



Living **Healthy**

A newsletter for the members of Central California Alliance for Health



June 2024 | VOLUME 30, ISSUE 2

Stay on track: A guide to kids' vaccines

Keeping your kids healthy now can help them stay healthy in the future. One way to do that is by making sure they're up to date on their vaccines. Here's a quick guide to help you out:

1. **Follow the schedule.** Stick to your child's vaccine schedule recommended by your child's doctor.
2. **Stay on track.** Life gets busy, and sometimes we might miss doses. Don't worry! If you fall behind, talk to your child's doctor. They can help get your child back on track.
3. **Plan ahead.** Appointments can fill up quickly. Call and schedule an appointment today so your child is ready to return to school!
4. **Ask questions.** Talk to a health care professional you trust. They are there to help you and provide the best advice for your child.

HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

www.thealliance.health

Remember, scheduling regular checkups with your child's doctor is key to addressing any concerns or questions. Let's keep our kids as healthy as we can!

For more information, visit

www.thealliance.health/child-vaccines.

Ask the doctor

What should I know about preventive medicine?

Dr. Wang is a Medical Director for Central California Alliance for Health, serving Mariposa, Merced, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties.

With Dr. Michael D. Wang

Sometimes people do not like to talk about their health or go to the doctor. But it is important! Checkups can help in many ways that include:

- **Finding problems early.** Some health problems, like high blood pressure and diabetes, do not have symptoms at first. Regular checkups can find these problems early. Also, finding things like cancer early on can help people get better faster.
- **Lowering health risks.** At checkups, your doctor can help you change unhealthy habits, like smoking, drinking too much alcohol or not eating healthy foods.

What are some types of preventive care that can help me stay healthy?

- **Healthy habits.** Exercise, eat healthy food and get enough sleep.
- **Regular checkups.** See your doctor regularly to catch any health problems early.
- **Mental health care.** Your feelings are just as important as your physical health. It is good to talk to someone about your feelings, like a counselor or therapist.
- **Vaccinations.** Vaccines can keep you from getting sick.
- **Screenings.** Tests can find health problems early.

How can I get checkups and other health care?

You can call your doctor to make an appointment. The phone number is on your Alliance member ID card. If you need help with making an appointment or getting to the doctor, call the Alliance's Member Services department at **800-700-3874**.

How can I learn more about managing my health?

We have free programs to help with long-term health problems like asthma, diabetes or high blood pressure. Visit our website

at www.thealliance.health/healthrewards to learn more. Or call the Health Education Line at **800-700-3874**, ext. 5580.

Get Health Rewards

The Alliance's Health Rewards Program rewards you and your family for taking actions that support your health.

Here are the programs that members can participate in and the rewards you could earn:

Baby flu vaccines

7 months to 2 years

- Children who get their second flu dose by their second birthday.
- Monthly raffle for a **\$100** Target gift card.
- **Seasonal:** only during flu season (September through May).

Healthy Start: Well-child visits

Birth to 15 months

- Have six or more well-child visits on or before turning 15 months.
- **\$50** Target gift card.

15 to 30 months

- Have two well-child visits on or before turning 30 months.
- **\$25** Target gift card.

Infant immunizations

Birth to 2 years

- Complete immunizations by their second birthday.
- **\$100** Target gift card.

Adolescent immunizations

9 to 13 years

- Get all needed vaccines by their 13th birthday and have one well-care visit within the last 12 months.
- **\$50** Target gift card.

Well-care visits

18 to 21 years old

- Have one annual checkup with their doctor.
- **\$25** Target gift card.

Nurse Advice Line

- Call the Alliance Nurse Advice Line if you have a health question.
 - **Members can call 844-971-8907 (TTY: Dial 711)** to talk to a nurse.

- Monthly raffle for a **\$50** Target gift card.

Healthier Living Program

- Complete the six-week *Healthier Living Program* workshop.
 - Earn up to a **\$50** Target gift card.

Healthy Weight for Life Program

- Complete the 10-week *Healthy Weight for Life* workshop.
 - Earn up to a **\$100** Target gift card.
 - Complete all 10 weeks and be entered into an annual raffle for the chance to win a **bike**.

