

health sense



Spring/Summer 2014

Helping young families eat well

WIC HAS OFFERED
FOOD SUPPORT
SINCE 1974

Are you pregnant? Or do you have a baby or a child under 5 years old? You may be able to get help feeding your children.

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program offers:

- Healthy foods. The food is valued at \$60 per person.
- Classes on healthy eating.
- Breastfeeding help and referrals.

Many working families qualify for WIC. The program is federally funded. It is 40 years old this year.

More food options, classes online. The WIC food package has improved. WIC will be giving more fresh fruits and veggies to children enrolled in WIC.

In the next few months, WIC will also add yogurt, soy milk and tofu. These will help improve the health of our nation's young families.

Also, you can now take your general nutrition classes online. Or you can still take the live classes at our WIC site.

Help with breastfeeding.

WIC has breastfeeding support for you and your baby. WIC provides classes and counselors to answer your questions.



Are you going back to work or school? WIC has breast pumps to help you keep feeding your baby breast milk.

Tell a friend about WIC. Or come talk to us. Call **800-414-**

4WIC (800-414-4942).

Find out if you or your friends and family qualify.

Go to our website:
www.cchealth.org/wic

Rest assured

It's official! Your health is No. 1 to us.

Our Medi-Cal Plan has been accredited by the NCQA*.

This is the gold standard for health plans. It means our members get high levels of quality and service.

Contra Costa Health Plan's Medi-Cal Plan serves over 105,000 members.



*National Committee for Quality Assurance

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Take 4 steps for diabetes control

When you have diabetes, staying on top of your health care needs can get complicated. Help keep it simple with these 4 healthy habits:

1. Visit the health care pros.

Even if you feel fine, you need regular checkups. Your provider needs to monitor your A1c, blood pressure and other health

measures. Ask how often you should come in.

Also, see your eye doctor at least once a year and your dentist twice a year.

2. Follow a daily self-care to-do list. Ask your provider to help you make the list. Among other things, you may need to track your blood sugar and take medicine.

Also, plan to check your feet each day. Look for red spots, cuts or blisters.

And don't forget your teeth and gums. Brush twice a day and floss once.

3. Adopt a healthy lifestyle. That includes eating right, staying active and quitting smoking, if you smoke. Your provider can help you with all 3.

4. Watch for trouble. Know when to call your provider for help. Some signs include:

- Rapid weight loss.
- Feeling weak and then confused.
- Extreme thirst.
- Blurry vision.
- A sore that won't heal.
- Numbness.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Diabetes Association



Have diabetes? Call us!

Are you trying to go it alone with diabetes? That can be hard to do.

That's why we offer the Diabetes Disease Management Program. It can help you better control the disease.

You will find out about:

- How the disease works and how to manage it.

» WE'RE HERE TO HELP! To talk with a disease management nurse, call **925-313-6968** or send an email to **Disease.Management@hsd.cccounty.us**

- Tests and services that can help you stay on track with your self-care plan.
- Classes or groups you can learn from.
- How to choose and use a glucose monitor the right way.
- Good questions to ask your doctor.

We can also help you if you have questions or concerns about:

- Your medical appointments.
- The food you eat.
- Your family and how to make changes with their help.



THINGS TO KNOW

When your child is vomiting



Vomiting is common in kids. It usually goes away on its own.

Is your child sick and throwing up? Here are ways to help your little one if he or she is vomiting.

If your child has a slightly dry mouth, is thirsty or cannot eat:

- Don't give any medicines.
- Give ice chips if your child is older and won't choke. Or give small amounts of water or juice mixed with water.
- If the child vomits water, try giving Pedialyte. You can also buy a store-brand version. Give small sips often for several hours. If you have questions, call your provider.

When vomiting has stopped for 8 hours, offer bland, starchy foods. Rice or mashed potatoes are good options.

Signs of danger. Vomiting usually is not serious. But you need to know when it might be and what to do. Call 911 or go to the ER if your child:

- Can't be woken up easily.
- Is not moving or responding.
- Is too weak to stand.

Call your provider right away—day or night—if your child:

- Looks or acts very sick or confused or you feel the child needs help right now.
- May have swallowed poison.
- Has vomit that is green or blood-tinged.

