



# LIVING HEALTHY

DECEMBER 2019  
Volume 25, Issue 4

A newsletter for the members of Central California Alliance for Health

## Seasonal affective disorder

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), or seasonal depression, is a condition that usually occurs during the fall and winter. It is caused by the lack of sunlight due to the change in season. It can affect your mood and make you feel symptoms of sadness, low energy and loss of interest.

Some natural ways to help treat SAD are:

**Exercise:** By doing any sort of physical activity, you are able to release endorphins that can help you feel more positive. Get out and get moving!

**Socialize:** Take time to be around friends and family. By being around loved ones and talking with them, you can keep your mind busy and have fun in a positive environment.

**Go outside:** During fall and

winter, there might not be much sunlight. However, if the weather allows, be sure to get outside to get some fresh air. Even without sunlight, breathing in the fresh air can make you feel better!

**Create a bedtime routine:**

Try to make your time for sleep peaceful and enjoyable. Try to go to sleep around the same time each night and wake up around the same time each morning. Don't look at the television, computer or phone for a few hours before bed. The light from those screens can make it harder to fall asleep.

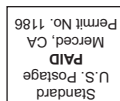
For best results, try combining the things above. Get outside and get some exercise with your friends and family, for example. A hike in the woods, or even a simple walk down the street, is a great option!



### Important notice

Beginning Jan. 1, 2020, a new law in California will give full scope Medi-Cal to young adults under the age of 26, and immigration status does not matter. To see if you are eligible, call:

- Merced County: **209-385-3000**
- Monterey County: **877-410-8823**
- Santa Cruz County: **888-421-8080**



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# Confused by referrals and authorizations?



There are many terms that are used in health care, and sometimes it can be confusing to understand them all. We want to make sure you know how to get services that are covered by your plan, so here is some information that should help.

## Referral

If you are assigned to an Alliance primary care provider, you must have a referral to see another doctor. There are some exceptions to this. See your Evidence of Coverage or Member Handbook for a complete list.

If your primary care provider thinks you need to see another doctor, they will fill out what is called a Referral Consultation Form. Your primary care provider sends a copy to the doctor you are being referred to and a copy to the Alliance. The referral is how the other doctor and the Alliance

know your primary care provider has approved the visit. If we don't have a referral, we will not pay the claim from the other doctor.

## Authorized referral

In most cases, your primary care provider will refer you to a doctor in our service area. Our service area includes Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced counties. If your primary care provider refers you to a doctor out of our service area, he or she will need to get approval from us in advance. This is called an authorized referral. It is called this because we have to authorize (approve) the referral before you can see the other doctor.

If you are an Alliance In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) member, you will also need an authorized referral if your primary care provider is referring you to a doctor that is not contracted with the Alliance—even

if the doctor is in our service area. Alliance members who are enrolled in the California Children's Services (CCS) Program will also need an authorized referral for specialty care.

## Prior authorization

The Alliance has to approve some services, procedures, medications and equipment before you get them. This is called prior authorization. The provider who is going to perform the service must send us a request for prior authorization, letting us know what you need and the reason why. The provider can send it electronically or by fax or mail. We will review the request and any medical records the provider sends.

If the service, procedure, medication or equipment is medically necessary and a covered benefit, we will approve the request. We will let the provider know, and then you can get the service. If we deny a request, we will let you and the provider know. You will be able to file an appeal if you disagree with our decision.

## More information

For a complete list of services that do not require a referral, see your Evidence of Coverage or Member Handbook.

## Formulary changes

DRUG NAME	USED FOR	ACTION
Tudorza Pressair Stiolto Respimat	COPD	Added
Gardasil 9 (HPV immunization)—expanded coverage to include males and females ages 27 to 45 (now covers ages 9 to 45)	Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine	Added
Symbicort—added to formulary for ages under 12	Asthma and COPD	Added
Sodium chloride 3%, 3.5%, 7% (hypertonic saline)	Cystic fibrosis	Added



# Don't wait until you are sick

Make a wellness visit with your doctor today!

