

family

health



**Kern Family
Health Care**

The Friendly Face

Fall 2006

questions & answers

Q. My baby has a cold and won't nurse. What should I do?

A. Is your baby 6 months old or younger? If so, you'll need a rubber suction bulb. (You can get one at a drugstore.)

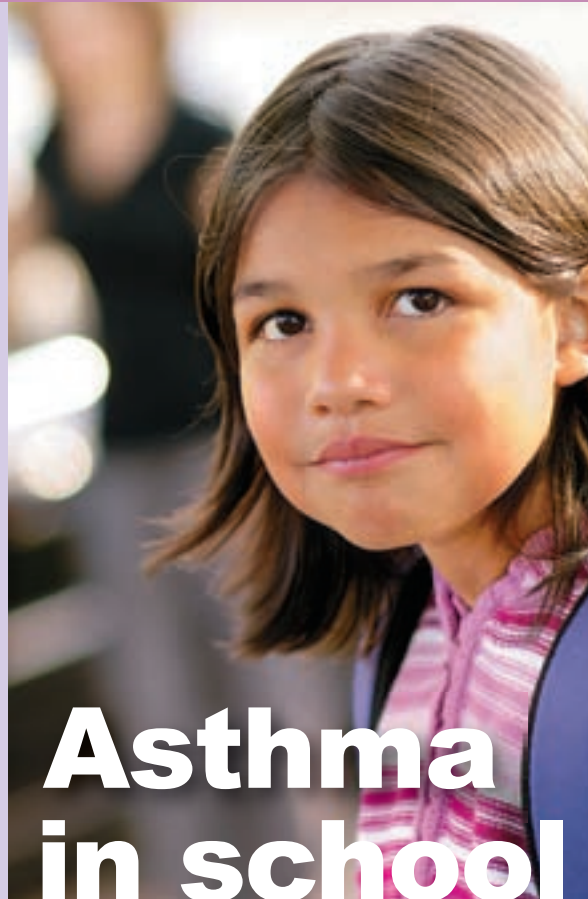
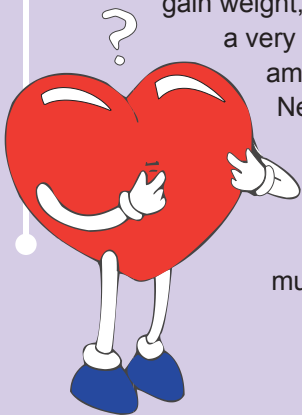
First, squeeze the bulb. Next, gently stick the rubber tip into one of your baby's nostrils. Now slowly let go of the bulb. This slight bit of suction will draw mucus out of your baby's nose, helping your baby breathe comfortably and nurse too. (Be sure to repeat the process on the other nostril.)

Older babies may fight the bulb. Ask your doctor if a vaporizer might help your child breathe easier.

Q. Will taking birth control pills make me gain weight?

A. Not really. If women do gain weight, it's only a very slight amount.

Neither the pill nor the patch affects weight much.



Asthma in school

Asthma attacks can happen anywhere—even in school.

But there are steps you can take if your school-age child has asthma.

To keep your child safe:

- Meet with your child's teachers, coaches and school nurse. Tell them about your child's asthma. Describe the warning signs of an attack in your child.
- Give the school a written plan from a doctor explaining how your child's asthma should be treated.
- Talk to your child. Tell your child to ask a teacher for help if asthma symptoms get worse.
- Be sure your child has his or her asthma medicine at school.
- Watch for signs of trouble. Tell a doctor if your child has a hard time learning, staying alert or having enough

energy. These symptoms may be caused by the medicine your child takes. Your child's asthma may need to be better controlled.

Source: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

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

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Diabetes can cause foot problems

If you have diabetes, take care of your feet.

Diabetes causes blood sugar to be too high. This can damage nerves, causing you to lose feeling in your feet.

When you lose feeling in your feet, you may not know you have a blister or sore, which can get infected. In serious cases, surgery may be needed to remove infected toes or feet. But there are things you can do to take care of your feet. You can:

- Keep your blood sugar level under control.
- Check your feet every day for sores, cuts or other problems.
- Wash your feet every day and dry carefully between your toes.
- Keep your toenails trimmed.
- Wear shoes and socks at all times.



To learn more, call our Health Education Department today at 1-800-391-2000.

- Take part in activities that are easy on your feet, such as walking and swimming.
- Avoid running and jumping, which can be hard on your feet.
- Rub lotion over the tops and bottoms of your feet, but not between your toes.
- Don't let your feet get too hot or too cold.

It's also a good idea to have your doctor check your feet regularly.

If you lose feeling in your feet or have other foot problems, see your doctor right away.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Keep your cholesterol in check

If you have diabetes, you may have a problem with cholesterol, a type of fat in your blood.

Diabetes raises your risk of heart attack and stroke. If your cholesterol is high, you have a bigger risk.

There are two types of cholesterol—good and bad. Not enough of the good kind or too much of the bad kind can block your blood vessels.

Doctors check cholesterol levels with blood tests. If you have diabetes, you should have your cholesterol checked at least once a year.

To keep your cholesterol at a healthy level:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Keep active every day.
- Don't smoke.

Your doctor also may have you take medicine to help.