- Has a headache, stiff neck or bad tummy pain that does not go away after vomiting.

- Has dry mouth or sunken eyes. These are signs of dehydration. In babies and young kids, also watch for crying without tears or no urine for 4 to 6 hours. In older kids, watch for no urine for 6 to 8 hours.

Is your child older than 3 months? If so and the child has been vomiting for over 24 hours, call the doctor as soon as the office opens.

Care for infants. Is your baby a newborn or up to around 3 months old? If so, you need to watch the baby very closely.

Take your infant to a provider right away if he or she vomits twice or more. Also take the baby to the doctor if he or she has a fever over 100.4 degrees. Take the

Kids: Get help for an asthma attack

When your asthma launches a scary sneak attack, you might need a doctor's help—right away. Tell an adult if any of these things happens:

1. You feel like you can't get enough air.
2. You're breathing too fast or too slow.
3. You can't stop coughing or wheezing.
4. Your lips (or fingernails) look blue.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

temperature through the rectum.

Call your provider anytime you are worried about your child's health.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; UpToDate



Beautiful you: 5 ways to look and feel great

When you feel good inside, it shows on the outside. It shows in your smile. It shows in your eyes. It may even show in the way you walk.

Try these 5 tips to help you feel and look great:

1. Deal with stress. Stress is tiring. It can lead to bad eating habits, bad moods and headaches. To help reduce stress:

- Think of what causes you stress. Can it be helped?
- Take quiet moments for yourself.
- Enjoy a walk. Exercise can help lift your mood and give you energy.
- Set realistic goals for your day. Work on the must-dos first.

2. Seek out joy. Having fun is healthy. It can help you handle stress, solve problems and fight illness. Pick fun things that keep your mind active. You might:

- Visit a favorite friend.
- Try out a new recipe.
- Listen to music or comedy.
- Play catch with your kids.

3. Get enough sleep. When you don't sleep well, it's hard to feel

happy. It can bring on worries, depression and weight gain. If you have trouble sleeping, tell your provider. It can help to:

- Cut back on drinks with caffeine.
- Be active in the daytime.
- Eat a small, healthy dinner.
- Avoid the TV or computer late in the day.

4. Quit smoking. Yes, it's bad for your heart and lungs. And it can affect your sleep. But it also wrinkles and changes the color of skin. Ask your provider for help in quitting.

5. Care for your skin. Too much time in the sun ages your skin. It's also linked to skin cancer. For protection:

- Avoid tanning, both outdoors and in tanning beds.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and long sleeves.
- Use sunscreen that is water-resistant, blocks UVA and UVB rays, and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology; American Psychological Association; National Institutes of Health

3 ways to get happy

Clip and save these time-tested ways to make a bad day better.

1. Write down or tell a friend 3 things you are grateful for. Savor the good feeling gratitude brings. Repeat as necessary.

2. Do a small, good deed for another person. Try to fit 5 acts of kindness into your day.

3. Take a negative thought you often have and ask yourself: Is it really true? Chances are, it isn't or it's not as bad as you think. Often, we are our own worst critics or

think that we are doomed to repeat our past mistakes.

Instead, focus on the good things you've done and what you've learned from hard times. Then imagine what you'd like your life to be like next year, and go for it.

Sources: American Psychological Association; Mental Health America

Stress eating: Better ways to cope

You're feeling stressed out. You go to the fridge and find a grapefruit, salad and ice cream.

Which one will you choose? Studies show it's likely to be the ice cream. When we are stressed, we tend to eat unhealthy foods. And we are more likely to eat them in large amounts.

We also often exercise less when under stress. And we don't sleep well, either—so we get up, turn on the TV and eat.

This cycle is the link between stress and weight gain. How can you break it?

Eat well. The nutrients in fruits, veggies and whole grains can actually help ease stress.

Move more. Exercise, too, helps fight stress and can help you sleep better.

Figure out why you're stressed. Then work on ways to ease the pressure. Can others take over some of your tasks?

Become more aware of what you eat and why. When you overeat, write down your feelings at the time.



Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

» **EAT WELL.** Learn about healthy eating at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

MEDI-CAL MEMBERS

Know your benefits

Remember! You now have more mental health benefits. Some of these are:

- Mental health checkup and treatment, in a group or one-to-one.
- Proper testing for a mental health issue.
- Checkups on how your meds are working.
- Lab visits, drugs, supplies and supplements.
- Talk with a mental health provider

Do you need to use any of these benefits? Call **888-678-7277**. Or call the Advice Nurse at **877-661-6230**. Press **1**.

JOB STRESS

Feel better about work and money

Even if you love your job, working can be stressful. It doesn't help if good jobs seem scarce or your paycheck is stretched thin. Then the stress might feel overwhelming.

What can you do to fight job stress? First, know how it can put your health at risk. Then find healthy stress-busters that work for you.

Stress is sneaky. Job stress can harm you in ways you might

not think of. For instance, if you're always anxious about deadlines, you might grab unhealthy fast foods for lunch.

Or if you have more work than you can handle, you might not have time for fitness. The results could be weight gain, high blood pressure, heart disease—even depression.

Ease your stress. Try these 6 ways to help reduce job stress. You can tweak them to meet your needs.

- Connect with co-workers, and support one another on the job.
- Talk with your boss about your role. Having a job description that reflects what you really do can give you a sense of control.
- Learn a new job skill. It might lead to more satisfaction—or

even a raise.

- Ask a financial planner for help making the most of what you earn. Some civic organizations offer free help.
- Choose healthy ways to de-stress. On work breaks, walk or relax in the park. At home, enjoy a hobby that takes your mind off your job. And remember 2 of the best stress-busters: getting some exercise and sleeping 7 to 9 hours each night.
- Be aware of your attitude. Staying positive at work can help you feel better every day. If negative thoughts and job stress are making you depressed, get help. A mental health professional can suggest more ways to handle stress.

Sources: American Psychological Association; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Check up on your health

A LITTLE PREVENTION GOES A LONG WAY

Don't let illness sneak up on you. Keep an eye on your health, even when you feel fine. To help protect your health, have regular checkups with a doctor. And ask your doctor what screening tests are right for you.

These exams can help spot problems early. The exams might even prevent a problem from happening at all.

Know your history. Your doctor will want to know if your close family members had certain health problems. Did they have heart trouble, stroke, diabetes or cancer? Let your doctor know.

Also, tell your doctor about any changes in your own health. That includes: » New lumps. » Skin changes. » Pain. » Dizziness. » Sleep problems. » Changes in eating or bathroom habits.

Your doctor needs to know all these things.

Get screenings. Some of the tests your doctor might want you to have are those for:

■ **Cholesterol.** At age 20, have your cholesterol checked. Repeat every 5 years. High numbers mean a higher risk for heart disease.

■ **Blood pressure.** Have it checked at least once every 2 years. High blood pressure raises risks of heart and kidney disease and stroke.

■ **Diabetes.** Get screened for this disease if: » Your blood pressure is over 135/80. » You take medicine for high blood pressure.

■ **Colorectal cancer.** Most adults need this screening at age 50. Ask about the different types of tests.

Women: Talk with your doctor about tests for: » Breast cancer.

» Cervical cancer. » Osteoporosis.

Men: Ask your doctor about the pros and cons of tests for prostate cancer. Also, are you between age 65 and 75, and have you ever been a smoker? If so, get screened for abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Sources: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; American Heart Association



ALCOHOL

Real risks— now and later

Heaty drinking can harm your health—right now and down the road too.

In the short-term, alcohol abuse makes you more likely to make poor choices. You might choose to:

- Drive drunk.

- Hurt yourself or someone else.
- Have sex without a condom.
- Put off family or money concerns.

If you are pregnant, alcohol can damage the baby's brain. Stop all drinking if you think you might be pregnant.

Or you might drink to try to cope with depression or another mental health problem. If you think that might be true, know that you need real help—not alcohol—to get better. Ask your provider, or call

Member Services.

Long-term heavy drinking also causes harm. It can lead to liver disease, brain damage, heart trouble and some types of cancer.

