

living

A newsletter for the members of
Central Coast Alliance for Health



**CENTRAL COAST
ALLIANCE
FOR HEALTH**

things to know

Free booklets

Learn how to eat right to protect your heart and lose weight.

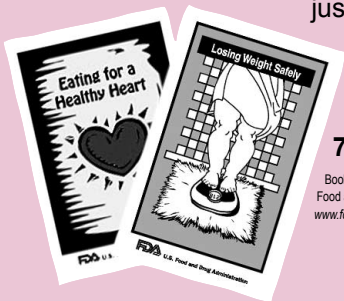
Eating for a Healthy Heart is an easy-to-read booklet that will help you choose healthier food.

If you need to lose weight, we can send you *Losing Weight Safely*. The simple but important tips will help you slim down.

Both booklets come in English or Spanish. To get one or both,

just call our health educator at **1-800-700-3874**.

Booklets courtesy of U.S. Food and Drug Administration, www.fda.gov.



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Teens, get a checkup and get free music

Teens need a checkup every year, just like younger kids.

Seeing a doctor for checkups is an important part of staying healthy. At your visits, your doctor can check on how you are doing. And he or she can give you advice on staying healthy.

Get answers in private

Your doctor can answer questions about things that matter to you, like skin, weight and sports. Or maybe you're sad and wonder if you're OK. Your doctor can talk to you in private.

It can be hard, but ask if you need help with a problem. Do you have questions about things like sex, smoking, drugs or violence? Your doctor is there to help you.

Earn a gift card

We will mail you a special form near your birthday. Go for your checkup, and ask your doctor to sign the form. Mail it back to get a \$15 gift card for Warehouse Music. You also get a chance to win a mountain bike!

If you have questions, call our health educator at **1-800-700-3874**.



Central Coast Alliance for Health

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Compliments or complaints?
Call Member Services.
1-800-700-3874



Keep your child eligible

Renew Healthy Kids every year

If your child is a member of the Healthy Kids Health Plan, please watch your mail for your renewal notice. You must renew Healthy Kids eligibility every year.

For example, if your child became eligible July 1, 2004, you would need to renew before June 30, 2005. If you didn't, your child would be dropped from Healthy Kids.

How to renew

We will send you a notice in the mail. You will have two months from the date of that notice to renew.

To renew, call a certified application assistor (CAA) to make an appointment. To find a CAA near you, call **831-454-2515** or **831-763-8568**.

When you see the CAA, you need to take:

- Current proof of income.
- Current proof that your child lives in Santa Cruz County.

If you want to find out when your child's renewal date is, call Member Services at **1-800-700-3874**.

Healthy
kids
Health Plan

Note this: We're moving!

We will be moving our main office from Santa Cruz to Scotts Valley in early July. Our new address will be **1600 Green Hills Road, Scotts Valley, CA 95066**.

You will still be able to reach us at **1-800-700-3874**.

Our Salinas office will still be at **1000 S. Main St., Suite 313, Salinas, 831-755-8220**.

Know which medicines we cover

The state Medi-Cal office sent a letter about changes in their drug list, called a formulary. They have stopped covering certain drugs unless they approve them first.

But this does not apply to you. We have our own list of approved drugs. It is different from the list that state Medi-Cal uses.

If you want to know whether the Alliance covers a drug you take, call Member Services at **1-800-700-3874**.



We won— thanks to you!

The Alliance won a 2004 Silver Quality Award from the state Department of Health Services.

The award is for preventive care. It means that more of our members got services to avoid sickness than members of 34 other Medi-Cal plans in California.

Thank you for making sure you get the care you need to stay healthy.

5 steps to a healthy heart



Your heart pumps blood to your entire body. But you may not think about it until something goes wrong.

You don't need to wait to develop heart problems before taking action. By following these steps, you can help protect your heart now and in the future.

Stay at a healthy weight. When you're overweight, your heart has to work much harder. This can put you at risk for heart disease. Being overweight can

lead to other diseases, such as diabetes. Having these diseases can increase your heart disease risk.

You can help protect your heart now and in the future.

