

# health sense

## questions & answers

**Q.** When should I start cleaning my baby's teeth?

**A.** It's best to start as soon as your baby's teeth come in. Until then, you can get a head start by cleaning your baby's gums.

To clean your newborn's gums, use a clean, soft cloth or a toothbrush made for babies. You can use either of those items when baby's teeth come in too.

Ask your doctor before using toothpaste on a child under 2. Otherwise, clean gums and teeth with plain water.

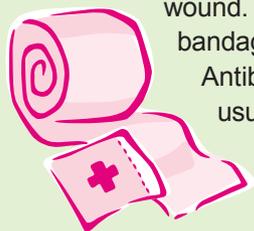
Clean your child's teeth twice a day, or at least before bedtime.

**Q.** What's the best way to treat a small scrape or wound?

**A.** Clean the wound first by pouring cool water over it. You can use soap and a washcloth to clean dirt from the skin around the cut, but don't get soap in the wound.

Cover it with a bandage that lets air and moisture into the wound. Change the bandage every day.

Antibiotic ointment usually isn't needed for minor wounds.



## It's hot! Tips to be cool

Hot weather can be tough on anyone. But extreme heat is especially hard on children and older people.

Your best protection during a heat wave is to stay cool—and use a little common sense. Just remember these dos and don'ts for staying safe in the heat:

### DO:

- Drink lots of fluids.
- Seek out air conditioning in malls or libraries or at the movies.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Dress yourself and others in cool, loose clothes.
- Try to go outdoors only in the morning and evening hours.

### DO NOT:

- Drink sugary or alcoholic beverages.
- Leave kids or pets in a car, even with the windows open.
- Eat a lot of heavy or hot meals.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Step up to control diabetes



Diabetes can affect many parts of your body. If your blood sugar is out of control, it hurts your heart, kidneys, eyes and more.

That's why it's so important to get your diabetes under control. It can help you avoid or delay problems like heart disease and stroke.

And if you already have certain problems, like eye disease, controlling your diabetes may help keep them from getting worse.

Plus, you'll feel better, and you'll likely have more energy too.

Are you ready to get to work? Start with these steps.

**Step 1: Watch your blood sugar levels.** You'll need to check your blood sugar often. That will help you keep track from day to day. Talk to your doctor about how and when to test.

Get your blood sugar under control. See below to learn about our free diabetes booklet.

You'll also need a test called the A1C. It shows what your average blood sugar has been over the past few months.

You'll have less risk of health problems if you keep your A1C as low as possible. In general, a good A1C goal is less than 7 percent. Aim to get the test at least twice a year.

**Step 2: Exercise often.** Aim for at least 30 minutes on most or all days. Being active helps your body use blood sugar better.

**Step 3: Get to a healthy weight.** Dropping extra weight has a big impact on getting blood sugar under control.

**Step 4: See your doctor regularly.** Keep up with eye exams, foot exams and other important checkups.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health

### Get a free diabetes booklet

Did you just find out you have diabetes? Have you had it for a while but still need help?

Are you waiting to meet with a dietitian or health educator? Or just want to learn how to manage your diabetes better?

We can help you now!

We'll send you a useful

booklet with easy-to-read info. It explains what you need to do to take care of yourself. It talks about things like:

- Your blood sugar.
- Why you should exercise.
- How to take care of your feet and teeth.
- Good foods to eat.
- Tests you need.
- What to do in an emergency.
- Other useful tips.

The booklet is called *Live Your Life—Control Your Diabetes*. You can get one if you are a Contra Costa Health Plan member or if you go to the county clinics.

Just call **925-313-6060** and ask for the free diabetes booklet. It comes in English and Spanish. A nurse can also talk with you about ways to live well with diabetes.



## How we protect your privacy

We know your privacy is important. Lots of things can go wrong if your health care info is lost or misused. So we do all we can to keep it safe.

Here are some of the things we do:

- We teach our staff the law. They can only get your info if they need it to take care of you or help with your bills.
  - We don't sell your info to anyone.
  - We don't put your Social Security number on your ID card. And we don't use it in letters we send you.
  - On the phone we will only give your info to you or someone who takes care of you. We may ask you questions to make sure you are who you say you are. This helps keep the wrong person from getting your info.
  - When we send out your info electronically, we use special tools to protect it.
  - We make sure the people we work with keep your info safe too.
- Those are a few of the ways we

protect your info. To learn more, go to [www.cchealth.org/policies](http://www.cchealth.org/policies). Or call us at **877-661-6230, option 2**.