If you need help quitting alcohol or drugs, please ask your doctor for help. Your doctor can refer you to a program. You can also call **888-678-7277** or the Advice Nurse at **877-661-6230** (press 1).

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism



GUNS AT HOME

Keep safety in your sights

A safe, secure home—we all want that for our families. Does keeping a gun at home help?

This question can raise strong feelings, so it's a good idea to know the facts. These facts come from U.S. health experts:

- A handgun at home is far more likely to be used to shoot a friend or family member by mistake than an intruder.

- Curious kids can and do find hidden guns. Young kids can't tell real guns from toys, and even some toddlers are able to squeeze a gun's trigger. This may be why so many kids are shot or killed by guns every year.

- A gun in the home makes it easier for a depressed child to commit suicide.

These facts are why children's doctors say it's best to keep guns out of homes where kids or teens live. Even if you don't have kids, they may visit your home.

Locked and unloaded. If you choose to keep a gun at home, follow safety tips, such as:

- Keep guns unloaded and locked away—or use trigger locks. Never leave a gun out, such as on a nightstand. Store and lock up ammo in a separate place.
- If you unlock a gun to clean it, keep it in sight at all times.
- Remove guns from your house

What is the CCHP Utilization Management Unit's (UM) role?

Our role is to look over medical requests that come from your doctor. These can be things like the need to:

- See a specialist.
- Have a wheel chair.
- Stay in the hospital.

We decide if your request is covered. To do this, we look at what care will best support your health. We also look at what's covered by your insurance.

Our doctors and staff do not get any rewards to deny or cover any of these requests. Also, our providers do not receive any rewards.

Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you call after hours or on a weekend or holiday, your call will go to the Advice Nurse Unit.

» Have an urgent question? You can leave a message on the UM phone line. Call **925-957-7260**. Or call **1-877-661-6230**. Press 4.

if someone you live with is depressed.

- Write down and keep all information about your guns. Report any lost or stolen gun. It could be used to commit a crime.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Safe Kids Worldwide; U.S. Department of Justice

Visit us at www.contracostahealthplan.org

100% FRUIT JUICE

A little is good—a lot is not

Does your child like to drink juice?

Pure fruit juice can be a healthy drink for kids—but only if they have just a little.

Drinking too much juice can lead to tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain.

The best drinks for thirsty kids are water and low-fat milk.

How much fruit juice is OK?

That depends on your child's age:

■ Under 6 months old: Do not give juice. Tiny babies do not benefit from it.

■ 1 to 6 years old: No more than 4 to 6 ounces of juice per day.

■ 7 to 18 years old: No more than 8 to 12 ounces per day.

Be sure to offer kids whole fruits too. They have fiber and other nutrients that juice doesn't.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

» **A PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH.** Ask your child's health care provider about healthy foods for them. He or she will help you make sure your children are healthy and well-fed.



Roasted root vegetable salad

Makes 4 servings.

Ingredients

- 1 small sweet potato, about 8 ounces, cut into ¾-inch cubes
- 1 medium potato, cut into ¾-inch cubes (peeled parsnip may be substituted)
- 1 medium carrot, peeled, cut into ¾-inch slices
- 1 small red onion, cut into ½-inch wedges
- 2 medium celery stalks, cut into ¾-inch slices
- 1 medium beet, peeled, cut into ¾-inch cubes
- 1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon cilantro, chopped
- 2 tablespoons walnuts, finely chopped
- 1 ounce crumbled feta cheese

Directions

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
- In large bowl, toss sweet potato, potato, carrot, onion, celery and beet with ½ tablespoon oil, coating well.
- Arrange vegetables in a roasting pan.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- Roast, stirring several times, until tender and beginning to brown, about 50 minutes.
- In mixing bowl, whisk vinegar, lemon juice and mustard with remaining oil and stir in parsley, cilantro and walnuts.
- Drizzle dressing over vegetables, and gently toss.
- Top with crumbled feta.
- Serve warm or at room temperature.

Nutrition information

Serving size: ¾ cup. Amount per serving: 156 calories, 9g total fat (2g saturated fat), 17g carbohydrate, 3g protein, 3g dietary fiber, 134mg sodium.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research