You can control your weight with a healthy diet and exercise.

Don't smoke. Smokers have a higher risk of having a heart attack. And it is more

likely to be fatal.

The best way to lower your risk is to quit now. In time, your risk will decrease to that of a nonsmoker.

Control blood pressure. High blood pressure raises your risk for heart disease and stroke.

You can help control your blood pressure if you:

- Eat less fat, red meat and sweets.
- Eat more vegetables and fruits.
- Eat less salt.
- Exercise regularly.

Control blood cholesterol. Cholesterol is a type of fat in your blood. It can clog your arteries and lead to heart disease.

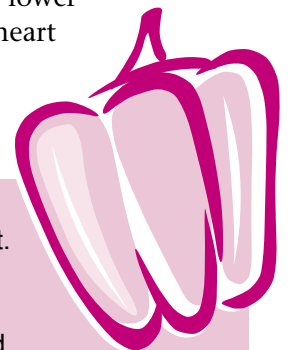
Your doctor can do a blood test to check your cholesterol levels.

Exercise regularly. Exercise can help you keep a healthy weight. It can help control blood pressure and cholesterol levels. And it helps your heart work better.

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise, such as walking, on most days of the week.

Talk to your doctor about other ways to lower your risk for heart disease.

Sources: American Heart Association; U.S. Food and Drug Administration



- A cold sweat.

If you have any of these symptoms and can't call 911, ask someone to call 911 for you. If no one can call for help, ask someone to drive you to the hospital right away. Don't try to drive yourself.

Source: American Heart Association

Get help fast for heart attack

It's important to protect your heart. But it's also important to know what to do if you have a heart attack—just in case.

The key to surviving a heart attack is getting help fast.

Medication that can stop a heart attack works best when

started quickly. That's why you should call 911 within five minutes of the first warning signs.

Signs of a heart attack can include:

- Pressure or pain in the center of your chest.
- Discomfort in your arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea.



Raising a healthy child

safety tips, visit the National SAFE KIDS Campaign Web site at www.safekids.org.

Have a smoke-free home.

Kids who breathe secondhand smoke have more health problems, such as ear infections. If you smoke, consider quitting or go outside when you smoke.

Monitor media. Violence, tobacco and alcohol are everywhere—on TV, in movies and in music. And kids can be influenced by what they see and hear. So be aware of what your child watches and listens to.

Read to kids—even babies—every day. Reading to children helps them learn to communicate. It also helps them become better readers.

Prevent violence. Hitting, spanking and mean words teach children that it's OK to hurt others to solve problems.

Reading to children helps them learn to communicate.

Most important, show your child love. Kids develop a sense of self-worth early in life. Listen and show you care. It can help your child feel important.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Safety on wheels

Bumps and bruises are a part of growing up. You know they will eventually heal.

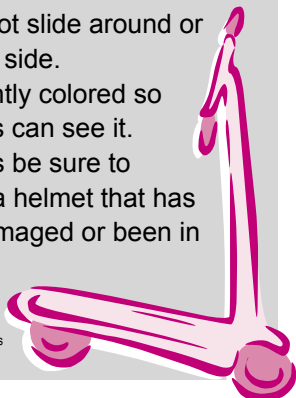
But a head injury could do lasting damage. That's why your child should always wear a helmet when riding a bike or scooter, inline skating or skateboarding. A helmet can help protect your child's head in an accident.

Choose a helmet that:

- Fits your child's head snugly. Check that the helmet sits squarely on top of the head. The helmet should not slide around or tilt to the side.
- Is brightly colored so motorists can see it.

Always be sure to replace a helmet that has been damaged or been in a crash.

Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons



As a parent, you are No. 1 in your child's life.

It's important that you give your child a good start. Here are some ways to help your child grow up happy and healthy.

Make good nutrition a goal. A healthy diet can make a big difference in how kids grow and learn. Try to offer foods from several food groups at each meal.

Childproof your home. Remove things that could hurt a child, such as poisons and small or sharp objects. For more

Why immunizations are important

Shots are no fun.

