

living

A newsletter for the members of
Central Coast Alliance for Health



Shots: Are your kids caught up?

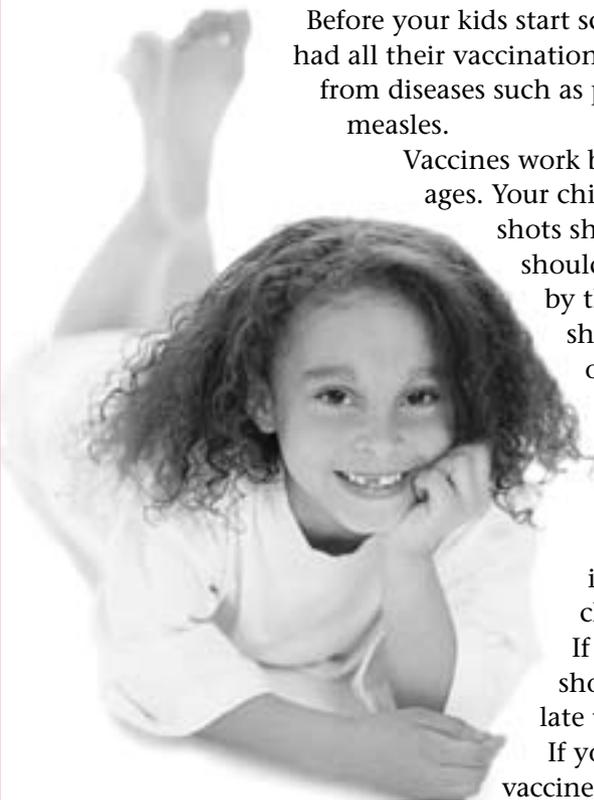
Before your kids start school, make sure they have had all their vaccinations. Vaccines protect children from diseases such as polio, hepatitis and the measles.

Vaccines work best when given at certain ages. Your child should start getting shots shortly after birth. Kids should have most of their shots by the time they turn 2. Some shots are given when kids are older and in their teens.

Keep a record of all your child's shots. Your child's school will need this record before school starts.

To make sure your child is up-to-date with shots, check with his or her doctor. If your child has missed a shot, don't worry. It's not too late to catch up.

If you have questions about vaccines, talk to your child's doctor.



questions & answers

Q. My 10-year-old wants to ride in the front seat of the car. Is this safe?

A. No. All children under age 12 should ride in the back seat. Children up to 80 pounds should be in child safety or booster seats.

Q. I was given a generic drug. Is it the same as the brand-name one?

A. The generic drug has a different name and costs less.

But it is the same as the brand-name one in:

- Active ingredients.
- Strength.
- Safety.
- Form (pill, liquid or shot).
- The way it works.

If you have questions about any medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.



Central Coast Alliance for Health

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Important information for members

If you have a question or concern about the Alliance, a particular doctor or getting health care, please call our Member Services department at 1-800-700-3874. It's our job to help you understand how to use your health plan and get the services you need.

To help us provide you with better service, please have your Alliance ID number ready before you call us. You can find this number on your Alliance ID card. If you don't have it with you, we will need to have your name and date of birth.

Here are answers to some of the questions we get from members:

Q. What is a PCP and why do I need one?

A. Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) is the doctor who will provide most of your medical care. You should call or see your PCP first for most health questions and problems. If you need specialty care or tests, you must be referred by your PCP.

It's important for you to see your PCP when you first become an Alliance member. This lets your PCP know your medical history and condition and helps him or her manage your health care.

If you want to change your PCP, call us before you see a new doctor. Not all doctors accept new patients. This information will be in the Provider Directory. If the doctor you pick accepts you as a patient, you can see him or her beginning the first day of the following month. We'll mail you a new Alliance ID card with your new doctor's name, address and phone number on it.

Q. How do I see a specialist?

A. Talk to your PCP. He or she will decide if you need to see a specialist for your medical condition. If your PCP thinks you need to see a specialist, he or she will send the specialist a Referral Authorization Form (RAF or referral). The referral tells the specialist what you are being referred for. It will also tell him or her the number of visits you

have with the specialist or the length of time the RAF is good for.

If you don't have a PCP, you are an administrative member. This means you can see a specialist without a referral. You can find a list of specialists in our Provider Directory.

If you don't know what type of specialist you need to see, you can ask your doctor to recommend one for you.

Q. What is a TAR?

A. Some health care services, medications and types of equipment are only covered if we authorize them in advance. Your doctor or provider knows what these are.

If your provider recommends one of these services for you, he or she will need to send us a Treatment Authorization Request, or TAR. There is a section on the TAR that asks the provider to explain why you need the service.

We will review the TAR to see if you need the service to keep you healthy. We will let your provider know if the request is approved.