Healthy Moms & Healthy Babies Program

- Pregnant women
 - See your doctor within the first 13 weeks of being pregnant or six weeks of joining the Alliance.
 - Monthly raffle for a **\$50** Target gift card.
- Just had a baby
 - See your doctor for a postpartum visit one to 12 weeks after having a baby.
 - **\$25** Target gift card.

Members with other health insurance, besides Medi-Cal, are not eligible for these rewards. If you have questions

about the Health Rewards Program, call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**.

Community CORNER

Community food resources for Alliance members

Do you know how to get fresh, healthy food for you and your family? The Alliance wants to make sure everyone knows where to turn for help when it comes to accessing food.

You may be able to get help with healthy food for your family from:

- Your local food banks.
- CalFresh.
- Your child's school district.

Food banks

Mariposa County

Community Food Bank, USDA Commodities—

Mariposa Park

209-726-3663

The Community Food Bank at Mariposa Park is open the third Tuesday of every month from 9 to 11 a.m.

Senior Brown Bag

209-966-6632

www.mariposacounty.org/423/Senior-Meals

For more resources in Mariposa County, visit

www.mmcfb.org/get-help.

Merced County

Merced County Food Bank

209-726-3663

The Merced County Food Bank is open the third Tuesday of every month from 9 to 11 a.m. Visit **www.mmcfb.org** to learn more.

Merced Lao Family Community, Inc.

209-384-7384

www.laofamilymerced.org

Catholic Charities

209-383-2494

<https://ccdof.org>

The People's Pantry

209-769-3231

For more resources in Merced County, visit

www.mmcfb.org/get-help.

Monterey County

Food Bank for Monterey County

831-758-1523

www.foodbankformontereycounty.org

For more resources in Monterey County, visit

www.foodbankformontereycounty.org/food-assistance.

San Benito County

Community Food Bank of San Benito

831-637-0340

www.communityfoodbankofsb.org

For more resources in San Benito County, visit

www.211sanbenitocounty.org/food.

Santa Cruz County

Second Harvest Santa Cruz County Community Food Hotline

831-662-0991

www.thefoodbank.org

For more resources in Santa Cruz County, visit

www.211santacruzcounty.org/food.

CalFresh program

CalFresh is California's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). If you qualify for Medi-Cal

coverage, you may also qualify for CalFresh benefits. Local food banks can provide fresh food and help you enroll in CalFresh. Or you can apply for CalFresh benefits online at www.getcalfresh.org or by calling your county's CalFresh office:

Mariposa County

209-966-2000

Merced County

209-385-3000

Monterey County

831-755-4448

San Benito County

831-636-4180

Santa Cruz County

888-421-8080

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 would like to talk to the Alliance about a problem, we are here to help.

You may file a **complaint** (also called a **grievance**) if:

- You are not happy with the care you received from your doctor or how you were treated in the office.
- You are not happy with your experience in a hospital or other facility.
- You received a bill for services covered by the Alliance.
- You are not able to get the care you need.
- You are not happy with 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, which you can find online at **www.thealliance.health/memberhandbook**.

If you are not happy with a decision we made, you can file an **appeal**. An appeal is a request for us to review and change a decision we made about your services.

How to file a complaint or appeal

You can file a complaint or an appeal by calling Member Services at **800-700-3874**. You can also file a complaint or appeal in writing or through our website at **www.thealliance.health/file-a-grievance**.

Next steps

Once you let us know about your complaint or appeal, we will look into your concern. We will do all we can to help you. The information you share also helps us improve as an organization and helps our health partners. If you are still unhappy after we try to resolve your case, we will tell you what steps you can take next.

Prescription drugs

If you are a Medi-Cal member, your prescriptions that are filled at a pharmacy are covered by Medi-Cal Rx, not the Alliance. You can view prescription drugs that are covered by Medi-Cal Rx at www.medi-calrx.dhcs.ca.gov, or you can request a printed copy by calling **800-977-2273** (TTY: Dial **711**), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you are an IHSS member, pharmacy services are managed by MedImpact. You can view covered prescription drugs on the Alliance website at www.thealliance.health/prescriptions. You can also request a copy of the covered prescription drugs by calling Member Services at **800-700-3874** (TTY: Dial **711**), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. You may also call Member Services if you have questions about a medication.