If you think someone has misused your info, call **800-659-4611**.

Here are a few other things you can do to keep your info safe:

- Carry only the ID cards you need.
- Never carry your Social Security card.
- Never write your secret code on your ATM card. And don't keep it on a piece of paper in your wallet.
- Always check your credit card and bank statements. Look for things you didn't buy.

Go to [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft) for more tips.



**Do you think someone has misused your info or tried to steal your identity? Call the Contra Costa 24-hour Privacy Hotline at 800-659-4611.**

## Teens need yearly checkups

Keeping our kids healthy and safe is important to Contra Costa Health Plan.

We want to make sure that kids get the checkups and shots they need to help them grow up into strong and healthy adults.

The tween (8 to 12 years) and teen years are a key time for kids to form healthy habits, like exercising and eating right. The habits they form now will last their whole lives.

This year, we want to make sure kids know that they need to go to a doctor visit every year.

These visits are a good time for teens to get all the shots they need. Shots can protect them from serious illnesses, like tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, chickenpox, meningitis and HPV.

The HPV shot is new. It protects girls against a virus that can cause cervical cancer. Girls need 3 shots over 6 months. They can get them at the same time as their other shots. We suggest that 11- and 12-year-old girls get the shot. But any girl from ages 9 to 18 can get it.

Our kids mean a lot to us, and it's our job to keep them healthy. Seeing a doctor every year protects their health today. And it teaches them how important good health is for the future.

If your child is a tween or teen, schedule a visit with the doctor in June:

- If you use the county health centers, call **800-495-8885**.
- If you use the Community Provider Network, call your child's doctor.



# Raising happy, caring children

There's no one right way to raise a child.

And there's no such thing as a perfect parent. All moms and dads—even the most loving ones—make mistakes every now and then.

Still, there are some basics of good parenting that can help you raise a happy, caring child. Among them:

**Show your love.** Make your child feel loved by giving lots of hugs and kisses. Every day, say, "I love you. You're special to me."

**Be a good listener.** Listening when your child talks is another way to show your love. You're letting your child know that his or her feelings are important to you.

**Be involved.** Few things matter more to children than a parent's attention. So spend time with your child. Take a walk, or read or play together.

**Set a routine.** Keep meals, naps and bedtimes on a regular schedule. When a change in routine is necessary, let your child know ahead of time.

**Give praise often.** Tell your child how proud you are when your child behaves or does something well.

*Few things matter more to kids than your attention.*

**Criticize bad behavior, not your child.** Did your child just run into the street? Don't say, "You were bad." Instead, explain why this behavior isn't safe. Then tell your child what to do instead—to always look for cars.

**Be consistent.** Your rules don't have to be the same as other parents' rules. But the rules you do set should not

## Help your child eat well for life

Good habits in childhood often start a pattern that lasts a lifetime. When it comes to eating well, you can help set your child on the right path.

Perhaps the best way to raise a healthy eater is to set a good example. So if you want your child to eat green vegetables, make sure you do too. Also:

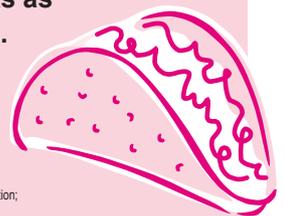
**Eat together as a family.** Serve a wide variety of foods, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and lean meats.

**Don't make a fuss.** If your child doesn't like a new food, just offer it another time. Sometimes it takes 8 or more tries before picky eaters take even a bite of a new food.

