



Living HEALTHY

A newsletter for the members of Central Coast Alliance for Health

Checkups for healthy babies

If you have a new baby, you're busy.

But do take the time to make sure your baby sees the doctor for checkups.

All babies, even healthy ones, need regular checkups, especially during the first year of life. These visits are one of the best ways to keep babies healthy.

Your doctor can tell you how often your baby needs to be seen.

Here's what you can expect from checkups:

- You can get a progress report. The doctor will check on how your baby is doing. How is your baby growing? Is he or she eating and sleeping well? How is your baby seeing and hearing? And the doctor may be able to spot a problem that needs care before your baby gets sick.
- You can be sure your baby has the shots he or she needs. At some visits your baby will get vaccines. Your baby needs these shots to stay well. They protect your baby from some very serious diseases, such as polio, measles and tetanus.
- You can ask questions. Bring up any concerns you have. How can you calm your crying baby? When can your baby eat solid foods?

If your baby is sick. Call the doctor between visits if your baby seems sick. Signs may be fever, cough, vomiting, diarrhea, or a baby who refuses to eat or is very cranky, sluggish or sleepy.

Visits for new moms

New babies aren't the only ones who need checkups.

If you're a new mother, you need one too.

Your doctor will probably schedule a checkup for you

within a few weeks after your baby's birth.

This visit is when your doctor will make sure that you're not having any health problems after giving birth.

Just ask

Bring up any questions you may have.

Do you want to learn more about birth control? Nursing your baby? Losing weight?

The best time for this checkup is three to eight weeks after your baby's birth. Call early to make an appointment.



Central Coast Alliance for Health

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Stay covered Keep your Medi-Cal eligibility up-to-date



Did you know that some people on Medi-Cal now have to fill out a form every six months in order to stay eligible for Medi-Cal?

You do **not** have to fill out a status report if you:

- Are under 21 years of age.
- Are a CalWORKS participant.
- Receive Medi-Cal because you are aged, blind or disabled.
- Are in a special Medi-Cal program for people with breast or cervical cancer.

If you do not fall into one of these categories, you will get a form in the mail from the county

Medi-Cal office about a month before your report is due.

If nothing has changed since you first became eligible for Medi-Cal, you will still have to fill out, sign and return the form to the Medi-Cal office. If you have had a change, just write what the change is (such as your income or family size) and return the form to the Medi-Cal office.

Don't lose your coverage

If you do not turn the form in by the due date, you will lose your Medi-Cal coverage. If you lose your Medi-Cal coverage, you will no longer be an Alliance

member, and we will no longer cover your medical services and prescriptions.

If you have gotten your form in the mail and have questions about it, please call your local Medi-Cal office at one of the numbers below:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------|
| ■ Santa Cruz office | 454-4131 |
| ■ Watsonville office | 763-8500 |
| ■ Salinas office | 755-8500 |
| ■ Seaside office | 899-8001 |
| ■ King City office | 385-7400 |

New Healthy Families ID numbers and cards

Arriving in January

All Alliance Healthy Families members will be getting new Alliance ID numbers next year.

If you are an Alliance Healthy Families member, you will get a new Alliance ID card from us in the mail sometime in January 2004.

The card will have your new Alliance ID number on it. Your

Healthy Families benefits will not change. Only your ID number will be different.

Your Alliance ID number is important. It is the number providers use to see if you are eligible for services. It is also the number they use to bill us for payment.

As soon as you get your new ID card, please throw the old one

away and use only your new one. If you use your old card after the effective date on your new card, you may have trouble getting medical care or medication.

If you do not get a new Healthy Families ID card by the end of January, please call Member Services at 1-800-700-3874, ext. 4396.

Non-emergency medical transportation

Alliance Medi-Cal members
Medi-Cal covers non-emergency medical transportation in certain circumstances.

If you do not have transportation and cannot use regular public transportation (the city bus), you may qualify for transportation assistance to get to and from medical appointments.

Your doctor will need to fill out a form to certify that you are not able to use regular public transportation. If you qualify, there is no cost to you.

Rides are provided through Lift Line (if you live in Santa Cruz County) or the RIDES program (if you live in Monterey County).

Non-emergency medical transportation is **only** covered for rides to and from doctor's appointments or to the pharmacy to pick up medication that your doctor has prescribed.

Rides to the following places are **not** covered through the Alliance:

- Schools.
- Senior centers.
- Swimming pools.
- Medical appointments that are covered by other programs such as the California Children's Services (CCS) Program.
- Shopping.

Rides must be scheduled in advance and must be authorized in advance by the Alliance. If you are already signed up with Lift Line or the RIDES program,



call them to schedule a ride. They will call the Alliance to get authorization and make sure it qualifies under the Medi-Cal benefit.

If you aren't signed up with Lift Line or the RIDES program, but think you qualify, please call the Alliance's transportation coordinator at **1-800-700-3874, ext. 4877.**

Alliance Healthy Families members

Non-emergency medical transportation is only covered under the Healthy Families Program in certain limited situations. An example is if you have to be transferred from one hospital to another or if you have to see a specialist out of the area because there are no local specialists available to see you. Please look at your Evidence of Coverage for more information, or call Member Services at **1-800-700-3874.**

Interpreter services Help in other languages

We know how important it is for you to be able to talk to and feel comfortable with your doctor. There are doctors in our network that speak languages other than English. You can find this information in your Provider Directory or by calling Member Services at **1-800-700-3874, ext. 4396.**

If you are having trouble talking with your doctor because of language differences, we can provide interpreter services through a telephone language line.