Benefit spotlight

Getting transportation services through the Alliance

If you need a ride to a doctor's appointment, need to pick up a prescription or need a ride for another medical-related reason, the Alliance's transportation services can help.

If you don't have transportation and need to get to a medical appointment, you can schedule a ride by calling Call the Car (CTC) at **833-244-1678** anytime. This service is available to members living in Mariposa, Merced, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties. The Alliance can help you get to your appointment by offering mileage reimbursement, public transportation or a taxicab. It's important to call and schedule a ride at least seven business days before your appointment.

Members now have the option to get text messages in their language. To see if your language is listed, call **833-244-1678** and a representative will help you!

The Alliance also offers transportation services for members who have special transportation needs. If you're unable to use a car, train, taxi or bus, call the Alliance at **800-700-3874**. The Alliance aims to ensure

that members going to a medical appointment can get transportation.

WELLNESS FOR ALL

Talking with your primary care provider

Practicing good communication with your primary care provider (PCP) is an important way to embrace your health care journey. Clear and honest communication between you and your PCP can help you both build a safe connection. Talking about your concerns can help you make informed choices about your health care.

We know that talking with your PCP is not always easy. Below are some examples of questions to talk about with your PCP if you have health concerns during your visit.

Question

Example

What am I feeling that I want the PCP to check?

➔ My left ear aches each time I blow my nose.

When did it begin?

➔ It started about a week ago when I first caught a cold.

What makes it better or worse?

➔ It feels worse when I blow my nose and feels better in the morning after I shower.

What questions do I have, and what worries me?

➔ When will I start to feel better? Does the medicine have side effects?

Other tips for your visit to the doctor:

- Bring a list of all the medications you are taking.
- If you have any medical needs, such as wheelchair access, or require language assistance or interpreting services, let the doctor's office staff know so they can help you.

Protecting your family from lead exposure

Protecting your child from lead exposure means keeping them healthy and protecting their brain development. Lead exposure comes from touching, swallowing or breathing in lead dust. Lead can be found in older homes, plumbing, water, paint, dirt, toys, home remedies, makeup and candy.

Lead can have harmful effects on young children and pregnant women. Exposure can affect a child's brain and can cause pregnancy complications. Children with lead poisoning often look healthy but might have headaches, feel tired, misbehave and have difficulty paying attention or learning.

Protect your family from lead exposure by removing harmful items that may include lead, washing hands often, limiting play in dirt and doing your best to keep your home clean and dust-free. Good nutrition can help slow lead absorption. Make sure your child eats meals high in iron, calcium and vitamin C. Ask your child's doctor to give you information on lead exposure and have your child tested at ages 1 and 2 years old. If your child is past this age, they should be tested by age 6.

For more information about how to protect yourself and your family from lead exposure, visit

www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/docs/5things-508.pdf

Staying safe: Naloxone/Narcan can be a lifesaver!

The Alliance wants you to know about naloxone, also called Narcan, a medication that can save lives during an accidental opioid overdose.

Narcan is an easy-to-use nasal spray that will reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. You can get this medicine from your doctor when you get a prescription for certain pain-killing medications. If your doctor prescribes you opioids, like Vicodin or Percocet, it is OK to ask for Narcan. Consider it a safety measure against the chance of an overdose.

You can also pick up Narcan at any Alliance office with no questions asked and at no cost to you. Your safety is our main concern, and we are committed to giving you the information you need to stay safe.

How to use Narcan

If you think someone is having an overdose:

- First, call 911.
- Next, tilt the person's head back.
- Place the tip of the Narcan nasal spray in one nostril until your hand touches the bottom of their nose.
- Firmly press the plunger to push the drug into the person's nose and wait two to three minutes for a response.

For more information about how to use Narcan, visit [www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/naloxone factsheet.pdf](http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/naloxone_factsheet.pdf). Your safety is most important!

The Alliance is texting members when it is time to renew their Medi-Cal! You might get a text message from us.