



Living Healthy

A newsletter for the members of
Central California Alliance for Health



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Back-to-school immunizations

GET A HEAD
START ON
THE SCHOOL
YEAR

The idea of going back to school has changed since the start of COVID-19, but the need for our children to be vaccinated for school has not.

The start of a new school year is almost here, and your child may need to be vaccinated before going back to school. Now is a great time to start planning for the next school year! You can begin by calling your child's doctor. Ask what

vaccines your child needs and schedule an appointment. Appointments can be scheduled far in advance, so call your child's doctor today.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
and resources, visit
shotsforschool.org.

STUDENTS WHO WILL START THE FOLLOWING GRADES IN SCHOOL NEED THESE VACCINES:



Transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten (K):

- Polio
- DTaP
- Hep B
- MMR
- An additional varicella (chickenpox) vaccine is needed for entry to kindergarten



7th grade In addition to all vaccines above:

- Tdap
- Proof of varicella (chickenpox)

California parents are not able to file an immunization exemption for their child to enter school.

Follow us on Facebook!

Stay up-to-date with:

- Tips and services for Medi-Cal members.
- Local community information.
- COVID-19 updates.

Find us at facebook.com/TheAllianceForHealth

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1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Is COVID-19 bringing your teen down?

Living with the fear and restrictions of COVID-19 is enough to bring anyone down, but teens may be especially affected. They may be missing friends as well as major events like prom, sports or graduation.

It is normal for your teen to feel sad during these times. But how can you tell if they need a little extra emotional support? The American Academy of Pediatrics

(AAP) suggests you look for these signs that your teen is struggling:

- Unusual changes in mood or behavior. Is your teen irritable? Are they texting and talking to their friends less often than expected?
- Lack of interest in things they used to enjoy.
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much.
- Problems with memory or thinking.
- Lack of personal hygiene.

How you can help

One of the best things you can do to help a struggling teen is to let them know you are there for them. Acknowledge their feelings of sadness and even anger.

Also, be a role model. Try to stay positive yourself. Express optimism that things will get better. The AAP and other health experts also suggest that you:

- ✔ **Talk honestly with your teen.** Correct any misinformation about COVID-19 they may have in a calm, factual way. Stress the importance of social distancing to stop the spread of the virus.
- ✔ **Encourage them to stay connected.** Allow them to spend time video chatting with friends and loved ones. Let them play online games with friends.
- ✔ **Urge them to go for a walk or run outside.** Just getting outside can help. Adding exercise to that outing can help even more. Also consider taking family walks after dinner. (Remember to keep at least 6 feet away from other people.)
- ✔ **Steer them toward activities they can do at home.** Maybe your local library has e-books online. Encourage your teen to do video workouts. They might enjoy creating a vlog of life during the pandemic. Or they could take a virtual tour of a museum.
- ✔ **Spend quality time together.** Take part in an activity or conversation of your teen's choice with the goal of actively listening to them.
- ✔ **Encourage hobbies.** Creative activities like building models or painting can give teens a feeling of joy and accomplishment.
- ✔ **Limit daily news intake.** This can help everyone in the household feel calmer.



THINK YOUR TEEN IS DEPRESSED?

Talk with your child's doctor if you have concerns about your teen's mental health. The doctor can advise you on what steps to take next.



Feeling Sad or Anxious? We Are Here for You.

The impact of COVID-19 and social distancing can lead to feelings of anxiety and depression.

If you are having a hard time, **you are not alone.**

Central California Alliance for Health (the Alliance) works with Beacon Health Options (Beacon) to connect you to mental health services and support.

If you are having new or increased feelings of stress, anxiety or depression, call Beacon at:

855-765-9700

(TTY: Dial **7-1-1**), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Or visit their website at

beaconhealthoptions.com



Alliance's Language Assistance Services

» To help members communicate better with their doctors and us, the Alliance provides interpreting services over the phone and face-to-face. We also provide translation of written member information. All these services are at no cost to you.

Members can ask for:

- A trained American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter.
- A trained language interpreter.
- Alliance-written information in braille, large print or audio format.
- Alliance-written information in a language they can understand.

If you need to reach the Alliance's Language Assistance Services, or have questions, please call the Alliance Member Services Department at **800-700-3874**. For the Hearing or Speech Assistance Line, call **800-735-2929** (TTY: Dial **7-1-1**).

If you are having an emergency, don't wait.

Call 911.

Need help with a medical question?