You know it's important to see your doctor when you are sick. But did you know that as an Alliance member, you are covered for preventative services to help you stay well?

These wellness services include:

- Regular health exam (check-up) to meet with your doctor and to find problems before they start
  - Immunizations (vaccines) for children and adults
  - Important screenings like mammograms and prostate exams
  - Blood pressure and cholesterol checks
  - Help managing an ongoing health condition like asthma, diabetes or high blood pressure
  - Information about healthy eating and exercise and how to stop smoking
- If you have never seen your Alliance

primary care provider, call to make an appointment. Even if you are not sick, this visit will let you and your doctor get to know each other. Your primary care provider will ask about your medical history, what medicines you take and how you are feeling. He or she will make sure you are up-to-date on your vaccines and may order lab work.

This visit is also a time for you to ask any questions or talk about any concerns you have about your health and how you feel.

If it has been a while since you have seen your primary care provider, it might be time for a wellness check-up or to make sure you are up-to-date on screenings and vaccines.

Don't wait. Call your doctor and get started on the road to good health now!

# Tips for healthy aging

There's no question that age brings changes to our lives. Some of them, like the death of a spouse, we would prefer to avoid. But age can bring positive changes too. One survey found that many older people say they have less stress and more time for family, interests and hobbies than they used to have.

To a great extent, what older age will be like for you depends on how you live now. It also depends on how you cope with the changes that come your way. Here are a few tips to help make aging easier and more pleasant:

- **Decide to have an active mind and body.** Remember the saying "use it or lose it."
- **Choose to be involved.** Isolation can contribute to depression and other health problems. So keep connected to family and friends. They can give you physical and emotional support.
- **Choose a healthy lifestyle.** Try to:
  - › Eat well
  - › Stay at a healthy weight
  - › Get enough rest
  - › Quit smoking if you do
  - › Do what you can to stay safe
  - › See your doctor regularly
- **Make the most of your spare time.** Do things you enjoy and allow yourself time to rest. Too much stress can bring on health problems.
- **Practice healthy ways to cope.** Believe in yourself and remember: You can handle whatever comes your way.

Sources: AGS Foundation for Health in Aging; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Mental Health America; Pew Research Center

**YOU AND YOUR HEALTH** are important to us. Please call us at **800-700-3874** (TTY: Dial **7-1-1**) if you have questions, need help or have concerns about your care as an Alliance member. We're here to help!

# Feedback, from members like you!

The Alliance has been reaching out to families, like yours, to understand their experience with immunizing (vaccinating) their children. We would like to thank the families who have given us the opportunity to hear their great and honest feedback.

So far, we have learned that most families believe vaccines are **important!** The good news is our members know where to get their child vaccinated (at their doctor's office) and have a safe place to store their child's immunization/vaccine record (folders, purses and other safe places).

## Areas of concern for parents

### Why does my child have to get so many shots at once? How safe are they?

Many vaccines are recommended for infants and children to protect them from infectious diseases. Some of the

vaccines are offered in a combination vaccine to reduce the number of shots. These combination vaccines have been given since the mid-1940s and are safe. If more than one shot is given at a doctor visit, they are usually given in different arms or legs.

### What is in the vaccine?

Doctors give a "Vaccine Information Sheet" handout after a child gets vaccines. We heard from members that this is not the best way to answer questions families have about what is in the vaccines. See the CDC's (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) website for an easy-to-understand guide of what is in vaccines: [cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/additives.htm](http://cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/additives.htm).

### Information on social media





Families also shared that they use social media and the internet to learn about vaccines and are concerned by stories

they see online. False information is often posted on social media (Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc.) without anyone's control. If you are looking for information on vaccines, the Alliance recommends going to the CDC's website to get accurate information at [cdc.gov/vaccines/index.html](http://cdc.gov/vaccines/index.html).

### Patient and doctor relationship

Families shared that they do not always see the same doctor at every visit, making it difficult to build a relationship with a doctor or clinic. It can be hard to continue conversations about vaccines if a different doctor is seen at each visit. The Alliance recommends writing down your questions before each visit to help get all of your questions answered. If you are not able to see the same doctor, tell the new doctor what was talked about at the last visit to continue the conversation.