**Limit sugar.** Buy cereals without much added sugar. Serve milk or water more often than soda.

**Relax the rules.** Let your child decide how much to eat. And respect your child's likes and dislikes about food.

**Treat snacks as opportunities.** Serve healthy ones, such as fresh fruit.

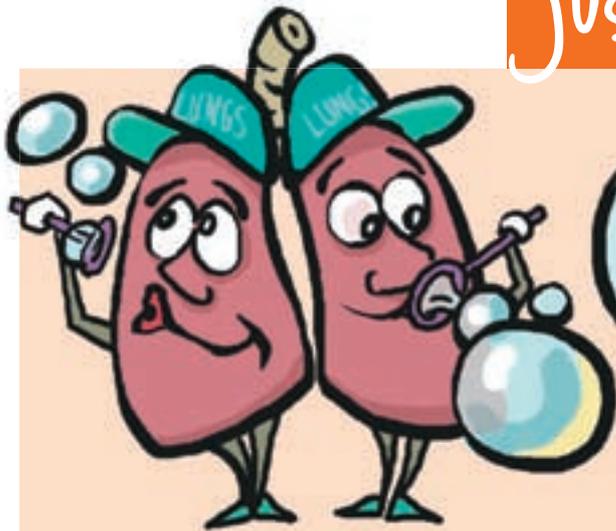


Sources: American Dietetic Association; National Institutes of Health

change from day to day.

**Get help if you need it.** Your child's doctor can help you make good choices whenever you're not sure about how to care for or guide your child.

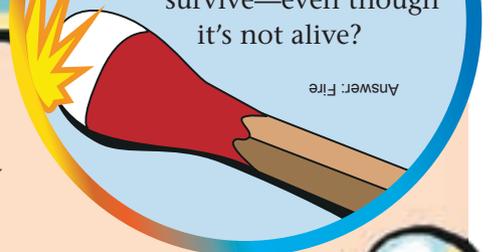
Source: American Academy of Family Physicians



## A riddle for you

What doesn't have lungs but needs air to survive—even though it's not alive?

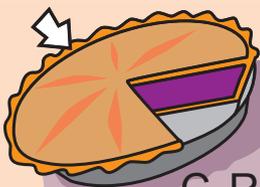
Answer: Fire



## What makes you cough and wheeze?

When you have asthma, it's important to know what triggers your asthma. These are things that can cause asthma to get worse. It's usually best to avoid them.

Look at these pictures. Each picture rhymes with something that may be an asthma trigger. Can you think of what that word would be?



CRUST  
DUST



SPOKE



HATS

and



LOGS



GOLD



DRESS

Answers: crust/dust; spoke; hats and logs/cats and dogs; smoke; gold/mold; dress/stress;

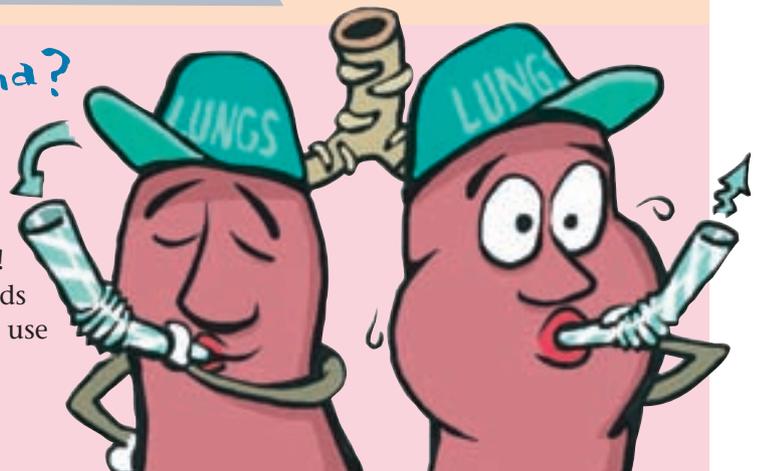
## What's it like to have asthma?