Call the Alliance Nurse Advice Line, 24 hours day, 7 days a week at: **844-971-8907**
(TTY: Dial **7-1-1**)

Need help with emotional support?

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

English: 800-273-TALK (8255)

Spanish: 888-628-9454

HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

www.ccah-alliance.org

ACE screening

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events in a child's or teenager's life. They are very common, and about two-thirds of adults have experienced a traumatic event at least once. ACEs can happen to anyone and may have long-term effects on health. An ACEs screening by your doctor helps determine if you or your child is at an increased health risk. This helps your doctor take better care of you or your child.

Types of ACEs and stress

ACEs can include major stressors such as:

- Abuse that is physical, emotional or sexual.
- Neglect that is physical or emotional.
- Household instability. This can include mental illness, incarcerated relative, substance abuse, divorce or the sudden loss of a loved one.
- Community violence or bullying.

Children's bodies can handle some stressful situations, like completing a



big school project. This kind of positive stress can build stress resistance, helping them to handle other stressful situations in the future. Stress from an ACE is different than everyday stress, and too much can be unhealthy. This stress can affect the way a child's body

and mind grow, leading to health problems such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease. It can also affect behavior, learning and mental health.

ACEs Aware Self-Care Tool for Adults: <https://www.acesaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Self-Care-Tool-for-Adults.pdf>

ACEs Aware Self-Care Tool for Kids: <https://www.acesaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Self-Care-Tool-for-Pediatrics.pdf>

Ways to regulate stress

The good news is that even though ACEs increase health risk, they don't have to lead to health problems. When adults care for children and offer support, kids feel safe and secure. This feeling is good for the kids' brains and bodies.

Other positive lifestyle factors for you and your child include:

- Healthy relationships.
- Getting enough sleep.
- Eating healthy food.
- Getting regular exercise.
- Practicing mindfulness and meditation.

- Access to nature.
 - Getting mental health care when needed.
- Together, all these important things can help reduce the potential negative effects of ACEs.





Get more from your mask

Your face mask can provide protection against the spread of the coronavirus. But the fit matters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers these tips for getting the most from your mask.

Go for a snug fit

The virus spreads mainly through droplets sent into the air by talking, coughing or just breathing. You want to be sure your face mask fits snugly so that droplets don't leak in or out.

To check the fit, cup your hands around the edges of your mask. You should not feel air flowing in and out as you breathe. Now put your hands in front of the mask. You should feel warm air coming from your mouth.

A few ways to improve the fit:

Wear a mask with a nose wire.

When fitted to the shape of your nose, it can stop air from leaking out of the top of your mask.

Use a mask fitter or brace. These are devices that can be worn over a

disposable mask or a cloth mask to make it fit more tightly.

Knot and tuck. Tie a knot into each ear loop of the mask as close to the edge of the mask as you can. Then fold and tuck the extra material under the knot to close any gaps.

Combine layers of material

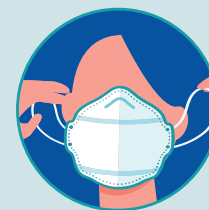
A cloth mask with multiple layers of fabric will filter droplets more efficiently than a single-layer mask. All layers should be made from tightly woven but breathable fabric. If you hold the mask up to a light source, you shouldn't see any light coming through.

You might also try doubling up. You can wear a disposable mask underneath a cloth mask, or you can wear two cloth masks. But don't combine two disposable masks. They aren't designed to fit tightly and wearing two won't improve that.

English: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Spanish: <https://espanol.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

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FOR MORE INFORMATION on masks, visit the CDC website at: [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).



5 ways to cut back on added sugars

If you pay attention to dietary headlines, you've probably heard the fuss over foods with added sugars. And you might wonder: How could something so deliciously sweet be so potentially bad for your health?

First, it's important to remember that sugars occur naturally in many foods, from milk to fruit. But that's not the issue here.

Instead, we're talking sugars, syrups and caloric sweeteners that are added to foods when they're processed or prepared. And if their calories make up too much of your diet, you may not have enough room for other nutritious choices. Diets that limit added sugars are linked to a reduced risk of obesity and certain chronic diseases.

Where's the extra sugar?

Everyone knows candy, cookies, cakes and regular sodas have added sugars. But added sugars are also listed on packaged food labels under dozens of different names. Among them: cane sugar, syrup, brown sugar and many words ending in *ose* (like fructose or dextrose).

Added sugars can be a part of a nutritious diet—you don't have to shun them all. However, you should limit them to less than 10% of your daily calories. To help cut back:



1. Choose naturally sweet fruits for desserts or snacks. Add fruit (instead of sugar) to cereal. Make a peanut butter sandwich with bananas or berries instead of jelly or jam.



2. Shop for foods with less or no added sugar. For instance, choose plain (instead of flavored) yogurt and add your favorite fruit. Try unsweetened applesauce and fruit canned in water or natural juices rather than heavy syrup.



3. Swap your usual sweetened soda, punch or energy drink for water or milk.

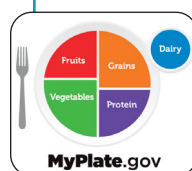


4. When baking, try using only half the recommended sugar. Chances are, nobody will notice.



5. Make candy, cookies and other sweets an occasional treat.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Heart Association; U.S. Department of Agriculture



LIMITING ADDED SUGARS is just one of many smart things you can do to help ensure a healthy eating plan. For more ideas, check out **choosemyplate.gov**.

Start early and keep on going to the dentist—even during COVID-19

It is safe to make an appointment to see your dentist. It is very important to keep up with regular dental care, especially for children. Many dentist offices have made changes to make sure patients and staff are safe from COVID-19. Your dentist and their staff are committed to keeping their clinics open and safe so you and your family can continue to receive important dental care.

Some safety measures offices have taken include:

- Scheduling fewer patients so that there are fewer patients in the clinic.
- Cleaning office equipment throughout the day, after each patient.
- Staff are wearing gloves, masks, face shields and gowns for protection.

Taking care of our teeth is important. This benefits our overall health across our lifespan. It is not too early for your child to establish care with a dentist and start good oral health habits! It is important to bring your young child to the dentist by their first birthday (or when their first tooth comes in). Baby teeth are important to take care of because they:

- Hold space for healthy permanent teeth.
- Promote healthy eating, including hard foods like apples and carrots.
- Promote the development of good speech patterns.

Regular visits to the dentist can also catch cavities when they are small. As you are planning your baby's first birthday party, be sure to also call the dentist to schedule their first dental appointment. When you call your dentist, let them know the appointment is for your baby's first birthday or first tooth. This may help you get an appointment faster.



IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS about dental services for Medi-Cal members, call Denti-Cal at **800-322-6384** (TTY: Dial **800-735-2922**) or visit the Denti-Cal website at **dental.dhcs.ca.gov**.



New Alliance website coming soon!

We are excited to announce that we will launch our new website later this summer. Now, it will be easier than ever to find online information about your health plan.

Stay tuned for more updates coming your way soon.



Alliance Drug Formulary changes effective April 1, 2021

ADDITIONS TO FORMULARY

Xarelto 2.5mg



We are committed to your satisfaction

We want you to be happy with your health care and our service. But sometimes you might not be. When that is the case, we want to hear about it.

If you are not happy with a provider or the provider's office, it is best to talk to them first. Let someone in the office know what happened. Ask him or her for help fixing the problem.

If you are not happy with your experience in a hospital or other facility, you can ask to speak with a nurse, social worker or patient advocate.

If you are getting a bill for services covered by the Alliance, call the billing department at the number on your statement. Let them know you have the Alliance as your insurance and ask them to bill us directly.

You may file a complaint (also called a grievance) if you are not happy with:

- The care your doctor is providing or how you were treated in the office.
- Being able to get the care you need.



If you would rather talk to us about the problem, we're here to help. You can file a complaint (also called a grievance) or an appeal (a disagreement with an Alliance decision) by calling Member Services at **800-700-3874**. You can also file a complaint or appeal in writing or through our website, www.ccah-alliance.org/complaints.html.

- The services you get from the Alliance.

There are other reasons you might file a complaint with us. These are listed in your Member Handbook.

You may file an appeal with us if you are not happy with:

- A decision we have made to change or deny services.

Once you let us know about your complaint or appeal, we will look into it. We will do all we can to help you. If you are still unhappy after we try to resolve your case, we will tell you what steps you can take next.



LIVING HEALTHY is published for the members and community partners of CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, 1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101, Scotts Valley, CA 95066, telephone 831-430-5500 or 800-700-3874, ext. 5505, website www.ccah-alliance.org.

Information in LIVING HEALTHY comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

Member Services Project Specialist
Quality and Health Programs Supervisors
Quality and Health Programs Manager

Yomayra Gomez
Desirre Herrera
and Mao Moua
Deborah Pineda

www.ccah-alliance.org

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