

family health



Adults can get asthma too

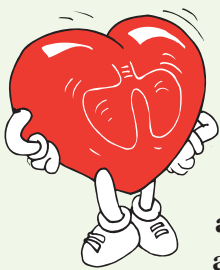
Asthma Classes

Get a free gift

Kern Family Health Care has free asthma classes for adult members through the Breathe

Well, Live Well Program.

Members can get a free spacer, peak-flow meter and \$20 gift for attending!



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To find out more or to be referred to a class, please call 800-391-2000 and ask for the Health Education Department.

Viruses, such as the flu, also seem to bring on asthma in adults. Colds that often go to the chest can be a warning sign of asthma.

Signs of asthma

You might have asthma if you:

- Cough.
- Have chest tightness.
- Have problems breathing.
- Wheeze.
- Get short of breath after exercise.

Any disease that makes it hard to breathe is serious. So it's important to see your doctor if you think you have asthma. Your doctor can check how well your lungs are working.

If you have asthma, there are ways to control it. You can limit contact with anything you might be allergic to. Medicines also can help you breathe easier. And your doctor can give you a plan to manage your asthma.

Source: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

You might think of asthma as a child's disease. And it is.

But millions of adults have it too. Many of them don't start having problems breathing until they reach their 50s or later.

Causes of asthma

No one is sure why some people get asthma when they're older. Asthma can be brought on by allergies after years of contact with such things as: » Smoke. » Mold. » Feathered bedding. » Dust.

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



Checkups for preteens

Why older kids still need checkups

Your child is almost a teen. So you might think he or she doesn't need regular checkups.

But checkups are important for older kids too. Even kids who are healthy and strong.

Why checkups are needed

The preteen checkup is for 11- and 12-year-olds. This is a good time to make sure your child is healthy.

It's also important to check that your preteen has had these shots:

- Chickenpox.
- Hepatitis B.
- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella).

These vaccines can help prevent serious diseases. Your child may have already had these shots at a younger age. But this is a good time to make sure your preteen is up-to-date.

There are also some vaccines just for 11- and 12-year-olds. At this age, kids start middle school and may go to camps. This can raise their risk for getting different diseases.

Checkups are important even when kids are healthy.

MCV4. This vaccine can help protect your child from a serious infection called meningitis. It can cause serious health problems, such as hearing loss. Meningitis can also cause death.

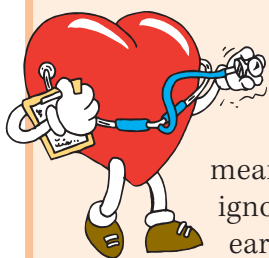
Tdap booster. This vaccine protects against tetanus, whooping cough and diphtheria. Whooping cough is very contagious.

HPV vaccine (for girls). HPV stands for *human papillomavirus*. This shot helps protect against the virus that can cause cervical cancer.

If your preteen hasn't seen the doctor in a while, schedule a checkup soon.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

When an earache might be trouble



Ear infections are part of life for kids. But that doesn't mean you should ignore a child's earache.

When a child has ear pain—especially with fever, trouble hearing or fluid coming from the ear—call a doctor. Being fussy or tugging at an ear might be signs that a young child's ear hurts.

Sometimes doctors wait for ear infections to get better on

their own. Other times, they'll give your child antibiotics.

The doctor might also suggest:

- Medicine, such as Children's Motrin or Children's Tylenol.
- A warm heating pad.
- Ear drops.

To prevent ear problems:

- Breastfeed new babies for at least six months.
- Keep your child away from tobacco smoke.
- Ask a doctor about a shot that may help.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

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To learn more about kids' health, go to the American Academy of Pediatrics website at www.aap.org.

Try not to miss your doctor visits



It's one date you don't want to miss—your doctor visit. Getting all the checkups and screenings you need can help you stay healthy.

It may take awhile to set up a new appointment, so try not to miss these visits.

If you can't make it, call your doctor's office as soon as you can.

This way, the office can set aside the time for another patient. And they can set up a new time for you.

If you miss a visit and don't call your doctor's office, a doctor may decide not to see you again.

Have a calendar handy and

mark appointments down as soon as you make them. That can help you remember when you have one scheduled.