Q. What if I have other insurance?

A. Your other insurance will be primary. This means it must be billed before Medi-Cal. It also means that you must follow the rules of the other insurance when you get care. For example, if your other insurance has a rule that you can only see certain doctors, you must follow that rule. If you don't, Medi-Cal will not pay for the service. Please call your other insurance company to find out if there are any special rules you must follow.



Things to know about the heat

Is it very hot outside? If so, be careful.

Your body can become dangerously hot—so hot you might become quite ill.

To stay safe:

- Drink lots of water, even if you're not thirsty.
- Don't drink anything with caffeine, alcohol or a lot of sugar. These drinks can make you lose body fluid.
- Stay inside. If your home isn't air-conditioned, take a cool shower. Or spend a few hours where there is air conditioning, such as a library. Electric fans won't keep you cool enough if the temperature is in the high 90s.
- Wear clothes that are loose fitting and light colored if you must go outside.
- Never leave anyone in a car—even for a few minutes.

- Check on older adults at least twice a day. Make sure the heat isn't harming them.

Sources: American Red Cross; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Simple steps for an insurance bill

What do I do if I get a bill?

Don't ignore it. Then follow these simple steps:

- Look on the bill for the phone number of the office that sent you the bill.
- Call the office and ask why they sent you a bill. In most cases, the reason is that they don't know what insurance you have.
- If you were eligible with the Alliance when you got the service, tell the office that you are a member of Central Coast Alliance for Health and give them your Alliance ID number. This number is on your Alliance ID card. You can also send them a copy of the front and back of your ID card.
- Ask the office to send us the bill.

If you have done all of this already but keep getting a bill, call the Alliance and talk with our billing specialist. Before you call, be ready with all of the following information:

- Your Alliance ID number.
- The name of the doctor or office billing you.
- The doctor or office phone number.
- Your account number.
- The date you received services.
- The amount you are being charged.

We may not be able to help you if you don't have this information. We also cannot help you with any bill that is over one year old. Please open any bill you get as soon as you get it and take the steps above before it is too late.

Ready, set, go!

Getting your body moving is a good way to get in better shape, stay well and have fun. To help show you how to be more active, Jumping Jack, Running Rhonda and Cartwheel Kate are planning to play some games. You can join them.

JUMP with Jack

Jumping Jack is learning about the different types of exercise. You can help him. Just fill in the blanks in the sentences with the word from the answer choices.

1. Aerobic exercise makes your ____ beat faster. It also causes you to breathe harder. You can run, swim or ride a bike to make this happen.

2. Strength and endurance exercises build up your muscles.

Lifting _____ may increase your strength and be good for your bones and your posture.

3. Stretching exercises make it easier to move your muscles and joints. It can also help you relax. Try _____ to touch your toes.

ANSWER CHOICES:

- A. Bending.
- B. Heart.
- C. Weights.

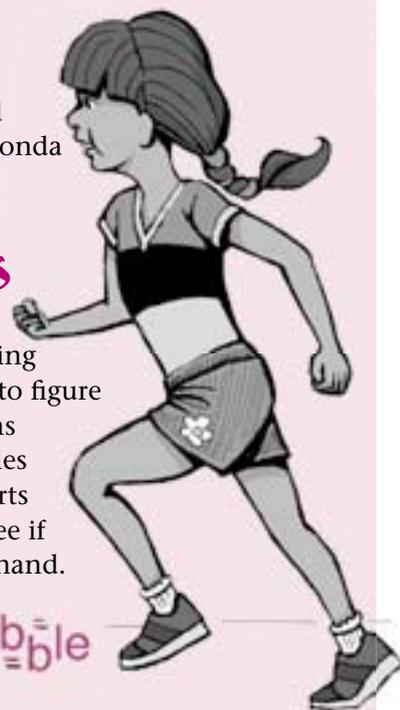


ANSWERS:
1 = B; 2 = C; 3 = A.



Picture this

Running Rhonda is in a race. She's trying to be the first one to figure out the sports terms hidden in the puzzles below and the sports they come from. See if you can give her a hand.



1. TOUCH

2. Dribble dribble

3. ONE

ANSWERS:
1. Touchdown; football.
2. Double dribble; basketball.
3. Hole in one; golf.