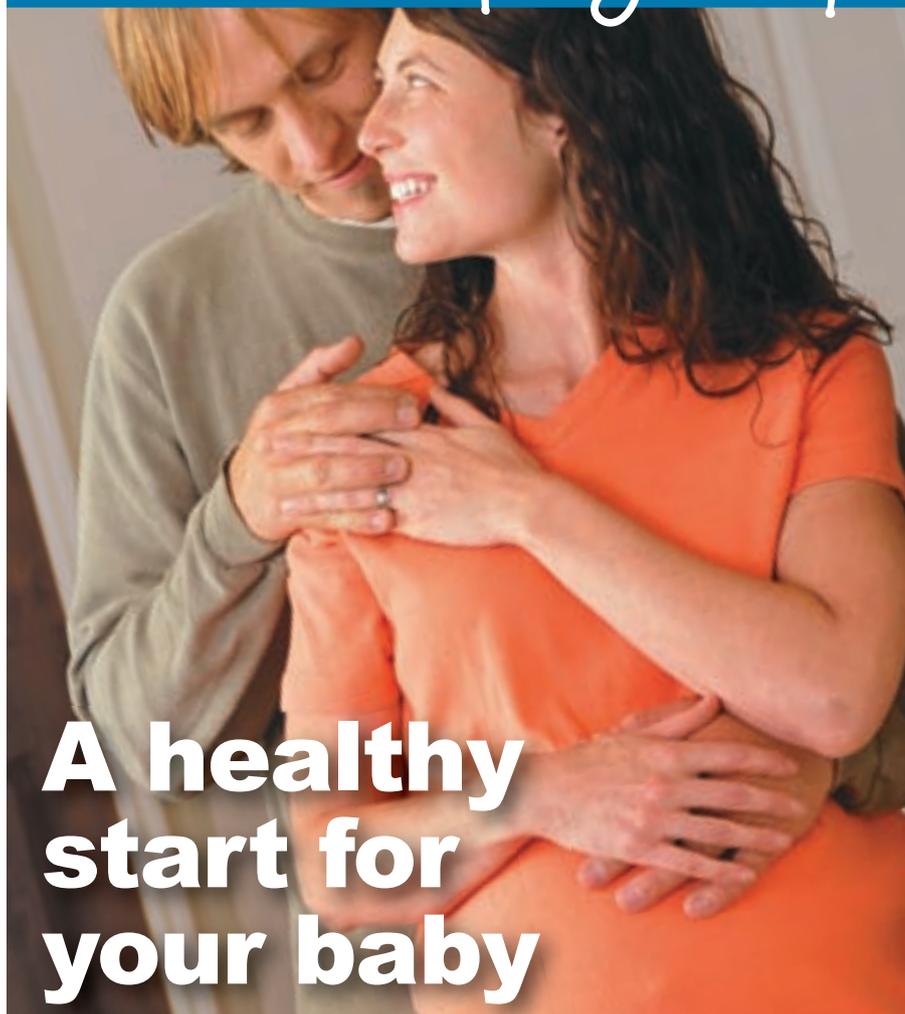
If you don't have asthma, it's hard to know what kids who have the disease go through. Try this:

Put a straw in your mouth and suck air in. Now blow it out through the straw. That's what breathing is like for someone with asthma. It's tough!

If you have friends with asthma, don't let other kids tease them. And tell your friends it's OK for them to use their medicines or inhalers when they need to.

Whatever you do, don't worry. You can't catch asthma from someone else.





## A healthy start for your baby

Did you know you can start caring for your baby even before he or she is born?

With prenatal care, you can. It's a good way to give your baby a healthy start in life.

Prenatal care means routine trips to see your doctor. Your doctor will check how your pregnancy is going and look for problems before they get serious.

Call your doctor as soon as you think you might be pregnant. Your doctor will tell you when and how often to come in. Usually, it's once a month at first. As your due date nears, the

visits are more often.

During the first visit, your doctor will:

- Ask about your health.
- Do a physical exam.
- Run tests.
- Answer your questions.

During later visits, he or she will check the baby's growth and talk about what will happen during childbirth.

Prenatal visits are important, even if you feel fine.



For more information, go to [www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov).

## Morning sickness: How to feel better

Morning sickness is no fun. But for many moms-to-be, it's a normal part of pregnancy.

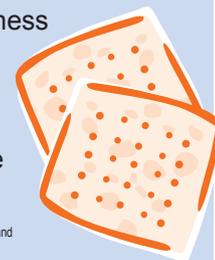
Many women have morning sickness. But most feel sick and throw up just during the first few months of pregnancy.

Morning sickness is usually gone by the fourth month. In most cases, it won't harm you or your baby.

Here are some things you can do to feel better:

- Get enough rest.
- Stay away from smells that make you feel sick.
- Don't eat too much at once. Eat small meals more often.
- Eat crackers when you feel sick.
- Try eating plain baked potatoes. White rice or dry toast may help too.
- Avoid fatty foods and spicy foods.
- Drink fluids often.

If morning sickness still bothers you, see your doctor. He or she may suggest medicine that can help.



Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists