

living

A newsletter for the members of
Central Coast Alliance for Health



things to know

How to handle low blood sugar and diabetes

Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) is a problem you may have to deal with if you have diabetes.

If you use insulin or take diabetes pills, blood sugar can fall too low if you:

- Don't eat enough food.
- Exercise more than usual.
- Are sick.

You may feel sweaty, dizzy, shaky or weak when you have low blood sugar.

If you have any of these symptoms, check your blood sugar. If it is 70 or less, eat or drink some kind of sugar right away. Five or six pieces of hard candy will work. Or try one-half cup of fruit juice.

Wait 15 minutes and check your blood sugar again. If it is still too low, eat or drink some more. Do these steps until your blood sugar is at least 70. If you can't get it to that level, call your doctor.



Source: American Diabetes Association

Sneezing? It's the season

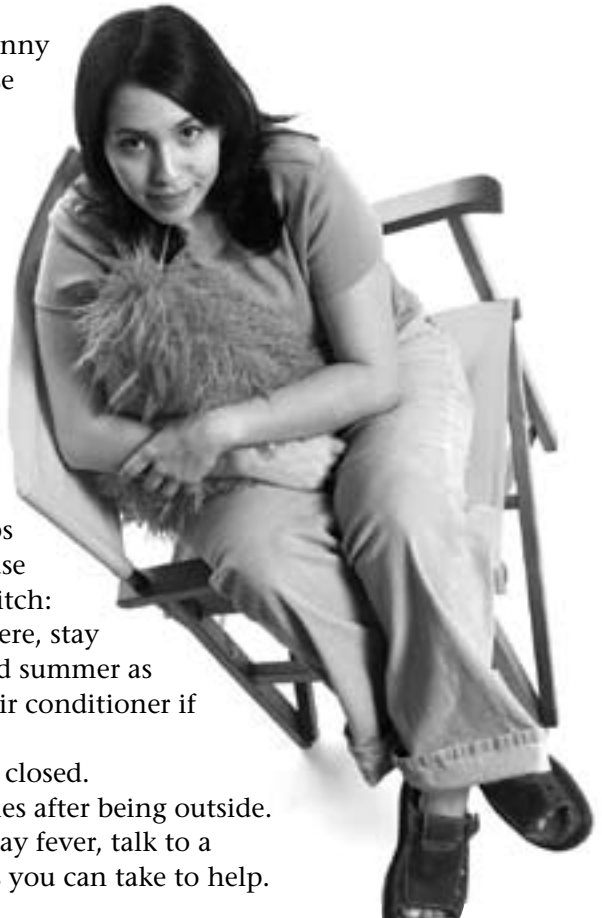
Sneezing. Itchy eyes. A runny nose. For some people, these are the first signs of spring.

If this is true for you, you may have seasonal allergies or hay fever. Grass, trees, flowers and weeds often cause hay fever. These plants bloom mostly in the spring and summer. But some plants that cause hay fever bloom in the fall too.

If you or your child has hay fever, you can take steps to avoid the plants that cause you to wheeze, sneeze and itch:

- If your symptoms are severe, stay inside during the spring and summer as much as possible. Use the air conditioner if you have it.
- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Shower and change clothes after being outside.

If you or your child has hay fever, talk to a doctor. There are medicines you can take to help.



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Easing the discomforts of pregnancy

Pregnancy has its wonderful moments.

You'll feel the flutter of your baby's first kick. You'll hear your baby's heartbeat.

But it also has its not-so-wonderful times.

You might feel sick to your stomach. Your back might hurt. As your baby grows, you may even have a hard time breathing.

Yes, you'll feel better after you deliver.

But until then, stay as comfortable as possible with these tips.

For nausea. You're more likely to feel queasy if your stomach is empty. So eat five or six small meals every day rather than the typical three.

Also, before getting out of bed in the morning, eat some dry toast or crackers.

For backache, try using heat or cold. Your doctor can also give you exercises that might help.

If your nausea or vomiting is severe, tell your doctor.

Prenatal care helps you have a healthy baby. See a doctor as soon as you think you are pregnant.

For trouble breathing.

Whenever you're short of breath, sit up straight.

