

family health

Questions & Answers

**Q. What is a mammogram?
How do I know if I need one?**

A. A mammogram is an x-ray of the breasts. It helps find breast cancer early, when it can be easier to treat.

Most women over 40 should have mammograms every two years. You should ask your primary care provider to see if you may need one more often.

**Q. I want to stop smoking.
Where can I get help?**

A. Your provider can help you make a plan to quit.

You may not be able to quit on the first try, but don't give up. Set a quit date, and ask your family and friends for support. Quitting may do more than save money—it may save your life.

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

Avoid the flu

Nobody wants to catch the flu. But it can sweep through a family. One person gets sick, and before you know it—coughs, fevers and sore throats for all.

And this isn't the worst of it.

The flu can lead to pneumonia. You might have to stay in the hospital. Some people, such as kids younger than 5 and adults older than 50, have a high risk of serious problems from the flu.

The best way to keep from catching the flu is to get a flu shot every year. Talk to your provider about getting a flu shot for everyone in your family. These healthy habits can help too:

» Wash your hands often. Use



soap, then rinse under running water. » Try to stay away from sick people. » Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth. » Eat healthy foods. » Get plenty of exercise. » Get enough sleep.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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

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**Call the California Smoker's
Helpline at 800-NO-BUTTS
(800-662-8887).**

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Primary care providers

Your first stop for health care

When you or your child needs medical care, where do you turn?

You want someone you can trust. You want someone who knows about your health or your child's health. You want someone you are comfortable talking to.

Using your ID card

Your ID card is your key to getting health care. Be sure to bring it with you every time you see your provider or get any other health services.

To protect your ID card, don't let anyone else use it. Call Member Services at 800-391-2000 if your card is lost or stolen. Also call if you change your name, address or phone number. We will tell you what you need to do to get a new ID card.

For most people, that person is a primary care provider (PCP).

Think of a PCP as the head of your health team. He or she takes care of most of your health problems. And your PCP can send you or your child to a specialist if needed.

Examples of PCPs are:

- Family doctors, who care for people of all ages. They focus on helping you stay well.
- Pediatricians, who treat children and young adults.
- OB/GYNs, who take care of women.
- Internists, who treat adults.
- Nurse practitioners, who help you stay well and teach you how to take care of yourself. They focus on many areas of medicine, such as



■ ■ When you or a family member is sick, your provider is the first person you turn to.

taking care of families or women. And they treat many health problems.

Remember, your PCP is the first stop for health care when you or a family member is sick.

To find a PCP, call Member Services.

Getting started with a new provider

When you join our health plan or change providers, you need to follow these steps:

- Choose a provider from our directory.
- Call the provider's office. Ask if he or she is taking new patients. If not, choose someone else.

■ Make an appointment.

At your first visit, your provider may give you a physical exam. He or she will also ask about any health problems you and close family members have or have had. This will help your provider

understand your health now and what to watch for in the future.

Also, take a list of:

- Shots you've had and when you had them.
- Any allergies or drugs that have given you bad reactions.
- Questions you want to ask.

To find a provider, call Member Services.



Help your baby have a safe sleep

SIDS is a mystery. SIDS is short for *sudden infant death syndrome*. When a baby younger than a year old dies for no clear reason, it's called SIDS.

No one knows exactly what causes SIDS. But we do know that some things make it more likely.

Breathing secondhand smoke, for example, raises a baby's risk of SIDS.

We also know some things that lower the likelihood of SIDS.

Here are some steps you can take to help keep your baby safe:

Go back to sleep. The safest way for a baby to sleep is on his or her back, not side or stomach.

Keep baby nearby. The safest place for a baby to sleep is in your room, near—but not in—your bed.



Make the sleep area safe. A crib with a firm mattress is likely the

safest sleep area. Be sure the crib is safety-approved.

Remove soft items. Clear the area of toys, blankets, pillows and other soft items at sleep time. They could block your baby's breathing.

Keep air flowing. A crib with slats or mesh sides helps air flow around your baby. You might want to use a fan in the room too.

Control the heat. Don't let the room—or your baby—get too hot.

Sources: First Candle; American Academy of Pediatrics

Overwhelmed? It may be time to call a friend

Being a parent is a full-time job. Sometimes it's the best job in the world. At other times it can be the hardest.

So when was the last time you took a break from it?

As a parent, you get frustrated. You get mad. That's normal.

If it happens too often, though, it may be a sign that you need to take time off.

If you're upset that your baby won't stop crying, call a friend for help. Ask a relative to babysit while you take a walk.

Reach out for help before you act out of anger.

And remember that it's never OK to shake a baby. Even a few seconds of shaking can seriously hurt a baby's brain. Talk with your provider if you feel overwhelmed.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians

Breastfeeding—good for moms, babies

Breastfeeding is good for your baby. And it's good for you too.

Breastfeeding:

- Gives important vitamins and other nutrients to help your baby grow.
- Helps keep your baby healthy. Breastfed babies don't get sick as often as formula-fed babies do.
- Helps you lose pregnancy weight faster.
- Lowers your risk for breast

cancer and other cancers.

Plus, you don't have to buy formula. And there are no bottles to warm. You can feed your baby right away when he or she is hungry.

Of course, not everyone chooses to breastfeed. And some women may not be able to breastfeed because of health problems.

Source: National Women's Health Information Center

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take You can find other safe sleeping options at www.cpsc.gov/cribs.html.

Are your kidneys working as well as they should?

Your kidneys need help to stay in good shape. Here are some things to keep in mind.

First, know that diabetes and high blood pressure can hurt your kidneys. These conditions are the main causes of kidney disease.

If you have diabetes, work with your health care team to keep it under control.

You will need to: » Eat well.

» Get plenty of exercise.