## Vaccines babies and children need

	 <b>Birth</b> HepB (1 of 3)	 <b>2 months</b> HepB (2 of 3) Rotavirus* (1 of 2 or 3) DTaP (1 of 5) Hib (1 of 3 or 4) PCV (1 of 4) IPV (1 of 4)	 <b>4 months</b> Rotavirus* (2 of 2 or 3) DTaP (2 of 5) Hib (2 of 3 or 4) PCV (2 of 4) IPV (2 of 4)	 <b>6 months</b> HepB (3 of 3) Rotavirus* (3 of 3) DTaP (3 of 5) Hib** (3 of 3 or 4) PCV (3 of 4) IPV (3 of 4) Flu*** (1 of 2)
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## Thank you!

Your feedback is very valuable to us! We have heard your concerns, and we are devoted to improving families' experiences with vaccines. We now understand that we must better explain why vaccines are so important and how they work. Your feedback helped us to create an infant wellness map that explains what vaccines your baby needs from 0 to 12 months of age. The infant wellness map will help make vaccines easier to understand and help to keep your child on track.



### 12 months

HepB (3 of 3)  
IPV (3 of 4)  
Hib (4 of 4)  
MMR (1 of 2)  
HepA (1 of 2)  
VAR (1 of 2)

(3rd doses of HepB and IPV can be given as early as 6 months of age.)

### 15 months

HepB (3 of 3)  
DTaP (4 of 5)  
IPV (3 of 4)

### 18 months

HepB (3 of 3)  
Flu (1 dose annually)  
HepA (2 of 2, 6 months after the 1st dose)

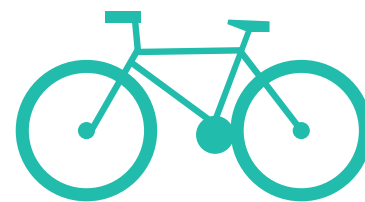
5th DTaP, 4th IPV, 2nd MMR and 2nd VAR are given after the 4th birthday.

\*Rotavirus: 2- or 3-dose series available.

\*\*3rd dose may be skipped, depending on vaccine brand.

\*\*\*2nd dose should be given 4 weeks after initial dose.

# Alliance members win bikes for being healthier!



Twice a year, the Alliance Health Programs team raffles brand-new bikes, along with helmets and bike locks, to children and teens who worked hard making healthier lifestyle changes to maintain a healthy weight. Meet our three lucky bike raffle winners: Jesus, Brandon and Josue.

These members were entered into the bike raffle through their enrollment and participation in our *Healthy Weight for Life* (HWL) program. The HWL program helps families adopt healthy lifestyle changes and rewards those who meet their healthy weight goals.

## Jesus, age 14— Merced County

Jesus shared that the most challenging part of his journey was cutting out bread, soda and other sweets. He decided to start reaching for healthier snack options. Although he wasn't the biggest fan of vegetables, he decided to try them in different ways. Now he enjoys soups that have lots of broccoli, carrots and other vegetables.

Jesus also started being more physically



active. At first, he started walking for an hour. Then he started to push himself to run. He shared his technique with us: "Set a goal each week, and each time you run, try to beat your running time."

He also practices good portion control when eating meals. Jesus's mother said: "Parents have a lot to do with how our children eat. We have to set the examples for our children to see."

## Sign up for an HLP workshop

The Alliance offers Healthier Living Program (HLP) workshops near you at no cost! The HLP workshops are health and wellness sessions where members learn how to manage pain, fatigue, stress, anxiety and sleep loss. Members also learn about healthy eating, staying active, improving quality of life and building relationships. Be healthy in the new year!

### January through May 2020

MERCED COUNTY	MONTEREY COUNTY	SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
Livingston (Spanish) Thursdays, Jan. 30 through March 5	Salinas (Spanish) Mondays, Feb. 24 through March 30	Look for classes in Santa Cruz County during the summer of 2020.
Livingston (English) Thursdays, March 12 through April 16	Salinas (English) Mondays, April 13 through May 18	



**THE ALLIANCE INVITES YOU** to join an HLP workshop. Call the Alliance's Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580** to sign up for a workshop near you.