So try to keep your visits, and try to show up on time. It's part of staying well.

Your health information stays private

It's your health.

And information about it should stay private.

Only those involved in your care need to know what medicines

you use or what conditions you have.

That's why there are laws to protect your privacy.

Know your rights

These laws limit who can see your health information. The laws protect:

- Your health records.
- Talks with your doctor.
- Insurance information.
- Billing details.

Unless you approve, health information can't be shared with:

- Your place of work.
- Advertisers that send out marketing materials. This includes health plans and pharmacies.

Information can be shared:

- With loved ones involved in your care.
- With your doctor and health care team.
- With office staff who process

medical bills.

- To protect public health in a flu outbreak or other serious event.

The laws give you the right to:

- See copies of your health records.
- Learn when and why your information is being shared.

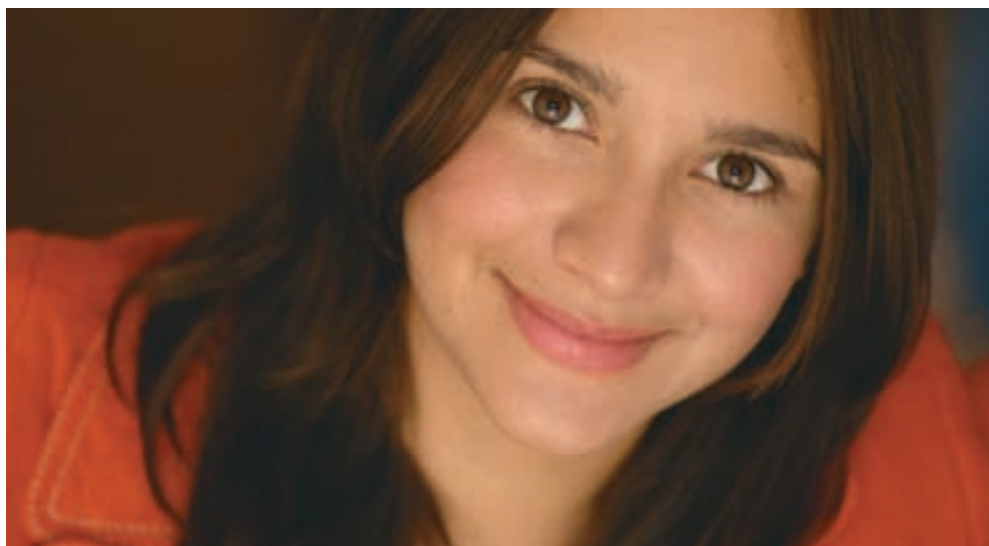
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learn

We want to protect your rights. If you have any concerns about privacy, call Member Services at 800-391-2000.



Preparing for your Pap test



It takes only a few moments of your time. But a Pap test can save a woman's life.

Here's why:

A Pap test can find early signs of cancer in the cervix, the lower part of the womb. Cancer of the cervix is common in women. But when it's caught early, the chance of curing this cancer is very high.

Even better, a Pap test can find abnormal cells in the cervix before they turn into cancer. Treatment

can help keep cancer from ever developing.

To protect your health, you need regular Pap tests if you are:

- 21 or older.
- Under 21 but started having sex three or more years ago.

Ask your doctor how often you should be tested.

Your role

Some things can cause wrong results from a Pap test.

To be sure your next Pap test is accurate:

- Have the test when you don't have your period.
- Try to be tested 10 to 20 days after the first day of your last period.

Also, for two days before your Pap test, don't:

- Have sex.
- Use tampons.
- Use any kind of vaginal douche, cream or medicine.

Remember, with regular Pap tests, cervical cancer can often be prevented.

Source: National Women's Health Information Center

How to avoid a UTI

A urinary tract infection—or UTI—is something you don't want.



A UTI can:

- Make it sting when you urinate.
- Make you need to go a lot.
- Make you feel like you need to urinate, even when you can't.

- Make your urine bloody.

A UTI can happen when bacteria get into your bladder. That may happen during sex.

It can also happen when you wipe after a bowel movement.

The good news: Most UTIs aren't serious. But they do need treatment.

A UTI can be treated with antibiotics. So be sure to let your doctor know if you think you might have one.