Source: American Diabetes Association



Protect yourself from flu and pneumonia

Getting the flu or pneumonia is bad for anyone. If you have diabetes, it can be worse.

With diabetes, you're more likely to get very ill or die from these diseases.

But you can get shots that will protect you from flu and pneumonia.

It's best to get a flu shot in the early fall. You should get one every year.

You can get a pneumonia shot any time of the year. You can also get it when you get your flu shot. One pneumonia shot is usually enough to protect you all your life.

If you have questions about these shots, talk to your doctor.



Depression: What you should know

Your parents wonder why you don't want to eat. Maybe your friends say you get angry over nothing. And you just want to be left alone.

When a friend talks about suicide

Do you have a friend who talks about suicide? If so, listen. People who commit suicide often talk about it first.

Here's how you can help:

- Ask your friend if he or she is thinking about suicide.
- Listen carefully.
- Tell the person that you and others care and want to help.

Is it depression?

If this sounds like you or someone you know, the problem could be depression. It's more than just feeling blue once in a while. It's feeling sad and hopeless most of the time. People who are depressed may also:

- Cry a lot.
- Have trouble focusing and remembering.
- Sleep a lot more or a lot less than usual.
- Think about death a lot, or say they wish they were dead.
- Lose interest in things they usually like to do.
- Have stomachaches and headaches.
- Lose or gain weight.

Anyone can get depressed, even children. It can happen when there are family problems, such as divorce, or when someone you love dies.

Sometimes other people in the family are depressed too.

Getting help

If you think you or someone you know might be depressed, tell

- Keep medicines and weapons away from your friend.
- Help your friend make an appointment with a mental health expert. Offer to go along.
- Your friend may be thinking about suicide if he or she:
 - Seems to be down.
 - Stays away from friends.
 - Talks about death.

Pay attention. Your friend needs help, and you can make the difference.

an adult you trust. They can help you find treatment that works.

Counseling can help you change the way you think and act. And medicines can help you feel better.

Don't ignore depression, in a friend or in yourself.

Don't ignore depression, in a friend or in yourself.

The sooner you get help, the sooner you can start to feel better.

Source: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Teen driving tips

If you're like most teens, you couldn't wait to drive.

Now that you're finally behind the wheel, play it safe.

To avoid accidents:

Practice, practice, practice. You're a beginning driver. So it's easy to make mistakes.

Along with driver ed classes, get experience driving in all sorts of conditions.

Don't carry too many passengers. The more people in your car, the harder it is to concentrate.

Don't drive after 9 p.m. (That's unless you're practicing nighttime driving with your mom or dad.)

You're twice as likely to be in a fatal crash at night as you are during the day.

Always buckle up. Too many teens leave seat belts unbuckled. Don't be one of them.

Never drink alcohol and drive. Even a small amount of alcohol can be risky when you drive.

CUT AND SAVE



When to go to the ER

Sometimes cuts and scrapes can be cared for at home. Other times, such injuries need expert care.

You should go to the emergency room (ER) for help if you or a loved one has a serious injury or illness. That means it could threaten your life or cause lasting harm.

These types of problems should be treated at the ER:

- Cuts or burns that are large or deep.
- Broken bones.
- Bleeding that won't stop.
- Breathing problems.
- Seizures.
- Head injuries along with losing consciousness, not thinking clearly, a bad headache or vomiting.
- Drug overdose.
- Pain that is severe or won't go away.
- Trouble moving or feeling after an injury.

Call **911** or go to the nearest ER right away. If you aren't sure if it's an emergency, call our 24-hour nurse advice line at **1-800-391-2000**.



We speak your language

When you're sick, it often helps to see a doctor. And the easier the doctor is to talk to, the better.

But talking with a doctor can be hard if he or she doesn't speak the language you know best.

Check your *Provider Directory* for information about the languages spoken by our participating providers and their staff. Our Member Services staff can help you find a health care provider who speaks your language or who has a regular interpreter available.

It is important for you to know that you do not have to use family members or friends as interpreters. If you cannot find a health care provider who meets your language needs, we can help.

We offer:

- Staff members who are bilingual in English and Spanish.
- Over-the-phone language interpreters for more than 150 languages.
- Sign language interpreters.

- After-hours interpreting services provided by contracted emergency and urgent care providers.

By offering these services to you, we make sure the doctor knows what you're saying and you know what the doctor is saying. With an interpreter's help, you can get answers to all of your questions.

These services are **free** and easy to use. Just call our toll-free number, **1-800-391-2000**, day or night.

Member rights

If you have a service or quality of care complaint against Kern Family Health Care or a provider, call us first at **1-800-391-2000**.

You may call the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) for help if:

- You are not happy with Kern

Family Health Care's decision.

- Your grievance is an emergency.
- It has not been resolved in 30 days.

The DMHC's toll-free number is **1-888-HMO-2219 (1-888-466-2219)**. Its TDD line (for people with hearing and speech impairments) is **1-877-688-9891**. You may also call the DHS Office of the Ombudsman toll-free at **1-888-452-8609**.

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FAMILY HEALTH is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of KERN FAMILY HEALTH CARE, 9700 Stockdale Highway, Bakersfield, CA 93311, telephone 1-800-391-2000.

Information in FAMILY HEALTH 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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