

family health



Winter 2004

new members

Get your IHA and win a prize!

Are you or your child a **new** member? If so, you could win a prize by having an IHA. An IHA is a complete health exam.

New members should have an IHA within four months of joining Kern Family Health Care. Children 18 months or younger should have an IHA within two months of joining.

How to get your prize

See your doctor for an IHA. Then send us a note with your or your child's:

- Name and address.
- Phone number.
- Birth date or ID number.

Also include:

- The date of the IHA.
- The doctor's name.

Mail the note to:

**Kern Family Health Care
Health Education Department
9700 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93311-3617**

We will send you a prize, after checking that the IHA was done on time. Only new members can win this prize.

Call your doctor today and schedule your IHA!

Questions?
Please call us at

1-800-391-2000.

Better health: A plan for the new year

The new year is a great time for healthy changes. Here are a few ideas to make 2005 healthier.

● Exercise more.

Exercise three to five days per week. One way to get your family moving is by watching less TV.

● Eat more

fruits and

vegetables. Buy more fresh foods. They make great snack ideas for your family.

● **Drink more water.** Cut down on sodas and drink water instead.

● **Read food labels.** Cut out extra calories by picking foods with less fat, sugar and calories.

● **See your doctor regularly.**

Kids, teens and adults should



have yearly wellness exams. Talk to your doctor and find out what exams you and your family need.

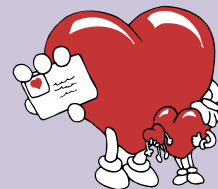
Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2005.



Remember: We are here to help. Call us at 1-800-391-2000 for help with the topics listed above.

Si necesita esta información en español, llame al 1-800-391-2000.

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Flu shot update

What you need to know

Flu season is here, but not everyone should rush to get a flu shot. That's because there's a shortage of the flu vaccine this year.

The shot is being advised for only certain groups. This includes people who are at high risk of problems from the flu.

Who needs it most?

The groups that should receive the flu shot first include:

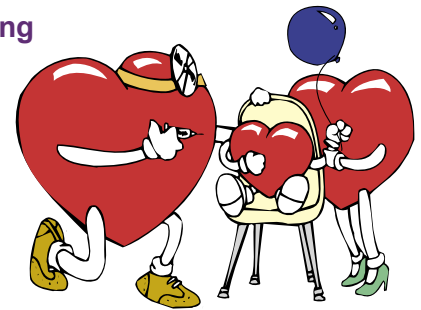
- Children who are 6 to 23 months old.
- Children from 6 months to 18 years old who are on chronic aspirin therapy.
- Those 65 or older.
- People with a chronic illness such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease.



To learn more about preventing the flu, call 1-800-232-2522.

- Anyone with a weakened immune system.
- Pregnant women.
- Those who live in a long-term care facility.
- Health care workers who care for patients.
- Anyone who takes care of, or shares a home with, infants younger than 6 months.

If you are not in any of these groups, you're asked not to get a



shot this season. Or you can wait to see if more vaccine becomes available.

What you can do

Even though you may not get a flu shot this season, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your family.

- Stay away from people who are sick when you can. And if you do get sick, stay home and stay away from others.
- Wash your hands often.
- Try not to touch your mouth, nose or eyes. Germs are often spread this way.

If you do get the flu, call your doctor. There are medications that may make your illness less severe.

Why immunizations are important

Shots are no fun.

But neither is getting sick. And shots keep your child safe from dangerous diseases.

That's why it's so important to keep your child's shots up-to-date. You can keep track with a shot record. This record should be started when your child receives a shot for the first time. Be sure to have the record updated with each doctor visit.

Also, review shot records regularly with your child's doctor. That way you'll know when your child needs another shot.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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substance abuse

The truth about marijuana

You may have heard that marijuana is no big deal.

But here's the truth: Marijuana can be more harmful than you think.

Studies show that the drug:

- Damages brain cells where memories are made. That makes it hard to remember things.
- Harms your lungs. Just one joint has four times as much cancer-causing tar as a filtered cigarette.
- Impacts coordination. That can affect your ability to do things, such as driving a car.
- Causes burning and stinging of the mouth and throat. It can also cause a heavy cough and frequent chest colds.
- Weakens your ability to fight off infections.
- Can be addictive.

Pot is risky for everyone. But the dangers are highest for young people.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



When you need help

It's nice to do things on your own. But there are times when you need help. One of those times may be when you're trying to stop drinking or using drugs.

It can be tough to admit you have a problem. But it's the first step toward getting better.

Here are a few clues that you may need help quitting:

- You can't have fun without alcohol or drugs.
- You lie or make excuses about using alcohol or drugs.
- You avoid friends who don't drink or use drugs.
- You've been late or missed work or school because of drinking or drugs.

So how do you get help?

For starters, talk with your doctor. Don't be shy—your doctor is there to help, not to judge you.

Your doctor might suggest that you see an expert who helps people stop drinking or taking drugs.

You can also ask family members and friends for encouragement. Support groups can help as well.

Remember, quitting is a bold step to take. And so is asking for help.



For more information, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.

Drugs, alcohol and sex: A bad combo

If you're a teen or young adult, listen up. Mixing sex with alcohol and drugs can be risky.

Here's what a large survey found: Many young people have had unsafe sex because they were drinking or using drugs at the time.

Unsafe sex can:

- Lead to unplanned pregnancy.
- Spread STDs (sexually transmitted diseases).

But that's not all. Drinking and drugs have even been linked to other problems as well. These problems include unwanted or forced sex.

So play it safe. Know the risks.



To learn more about healthy eating, call us at 1-800-391-2000 and ask for the Health Education Department.



Create a healthy grocery list

Making the list

Take a few minutes to sit down and plan some healthy menus for the week. Then check your kitchen to see which ingredients you have on hand.

Make a shopping list for the rest of what you need. That list might include healthy items such as:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Whole-grain bread, pasta, cereal and brown rice.
- Lean cuts of meat, fish, chicken, turkey and eggs.
- Low-fat or nonfat milk, yogurt and cheese.

More tips

Keep in mind your schedule for the week as you create your list. If you are going to be busy, you might choose a frozen main dish with a green salad. Or you might want to use canned beans instead of cooking dry beans from scratch.

Buy only enough fresh produce for a few days. Otherwise, it might spoil and go to waste before you can eat it. You can also stock up on canned or frozen fruits and veggies to round out your meals.

Plan to shop when you aren't hungry. That way you're less likely to buy things you don't need. And when you are in the store, stick to buying only the foods on your list.

Source: American Dietetic Association

Success comes from planning. That's true even when it comes to eating well. Planning ahead and making a grocery list can help you feed your family a nutritious, balanced diet.

Join our Weight Watchers® program

Have you ever thought of joining Weight Watchers?

Kern Family Health Care has teamed up with Weight Watchers. Members can learn tips for healthy eating, cooking and exercising.

Who can join?

Any member who needs to

lose weight can join. Members must be 18 or older. Some members with serious health problems may not be able to join.

How does the program work?

Members who join will be given 10 weeks' worth of vouchers to Weight Watchers. At the end of the program, they will also be given a 30-day gym membership.

How do I join?

Call 1-800-391-2000 and ask for the Health Education Department.

Being overweight can cause health problems like heart disease, high cholesterol and diabetes. Even a little weight loss can lower your risk for many diseases.

Don't wait—join today!

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