Some simple steps can help prevent a UTI:

- Don't wait to urinate when you need to go.
- Always go before and after sex.
- Always wipe from front to back after a bowel movement.
- Drink lots of water every day. This can help your body get rid of bacteria that could cause a UTI.
- Wear underwear with cotton lining.
- Don't use vaginal douches or sprays.

Source: National Women's Health Information Center

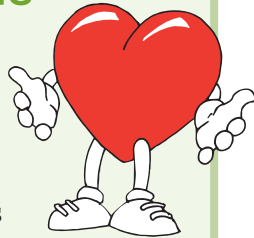
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For more information about women's health, visit the National Women's Health Information Center website at www.4women.gov.

Protect kids from burns

Burns can be very dangerous for kids. Their skin is thin and burns faster than an adult's.



Anything that gets hot can cause burns. In the house, the list includes:

- Heaters.
- Ovens and stovetops.
- Electrical cords and outlets.
- Hot foods.
- Hot tap water.
- Hair curlers or curling irons.
- Fireworks.
- Flames from fires, candles, matches or cigarette lighters.

To protect your child:

- Don't hold your child and carry something hot at the same time.
- Test food or bottles before giving them to your child to make sure they're not too hot.
- Keep hot items, such as irons and coffee pots, away from the edge of a table.
- Turn pot handles inward, or heat pots on back burners.
- Check bath water on your wrist before bathing your child.
- Set water heaters to 120 degrees or less.
- Put safety plugs in wall outlets. Keep electrical cords out of reach.
- Keep matches and lighters where kids can't reach them.

Sources: Home Safety Council; Safe Kids Worldwide



About abuse

What it is and how to protect yourself

Someone who loves you should not hurt you.

But each year, many women are hurt by their husbands, boyfriends and ex-partners. Many men also get hurt.

Abuse can be physical. It involves shoving, kicking, beating—or worse.

But abuse takes other forms too. Does your partner make threats? Does he or she always criticize you? That's emotional abuse.

Does your partner force you to do things sexually that you don't want to do? That's sexual abuse.

Facing the truth

Admitting you are abused can be painful.

But remember:

- Someone who hurts you may hurt your children.
- Abusers often get more violent.
- Abuse can get worse if you're pregnant.
- You're not the one with a problem. Your partner is.

Getting help

If you are abused, let someone know. Consider turning to:

Your doctor. Your doctor can treat any health problems caused by the abuse. He or she may also help you find an emergency shelter or counseling services.

A trusted friend. Keep a bag of your belongings at a friend's house. Include cash, credit cards and other things you'll need if you have to leave your home quickly.

The police. Call **911** if you are in danger.

Sources: American Psychiatric Association; National Women's Health Information Center

To learn more or for help, please call the:

- Alliance Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault at **661-327-1091** (24-hour hotline).
- Women's Center High Desert at **760-375-7525**.
- Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance at **661-325-5943**.

Be a part of your health plan!



Kern Health Systems (KHS) is the local initiative health plan that was created by the Kern County Board of Supervisors in April 1993. Through our Kern Family Health Care (KFHC) product, we are dedicated to improving the health status of our members through an integrated, managed health care delivery system.

Currently we provide medical care to more than 105,000 people in our community. These people choose KFHC as their health plan for Medi-Cal or the Healthy Families Program in Kern County.

Since we are the local health

**We hope to hear from you.
You can make a difference!**

plan in Kern County, community involvement and participation in KHS is important to us. Our structure provides a chance for providers, KFHC members and local community members to discuss issues related to the provision of health care services through KHS.

Your input is important to us! If you are a member of KFHC, or you're a parent or guardian of a child who is, you can participate

in the decision making processes at KHS by serving on our Board of Directors or one of the

Board subcommittees, where you will have the opportunity to represent our members and those who use our services.

» a leader

become

Meet with others who care about the community. If you are interested in representing your fellow KFHC members, please call us at 661-664-5120.

Member rights

If you have a service or quality of care complaint against Kern

Family Health Care (KFHC) or a provider, please call us first at **800-391-2000**.



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

- Your grievance is an emergency.
- You are not happy with KFHC's decision.
- Your grievance 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**.