How it works

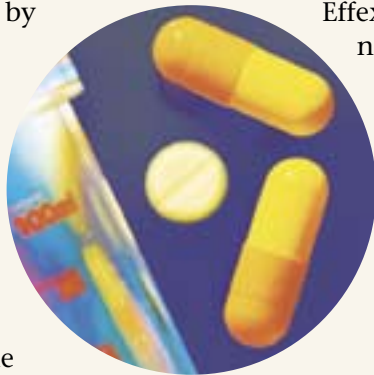
When you make an appointment with your doctor, tell the office that you would like an interpreter and what language you need. When you come for your appointment, your doctor will call the language line and ask for an interpreter.

There is no cost to you for interpreter services.

Updates to your medication coverage

The Alliance **formulary** is the list of medications that are covered 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 below are some recent changes.



If you are currently taking one of the drugs removed from the formulary, except for Effexor® XR, a TAR will now be required from your doctor.

With a few exceptions, 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.

Name of medication added to formulary (generic name)	Condition it is used to treat
Foradil® (formoterol fumarate)	Asthma
Prilosec® OTC (omeprazole)	Heartburn, ulcers
Ultram® (tramadol)	Pain
Name of medication removed from formulary (generic name)	Condition it is used to treat
Effexor® XR (venlafaxine)	Depression
Prilosec® (omeprazole)	Heartburn, ulcers
Protonix® (pantoprazole)	Heartburn, ulcers
Toprol XL® (metoprolol succinate)	Heart failure, high blood pressure



Exercise: It's good for your heart

You don't have to run for miles to help your heart. Any type of regular exercise can cut your risk of heart disease.

Swimming, riding a bike, jogging and walking are all good for your heart.

You'll get the most benefit if you exercise three or more times a week. Start slowly, but aim for 30 to 60 minutes each day you exercise.

Follow these tips to help make exercise work for you and your heart:

- Plan to exercise at the same time each day. Take a walk in the morning. Or maybe an afternoon bike ride works best for you.
- Ask a friend to exercise with you.
- Walk or ride your bike instead of driving.
- Choose activities you enjoy.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

Remember to check with your doctor before starting to exercise regularly.



How can I get more exercise?

Free workout video, pedometer or classes

You know you should get more exercise. But what can you do if you can't afford to join a gym?

The Alliance can help! Call our health educator for:

- Brochures to help you start exercising on your own.
- A referral to a free or low-cost

exercise class or walking group. Ask about classes near where you live. We have referrals for all ages, including seniors.

Free gift

Are you ready to get started? The Alliance is offering a free exercise videotape or a pedometer to the first 100 members who call.

■ The *Lift-Off!* exercise videotape comes in English or Spanish. The video guides you through a simple home workout. You don't need any special clothes or equipment. It can even be done seated. Do 10-minute segments, or do the whole tape for a 30-minute workout.

■ Or get a "pedometer" that counts your steps. It comes with tips on how to walk for fitness. Challenge yourself to walk a little farther each day.

Call our health educator at 1-800-700-3874, ext. 4882, to request your gift and referrals.

Flu shot reminder

Flu season is here. A flu shot can help you stay well. And for some people it can be a lifesaver.

The flu, or influenza, is spread through the air when people sneeze or cough. It causes fever, chills, dry cough, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat and muscle aches.

High-risk groups

Getting the flu can be dangerous for people with asthma, diabetes, heart disease or certain other medical conditions. Your doctor may also recommend a flu shot for children 6 to 23 months old or people 50 years or older. Health care workers or others who could

give the flu to people in high-risk groups often get shots, too.

Call your doctor's office today to see if you need a flu shot. Flu shots are an Alliance benefit available from your doctor.



Keep backpacks light

Heavy backpacks can hurt a child's neck, shoulders and back.

A backpack should weigh no more than 10 percent of your child's body weight. For example, if your child weighs 80 pounds, the pack should weigh 8 pounds or less.

To protect your child from injury, make sure he or she:

- Uses a backpack with two wide, padded shoulder straps.
- Carries the pack using both straps and a waist strap if the pack has one.
- Packs the heaviest items close to the back.
- Adjusts the straps so the pack is not too high or low, but sits on the hips.

Source: American Occupational Therapy Association



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LIVING HEALTHY is published for the members and community partners of CENTRAL COAST ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, 375 Encinal St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060, telephone (831) 457-3850, Web site www.ccah-alliance.org.

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Dealing with back pain

Aches. Twinges. Pinches. Pain.

There are a lot of ways to describe back pain. And it is a very common problem. Most people have back pain some time in their lives.

But you can try to prevent back pain before it happens.

- Exercise and keep your back and stomach muscles strong. This helps support your back.
- Stay at a healthy weight. Being overweight can strain your back.
- Lift heavy objects carefully. Bend your knees and lift with your legs, not your back.
- Use good posture. Don't slouch when you are sitting or standing.
- Don't smoke. It can increase your chance of injury and disease.

If you have low-back pain, these treatments may help:

- A short period of rest. But don't rest too long. That can weaken your muscles and make the problem worse.
- Over-the-counter medicines like ibuprofen. Your doctor may prescribe stronger medicines if these don't help.
- Hot or cold packs.
- Physical therapy to strengthen and stretch the muscles.
- Surgery. (Most back pain will go away without surgery.)

Call your doctor right away if:

- The pain is very bad or keeps you from your regular activities.
- The pain lasts more than a few days.
- Your legs are weak or numb.
- Your groin or rectal area is numb.
- You can't control your bladder or bowels.