Turn the TV



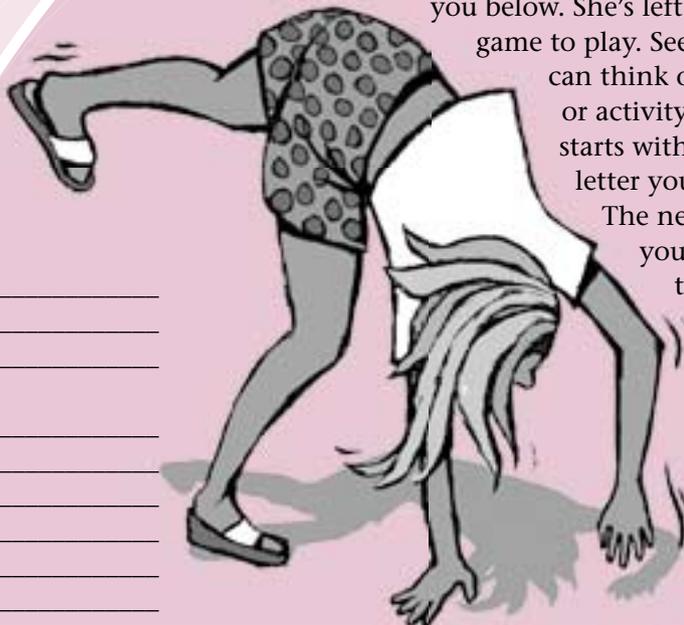
Cartwheel Kate knows too much TV is bad for you. It keeps you from doing other things that will get your body moving.

Kate has an important message for you below. She's left you a game to play. See if you can think of a sport or activity that starts with each letter you see.

The next time you plan to watch TV, do one of these things instead.

GET

ACTIVE



Take charge of what you eat



As a teen, you're facing many choices. Here's one more: what to eat that helps you feel good, look your best and do well in school.

In general, choose fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads, lean meat, poultry, fish and low-fat or nonfat milk and cheeses. Eat less fat and fewer sweets.

Start with breakfast. Quick and

Got calcium?

Right now, you're building the bones you'll use for the rest of your life. So make sure they're healthy.

Healthy bones need calcium, especially during your teen years. And it's important to store enough now so your bones stay strong as you get older.

But too few teens, especially girls, get enough calcium.

You can easily add calcium to your diet with:

- Milk.
- Cheese.
- Yogurt.
- Dark green vegetables, such as spinach and broccoli.
- Foods such as orange juice or tofu that have calcium added.

healthy choices include:

- Cereal with low-fat or nonfat milk.
- Low-fat or nonfat yogurt.
- Fruit.

Lunch is a good time for fruits and vegetables. Your body needs five or more servings every day.

Toss carrot sticks in the bag with your sandwich. Add a dish of vegetables to your school lunch tray. Eat fruit for dessert.

At fast-food places, avoid fat. Try a grilled chicken sandwich, salad with low-fat dressing and low-fat or nonfat milk.

For snacks, pick:

- Pretzels.
- Veggies with low-fat dip.
- Low-fat microwave popcorn.
- Low-fat tortilla chips with salsa.

Eating well can help you feel good and look your best.

At dinner, you can sometimes offer to take charge of the family meal. Learn to make a simple, healthy dish. It's good for you—and good to know how to do once you're on your own.

Sources: American Medical Association; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

How to get more sleep



Are you a dud at parties?
Are you crabby with friends?
Do you

have trouble with schoolwork or sports?

Like a lot of teens, you may lack sleep. What you need is a pillow and a good night's rest.

That's not always easy. Most teens need about nine hours of sleep each night. Most get about six.

But you can help yourself:

- Take a look at your activities and jobs outside school. Are they robbing you of sleep?
- Go to bed and get up at the same time, even on weekends.
- Don't drink coffee or sodas that have caffeine.
- Relax before bedtime. Dim the lights. Turn down the music.



Updates to your medication coverage

The Alliance formulary is the list of medications that are covered by the health 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, 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. You can find the list at www.ccah-alliance.org/formulary.htm.

Medication added to formulary	Condition it is used to treat
Cipro-Dex ear drops	Ear infections
Medication removed from formulary	Condition it is used to treat
Pravachol (generic name)	High cholesterol

Get moving to this free CD

Feel the beat of well-being! Movimiento is a musical group that wants you in tune with your health. Their new album *Movimiento por su Vida* can be yours for free. To order a

CD, call the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse at **1-800-860-8747**. (Operators also speak Spanish.)

Did you know that:

- Exercise can help prevent diabetes and heart disease.
- Exercise helps you maintain your weight.

Try to be active for 30 to 60 minutes each day. For exercise ideas and tips, call your Alliance health educator at **1-800-700-3874, ext. 4882**.



Call 1-800-860-8747 for your free CD.

Get moving for your health!

On the Web: Find local services

Many people now have access to the Internet at home, at school or at the library. Now you can find an up-to-date list of health services in your area.

● For Santa Cruz County, go to www.helpsc.org. Search by category of service, region, city or keyword.

● For Monterey County, go to www.theresourcebook.org. Click on "Search for Resources" to start.

Search by type of service or keyword.

Or you can search for an agency by name.