For constipation. Eat high-fiber foods, such as raw fruits and veggies and bran cereals. Drink lots of liquids. In addition, try to walk daily.

For heartburn—that burning feeling that rises up in your throat. Again, eating smaller, more frequent meals may be best.

Sit up while you eat, and wait an hour after eating before lying down.

Be sure to get your doctor's OK before you take any medicine for heartburn, such as antacids.

Pregnant? See your dentist

Are you pregnant? You're probably focused on your tummy. But here's a part of your body that also needs attention: your teeth.

Now that you're expecting:

- Your gums are more likely to bleed. They may also swell or feel tender.
- A serious gum infection may cause your baby to be born too early or too small.

So take good care of your teeth.

Floss and brush regularly.

And even if you're not having problems, see a dentist during your pregnancy.

Source: American Academy of Periodontology



Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Why checkups are good for kids

To help your child grow up healthy and happy, make regular doctor visits a priority.

Checkups are a good time for the doctor to make sure your child is in good health.

At the doctor's office

During a checkup, your child's doctor may:

- Make sure your child is eating properly.
- Check on your child's growth and development.
- Find health problems before they become serious.

How to help your child sleep

For some children, bedtime is not a favorite time. But it's important that you make sure your toddler or preschooler gets enough sleep.

Children younger than 5 need at least 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night.

To help your child get enough sleep:

- Set a quiet time each night before bedtime.
- Limit TV and games before bed.
- Try to stick to a regular bedtime.
- Let your toddler take a favorite stuffed animal or blanket to bed.
- Make sure the bedroom is not too hot or cold.
- Avoid sleeping with your child.

- Update shots.
- Offer tips on how to keep your child safe.

A checkup also gives you a chance to ask questions.

When to visit the doctor

Regular visits will start as soon as your child is born. After that, see your child's doctor:

- Before your baby leaves the hospital.
- During the first year when your child is 2 to 4 weeks old and also at 2, 4, 6, 9 and 12 months.
- During the second year at 15, 18 and 24 months.
- The Alliance encourages an annual checkup for children ages 2 to 21 years.

Ask the doctor if your child needs to be seen more often.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Keep your family safe from lead

Lead—which can be found in dust, paint chips, dirt and water—can be a big health problem for your child.

Children get lead poisoning most often from lead paint chips or dust. Lead can damage kids' brains and hearing, slow their growth and cause learning problems.

To help protect your child from lead poisoning:

- Keep your home clean. Mop floors, and



To learn more about your child's health, call the health educator at 1-800-700-3874, ext. 4441.

dust windowsills often with a wet cloth or sponge. Always rinse the cloth or sponge after cleaning.

- Wash your child's hands, bottles and toys often.
- Make sure your child eats healthy foods. A good diet helps a child absorb less lead.
- Wipe or take off your shoes before coming indoors. This helps keep out lead found in dirt.

If you're concerned about lead poisoning, ask your child's doctor about testing. Lead poisoning can be treated with medicine.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The truth about marijuana

You may have heard that marijuana is no big deal.

But here's the truth: Marijuana can be more harmful than you think.

Studies show that the drug:

- Damages brain cells where memories are made. That makes it hard to remember things.
- Harms your lungs. Just one joint has four times as much cancer-causing tar as a filtered cigarette.
- Impacts coordination. That can affect your ability to do things, such as driving a car.
- Causes burning and stinging of the mouth and throat. It can also cause a heavy cough and frequent chest colds.
- Weakens your ability to fight off infections.
- Can be addictive.

Pot is risky for everyone. But the dangers are highest for young people.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



When you need help

It's nice to do things on your own. But there are times when you need help. One of those times may be when you're trying to stop drinking or using drugs.

It can be tough to admit you have a problem. But it's the first step toward getting better.

Here are a few clues that you may need help quitting:

- You can't have fun without alcohol or drugs.
- You lie or make excuses about using alcohol or drugs.
- You avoid friends who don't drink or use drugs.
- You've been late or missed work or school because of drinking or drugs.

So how do you get help?

For starters, talk with your doctor. Don't be shy—your doctor is there to help, not to judge you.