### Brandon, age 6—Monterey County

Brandon's father, Jose, shared that he first learned Brandon was considered overweight at a doctor visit. This was very eye-opening because he did not realize Brandon was considered

overweight. The family decided to start making changes, such as eating dinner earlier and adding more vegetables to their meals. They reduced junk food and fast food that they ate as a family.

Jose feels it is important for Brandon to be physically active. Brandon enjoys going to the park and playing soccer, so these have become family activities to support the whole family in being healthier.

Jose shared that programs like HWL are extremely beneficial to the community. He is aware that as human beings, we tend to get trapped in our routines. He says that programs like HWL help people get out of unhealthy routines and explore healthier options or gain ideas for healthier lifestyles. He shared that children learn from observing their parents, and he feels it is important for parents to also be good role models.

Both Jose and Brandon felt that winning the bike and participating in HWL will keep motivating the family to continue their progress in making healthier lifestyle changes.

### Josue, age 16—Santa Cruz County

Josue shared that one day he just decided he did not want to be overweight anymore. He started to make changes to his eating habits and snack choices. Before HWL, he would eat hot Cheetos, drink a lot of sugary drinks and have sweet breads for breakfast. He shared that he has reduced the hot Cheetos to only once in a while and substituted the sugary drinks for water. He has also learned to count calories and increased his physical activity.

Josue feels his doctor greatly helped him continue with his quest to make healthier choices. At every appointment, his doctor complimented the amazing progress Josue made along the way and reminded him to keep eating well and staying active.

Josue plans to use his new bike to stay active. His advice to those who are thinking of making lifestyle changes: "Don't think about it; just do it."

Josue's mother shared that in the beginning, it was hard to see her son not eat the same. He still eats what she cooks—just smaller servings of it now. Josue and his mother are both grateful that the Alliance provides the HWL program and incentives like bikes to help members continue to be healthy.



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## Service with a smile!

Have you ever wondered who is on the other end of the phone when you call Member Services?

Our representatives are caring, dedicated professionals. They are here to answer your calls Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Our representatives are ready to:

- ▶ Help you understand how your health plan works
- ▶ Answer questions about your benefits
- ▶ Explain how you can get medical care and services

- ▶ Let you know which doctors and clinics you can go to
- ▶ Help you choose or change your primary care provider
- ▶ Offer interpreter services if you do not speak English
- ▶ Send you a new Alliance ID card if you lose yours
- ▶ Assist you with concerns or complaints

We have representatives in Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced counties. They live and work in the communities we serve. What they have in common is that they care about our members and are here to help.



**IT'S FLU SEASON.** Get your flu shot at your doctor's office or local retail pharmacy. There is no cost to you. Be sure to bring your Alliance ID card. Be a Flu Fighter!

**I GOT A FLU VACCINE. NOW MY BEST FRIEND WANTS TO GET ONE TOO.**

**I LIKE BEING A FLU FIGHTER! MY GRANDKIDS LOOK UP TO ME.**

**FLU FIGHTER!**

**ALLIANCE MEMBERS ...**

GET YOUR FREE FLU VACCINE FROM A LOCAL PHARMACY OR YOUR DOCTOR. CHILDREN MUST GO TO THEIR DOCTOR FOR THE VACCINE.

**BRING YOUR ALLIANCE ID CARD.**

**QUESTIONS?**

**CALL (800) 700-3874**  
TTY: DIAL 7-1-1.

# Changes are coming to the Alliance Member Rewards Program

The Alliance Member Rewards Program will be changing, starting Jan. 1, 2020. After this date, eligibility requirements for gift cards will be different for members participating in the following programs:

- **Healthy Weight for Life program**
- **Healthy Moms and Healthy Babies program**

**?** If you have any questions, please call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**. If you need language assistance, we have a special telephone line to get an interpreter who speaks your language. For the Hearing or Speech Assistance Line, call **800-735-2929** (TTY: Dial 7-1-1).



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](http://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.

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