» Take medicine and track your blood sugar level as your provider tells you to.

You'll also need to have your blood pressure checked regularly. Ask your provider how often to have it checked

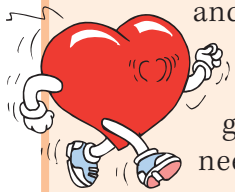
and what your pressure should be. To meet your goal, you may

need to change your diet and exercise level. And you may have to take medicine.

Other ways to help your kidneys: » Stay at a healthy weight. » Drink plenty of fluids. » Don't smoke.

Talk to your provider about having blood and urine tests to check for kidney disease.

Even if you have kidney disease now, these steps can help protect your kidneys.



Kidneys work hard to keep blood clean

Cleaning waste from your blood is a dirty job. But it's one done daily by two hardworking, fist-size organs in the middle of your back—your kidneys.

Healthy kidneys sift through about 200 quarts of blood every day. They remove about 2 quarts of materials your body doesn't need.

This waste comes from the normal breakdown of the body's tissues and from the food you eat.

The waste goes from the kidneys to the bladder and later leaves the body as urine.

That's not all. Kidneys also keep chemicals like sodium and potassium in the right balance. Kidneys also release hormones that:

- Prompt bone marrow to make red blood cells.
- Keep calcium levels normal, to keep bones healthy.
- Control blood pressure.

For the most part, the kidneys go about their chores quietly. Most people don't even notice them.

That can be true even if there are problems. Most kidney diseases occur silently. Damage can go on for years before it's found, often with blood and urine tests.



As kidney disease gets worse, you may: » Use the bathroom more or less often. » Feel tired. » Feel itchy. » Lose your appetite. » Have swollen or numb feet or hands.

The two main causes of kidney trouble are high blood pressure and diabetes.

The two main causes of kidney trouble are high blood pressure and diabetes. If you have either condition, ask your provider what you can do to control it. This can help your kidneys last longer.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Self-control

Kids need to have limits

It is a scene played out countless times in stores across America: the middle-of-the-aisle meltdown.

The scene stars one small child who stubbornly—and loudly—insists on having that box of cereal, no matter what. And who gets louder yet and loses control when told no. And who cries and screams something like, “I want it! I want it! I want it now!”

Embarrassing—yes.

But this can also be a time for both parent and child to learn



about limits and self-control.

From that store aisle to their annual list of birthday wishes, children want what they want when they want it. Kids who are not given limits have a hard time

■ ■ **Set limits and help your children become healthy adults.**

copied when they have to wait for something they want or when they are told no.

Parents who set limits help their children grow into healthy adults, because limits:

- Help a child learn what is and is not a good way to behave.
- Give a child a clear picture of the boundaries and rules. This helps a child feel secure.
- Help a child feel in control of his or her actions. This can help a child develop self-esteem.

To set limits and help your child gain self-control:

- Let your child know clearly what you expect. And be sure that what you ask your child to do is right for your child’s age.
- Be consistent. Children like to test rules. Be patient and stick to it.



Safety tips for shopping trips

Your biggest concern when you shop for

groceries may be how much you spend for that cart of goods.

But if you take your kids shopping with you, their safety should also be a concern, especially if you let them ride in the shopping cart. Falls can happen fast. So keep these tips in mind:

- Never leave your child in the cart when you’re not standing right by it.

- Always use the cart’s safety strap. Don’t let your child stand in the cart, ride in the basket or stand on the side of the cart.
- When you can, use a cart made for kids, such as a pretend car. This lets your child ride closer to the ground and can help protect him or her from a bad fall.
- Don’t put a baby carrier on top of a shopping cart.
- Have an adult push the shopping cart. Older kids may like to push the cart, but a cart is easy to tip over.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Department of Education

Help stop fraud

When people aren't honest, it can be fraud. Fraud can increase health care costs for all of us.

You can help us stop fraud and keep costs down. Here are some things that may be health care fraud.

- Letting someone use a member ID card that doesn't belong to him or her.
- Giving wrong information on forms.
- Trying to get benefits that a person shouldn't receive.
- Trying to get medicines that a doctor didn't order.
- Forcing people to pay more for medical care than they should.
- Charging too much money for medicine at a drugstore.
- Giving people treatments that they don't really need.

These can be serious problems. If you think someone may be misusing benefits or not telling the



truth in order to gain something, call us.

If you tell us when you think someone is doing something wrong, we'll try to find out if it's true. And if it is, we'll fix the problem. But we won't tell anyone that you talked to us. Your name will be kept private.

Be sure to call if something doesn't seem right. With your help, we can protect people from fraud.

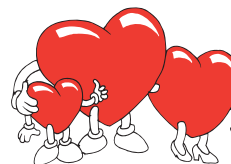
Unhappy with your care? We want to hear from you

If you have a service or quality-of-care complaint against Kern Family Health Care or a provider, call us first at **800-391-2000** or visit our website, www.kernfamilyhealthcare.com.

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

- Your grievance is an emergency.
- You are not happy with Kern Family Health Care's decision.
- It has not been resolved in 30 days.

The DMHC's toll-free number is **888-HMO-2219 (888-466-2219)**.



Its TDD line (for people with hearing and

speech impairments) is **877-688-9891**. You may also call the DHCS Office of the Ombudsman toll-free at **888-452-8609**.

Visit Kern Family Health Care on the web

You can:

- Find a doctor.
- Learn about your health care benefits.
- Find important member materials that are mailed to you.

■ Find out about your rights and responsibilities.

■ File a grievance (complaint).

We are happy to provide a website for our members and providers. You can visit us on the

web 24 hours a day, seven days a week for answers to your questions, to download member materials, and much more! Please visit us at www.kernfamilyhealthcare.com. We hope you enjoy your visit and find our website useful.

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