Your doctor might suggest that you see an expert who helps people stop drinking or taking drugs.

You can also ask family members and friends for encouragement. Support groups can help as well.

Remember, quitting is a bold step to take. And so is asking for help.

Drugs, alcohol and sex: A bad combo

If you're a teen or young adult, listen up. Mixing sex with alcohol and drugs can be risky.

Here's what a large survey found: Many young people have had unsafe sex because they were drinking or using drugs at the time.

Unsafe sex can:

- Lead to unplanned pregnancy.
- Spread STDs (sexually transmitted diseases).

But that's not all. Drinking and drugs have even been linked to other problems as well. These problems include unwanted or forced sex.

So play it safe. Know the risks.



To get information about local resources that can help, call Member Services at 1-800-700-3874, ext. 4396.

New car seat laws in 2005

Keep your child safe in the car

In California, it is now illegal for kids to ride in the front seat



There may be a free car seat

program in your area. Call the health education line at 1-800-700-3874, ext. 4441.

Updates to your medication coverage

The Alliance formulary is the list of medications that are approved by the plan.

If your doctor wants to prescribe a drug that is not on the list, he or she must fill out a Treatment Authorization Request (TAR).

From time to time the Alliance changes the formulary. Listed at right are some medications recently added to the formulary.

With a few exceptions,

of a car. Children under 6 years or 60 pounds **must** ride in the **back seat**. The fines for breaking the new law start at \$100.

Booster seats

Each child must ride in a seat that is right for that child's age and size. Infants and toddlers ride in car seats. Booster seats fit children ages 4 to 8 years old

who weigh 40 to 80 pounds.

The booster lifts the child up so that an adult seat belt fits the right way. Have your child sit all the way back against the seat. Be sure to use both lap and shoulder belts.

Seat belts

Adult seat belts will usually fit children who are 8 or older and who weigh more than 80 pounds.

When your children are ready to start using seat belts, be sure they can sit all the way back in the car's seat. Also, their knees should bend comfortably over the edge of the seat cushion.

It is safest to have kids ride in the back seat until they are 12 years old.

A shoulder belt should never be put under your child's arm or behind his or her back. This could cause injury.

For more tips, call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. at **1-800-745-SAFE (7233)** (English) or **1-800-747-7266** (Spanish).

Alliance policy requires that pharmacies use generic drugs if available. The complete formulary

is on the Alliance Web site at www.ccah-alliance.org/formulary.htm.

Medications added to formulary

Generic name (brand name)	Condition it is used to treat
Citalopram (Celexa)	Depression and anxiety
Atomoxetine (Strattera) and methylphenidate (Ritalin LA)	Hyperactivity / ADD (attention-deficit disorder)
Cefdinir (Omnicef)	Antibiotic for infection
Moxifloxacin (Vigamox)	Antibiotic eye drops
Epinephrine (Elestat)	Allergy eye drops



Resources for parents and teens

Parent Information and Referral Center

Do you have a question about your child's health, behavior, safety or development? The Parent Information and Referral Center (PIRC) can help.

When you call PIRC, you will talk to pediatric nurses (nurses who specialize in children's health). They will answer your basic questions about child health care.

They will also give you information about services for



The toll-free number for PIRC is 1-800-690-2282. You can call weekdays from noon to 8 p.m. and weekends from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

children in your community.

PIRC is part of the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. The nurses can give you information about breastfeeding, toilet training, preventing lice, treating chickenpox, getting immunizations (shots), car safety seats, discipline issues, normal development and more.

Bilingual (English/Spanish) staff members are available. A telephone language line provides interpreter services for callers who speak other languages.

Callers with hearing impairments can reach PIRC through the California Relay Service. You can also e-mail questions to PIRC at pirc@lpch.medcenter.edu.

Teen Health Resource Line

Now teens can use their very own toll-free telephone line to get immediate answers to health-related questions.

The Teen Health Resource Line is staffed by registered nurses at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. It offers the latest information on health and wellness for teens, sexually transmitted diseases, eating disorders, body changes and other health issues.



Call 1-888-711-8336 weekdays from noon to 8 p.m. and weekends from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. All calls are anonymous and confidential.

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healthy

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