But neither is getting sick. And shots keep your child safe from dangerous diseases.

That's why it's so important to keep your child's shots up-to-date. You can keep track with a shot record. This record should be started when your child receives a shot for the first time. Be sure to have the record updated with each doctor visit.

Also, review shot records regularly with your child's doctor. That way you'll know when your child needs another shot.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Be good to your bones

Chances are, you don't give them much thought. But you depend on your bones—to run, jump and stand up straight.

As you age, however, your bones may become weak and break easily.

There's a name for this problem: osteoporosis. And you want to avoid it.

Here's how you can prevent osteoporosis and keep your bones healthy and strong:

Be physically active. Just like your muscles, your bones need exercise.

The best exercise for your bones makes your feet and legs carry the weight of your body.

So walk regularly. Climb stairs. Play some basketball. But check with your doctor first if you haven't been active in a while.

Get plenty of calcium. This mineral is very important for bones.

Foods rich in calcium include low-fat or nonfat milk, cheese and yogurt.

Other good sources include almonds and green, leafy vegetables, such as broccoli. And don't overlook calcium-fortified orange juice or cereal.

Get enough vitamin D. Milk and egg yolks are super sources.

You also get vitamin D from sunlight. So try exercising outside.

Don't smoke. Smoking harms bones, as well as your lungs and heart.

Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons



To learn more about women's health, call the National Women's Health Information Center at 1-800-994-9662.

PMS: How to cope with the discomforts

PMS—these letters stand for premenstrual syndrome.

But maybe there's a better description: pretty miserable symptoms.

PMS symptoms vary from woman to woman.

If you have PMS, you may have:

- Tender breasts.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Bloating or an upset stomach.
- Mood swings or crying spells.

Symptoms usually start a week or two before your period.

When your period begins, they usually go away.

Try these tips to feel better:

- Take good care of yourself. Exercise regularly. Get enough sleep. Choose healthy foods. Don't smoke.
- Use less salt. Also try not to drink too much coffee or sodas with caffeine. And don't eat too many sweets.

It's especially important to watch your diet when you have symptoms.

- Consider a calcium supplement with vitamin D. It may ease PMS.

See a doctor if your symptoms are severe. There are treatments that can help.

Source: The National Women's Health Information Center



Create a healthy grocery list

Success comes from planning.

That's true even when it comes to eating well. Planning ahead and making a grocery list can help you feed your family a nutritious, balanced diet.



Learn more about healthy eating with a free class or brochure. Call Health Education, 1-800-700-3874.

Making the list

Take a few minutes to sit down and plan healthy menus for the week. Then check your kitchen to see which ingredients you have on hand.

Make a shopping list for the rest of what you need. That list might include healthy items such as:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Whole-grain bread, pasta, cereal and brown rice.
- Lean cuts of meat, fish, chicken, turkey and eggs.
- Low-fat or nonfat milk, yogurt and cheese.

More tips

Keep in mind your schedule for the week as you create your list. If you are going to be busy, you might choose a frozen main dish with a green salad. Or you might want to use canned beans instead of cooking dry beans from scratch.

Buy only enough fresh produce for a few days. Otherwise, it might spoil and go to waste before you can eat it. You can also stock up on canned or frozen fruits and veggies to round out your meals.

Plan to shop when you aren't hungry. That way you're less likely to buy things you don't need. And when you are in the store, stick to buying only the foods on your list.

Source: American Dietetic Association



Reading food labels

When you are shopping, don't forget to check the food label.

That label tells you what is in a food.

And it can help you make healthier choices.

When choosing food, look at:

Serving size and calories. The calories listed are the amount in one serving. Focus on the serving size. If the serving size is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and

you eat 1 cup of that food, you'll actually be eating twice the calories (and other nutrients) listed.

Saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. Try to avoid foods that have more than 5 percent of the Daily Value of these.

Fiber. The more you get, the better. Choose foods with more fiber, such as whole-wheat bread and baked beans.

Vitamins and minerals. Look for foods with more calcium, iron and vitamin C. You might try low-fat milk, fruit or fortified cereal.