; National Institutes of Health

SAFE HOME CLEANERS

Look for the DfE label

Babies and little kids stay indoors a lot. They creep and crawl and toddle about. And, of course, they touch things. From countertops to sippy cups to carpets, little fingers find them all.

You want to make sure the things kids touch are clean. But what about the cleaning products you use? How can you know they are safe for kids?

Look for the DfE label. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) works with many makers of home cleaning products to be sure their



Recognized for Safer Chemistry
www.epa.gov/dfe

products are the safest they can be for people, animals and the earth. The EPA calls this work Design for the Environment (DfE).

Once a product meets the EPA's standards, it can be marked with the DfE label. The label tells you that the product:

- Is the safest of its kind.
- Does a good job.
- Is a good value.
- Does not contain too many harmful gases.

When you choose the DfE label, you choose safer chemicals. That helps protect your family and your environment. And it might save you some money.

Source: Environmental Protection Agency

Anxiety: Do I need help?

Some symptoms of an anxiety disorder are:

- Worry that makes each day hard.
- Thoughts or painful memories that won't go away.
- Worry or fear without real danger.

- Nightmares that repeat.
- A sick feeling in the belly.
- A pounding heart.
- Tense muscles.
- Feeling jumpy or easily startled.

Source: American Psychiatric Association

Grandma's chicken vegetable soup

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Number of servings: 4

Ingredients

- 1 can (14½-ounce) reduced-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup water
- 1 pound (3 medium) potatoes, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 medium carrot, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 1 pound boned and skinned chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 medium zucchini, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 3 green onions, sliced
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper

Directions

- In 3-quart saucepan over medium heat, combine broth and water.
- Cover and bring to boil.
- Add potatoes and carrot; cover and cook 5 minutes.
- Add chicken, zucchini, onions and basil; bring to boil, reduce heat, cover and cook until chicken is opaque throughout, about 7 minutes.
- Season with salt and pepper.

Nutrition information

Per serving: 240 calories (12% calories from fat); 25g carbohydrates; 3.1g total fat; 65mg cholesterol; 1g saturated fat; 4g dietary fiber; 216mg sodium; 28g protein

Source: Produce for Better Health Foundation (supplied courtesy of the United States Potato Board)



Baked oatmeal

Ingredients

- 1¾ cups low-fat (1%) milk
- 2 teaspoons unsalted butter
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- ¼ cup dried apricots
- ¼ cup raisins
- 3 tablespoons lightly packed brown sugar, divided
- ½ Golden Delicious apple, peeled and cored
- 3 tablespoons chopped walnuts

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- In 2-quart microwaveable, oven proof casserole, heat milk and butter until milk steams, about

1 to 2 minutes. Mix in salt and oats and set aside.

■ Chop apricots. Mix apricots, raisins and 1 tablespoon of the sugar into oats. Shred apple into oats and mix to combine.

■ Bake oats, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Stir, then top with remaining sugar and the nuts. Bake 15 minutes longer, or until the oats are chewy. Divide the oatmeal among four bowls. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information

Makes 4 servings. Amount per serving: 280 calories, 8g total fat (2g saturated fat), 45g carbohydrates, 9g protein, 4g dietary fiber, 280mg sodium

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research