

# family health



**Kern Family  
Health Care**  
*The Friendly Face*  
Of Kern Health Systems

Winter 2008

things to know

## High cholesterol

Our veins and arteries are like a highway for blood. But sometimes there's a traffic jam.

This can happen if we have too much cholesterol.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance in the blood. If there's too much, it can build up inside your arteries. This makes it hard for blood to pass through and could cause a heart attack.

To control or prevent high cholesterol:

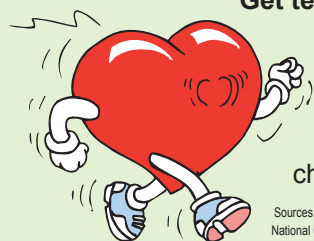
**Watch what you eat.** Limit foods high in cholesterol and fat. These include meat, egg yolks, dairy products and baked goods. Choose lean meat and low-fat or nonfat milk and cheese.

**Keep an eye on your weight.** Being too heavy raises your cholesterol level.

**Stay fit.** Get 30 minutes of brisk exercise, such as walking, five days a week. Also do strength exercise, such as lifting weights, twice a week.

**Get tested.** Ask your doctor about checking your cholesterol.

Sources: American Heart Association;  
National Cholesterol Education Program



## When your child needs medicine



When your child is sick, it could be a big mistake to head to the medicine cabinet. Over-the-counter cough and cold medicines for kids can have major side effects and may not be helpful in children younger than 6 years old. Parents should never give adult medicine to children. Over-the-counter medicines should only be given when prescribed by a doctor.

To help ease your child's cold symptoms:

- Use saline (salt water) drops to relieve a stuffy nose. Avoid drops that contain medicine.

- Use a suction bulb to clear the nose of infants up to 6 months old.
- Place a humidifier in the child's room.
- Offer the child lots of fluids.
- Give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (such as Motrin) to relieve a fever. Never give aspirin to children.

Call your child's doctor if:

- You have questions about any medicine.
- You are unsure of how much medicine to give.
- Your child's health gets worse.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

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

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Tacoma, WA  
Permit No. 1066

A safety  
guide by age

## Keep your child safe



Kids are natural explorers. And since they can't judge what is dangerous, it's our job as parents to keep them from getting hurt.

Follow these steps from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

### Birth to age 2

- Always use a car seat. Secure it in the back seat, facing backwards until your child is both 1 year old and weighs at least 20 pounds. After that, your child can face forward in a car seat, but leave it in the back seat.
- Put babies to sleep on their backs, even for a nap. This helps protect them from sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS.
- Keep small objects out of your baby's reach. That includes foods like popcorn and grapes.
- Don't leave children alone around pools, bathtubs or even buckets that have water in them. Kids can drown in less than 2 inches of water.
- Tie window cords high and out of reach. Children can choke in them.
- Keep medicines and cleaning

products out of sight and out of reach.

- Keep any guns unloaded and locked away.

### Ages 3 to 6

- Make sure your child always wears a helmet when riding a bike and doesn't ride or play in the street.
- Don't let your child swim or play around water unless an adult is within reach.

*You can help prevent  
most childhood injuries.*

- Teach your child to look both ways when crossing the street and to always cross with a grown-up.
- Keep your child in a car seat as long as possible before switching to a booster seat.

### Ages 7 to 10

- Make sure your child wears the right protective gear for sports.
- Find out if there are guns where your child visits and how they are stored.

## Kids need calcium

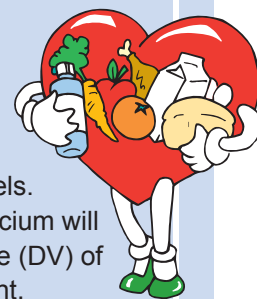
Childhood is prime time for building strong bones. And calcium is a very important part of that process.

Kids need the following milligrams of calcium each day:

- 500 until age 3.
- 800 between ages 4 and 8.
- 1,300 between ages 9 and 18.

To help your kids get enough calcium, try these ideas:

- Read food labels. Foods high in calcium will have a daily value (DV) of at least 20 percent.
- Serve a calcium-rich food with each meal and snack. Yogurt, milk and cheese are quick and easy choices. (For kids older than 2, choose low-fat or fat-free dairy.)
- Try soy milk or orange juice with added calcium. Some kids can't or won't drink milk.
- Sneak in calcium. Make smoothies with milk or yogurt. Whip up soup, cocoa or oatmeal with milk instead of water.
- Serve kid-friendly foods such as pudding, cheese pizza, frozen yogurt, string cheese or cereal with milk.



Sources: National Institutes of Health

- Teach your child to always buckle up the car safety belt.

You can help prevent most injuries and teach your child to be safe as he or she grows up.



## Why eye exams are important

When was the last time you had your eyes checked?

You can have some kinds of eye problems and not know it. You may be able to see fine and have no pain.

That's why children and adults need to have their eyes screened. If a problem is found early, it can often be treated.

### Children

In the first few months, babies' doctors will check their eyes.

At about 3 years, children should have their vision tested.

Older children and teens should have their eyes checked every one to two years when they see their doctor.

### Adults

Adults with healthy eyes should see an eye doctor for an exam every five to 10 years.

After age 40, you need an exam every two to four years.

People 65 and older should be checked every one to two years.

You should have your eyes

checked more often if you:

- Have had an eye injury.
- Have a family history of eye problems.
- Are black and older than 40.
- Have diabetes.

Sources: American Academy of Ophthalmology; American Optometric Association



To learn more about how to take care of your eyes, go to [www.eyecareamerica.org](http://www.eyecareamerica.org).

## Protect your eyes

Safety goggles can prevent most eye injuries. It's important to wear them when you:

- Play sports.
- Work on cars.
- Work in a home workshop or garage.
- Use power tools.
- Do high-risk jobs, like construction or using machines.

Also take care when you: **Clean the house.** Chemicals from cleaners can burn your eyes. Point nozzles away from you before



## Glaucoma screenings

Glaucoma causes extra fluid to build up in your eyes. This can harm the nerves in your eyes.

You may not feel pain or notice that you can't see well. But slowly you may lose your sight and go blind.

People older than 40 need to see an eye doctor to get checked for glaucoma. If it is treated early, your sight may be saved.

You're at high risk if you:

- Are older than 60.
- Are black and older than 40.
- Have a family history of the disease.
- Have other health problems, like diabetes.

Treatment includes pills or eyedrops. In some cases, surgery may be needed.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Academy of Ophthalmology; National Institutes of Health

spraying. Open windows to let in air.

**Go outdoors.** Wear sunglasses. Ultraviolet rays from the sun can harm your eyes.

Also remember eye safety when you choose toys for your children. Don't get toys that have parts that stick out or are sharp. Teach your kids how to use pencils, scissors and forks so they don't hurt their eyes.

If you or someone else gets an eye injury, get medical help right away.

Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology



pregnant, breastfeeding or have children younger than 5 years old. You must also meet certain income guidelines. To find out if WIC can help you or your family, talk to your doctor. You can also call **888-WIC-WORKS (888-942-9675)**.

On Aug. 1, 2007, the WIC program changed their brand of formulas. WIC will now provide the following formulas to their clients:

- Cow milk-based: Enfamil LIPIL with Iron.
- Enfamil LactoFree LIPIL.
- Enfamil Gentlease LIPIL (replaces Nestle Good Start Supreme).
- Enfamil A.R. LIPIL.
- Soy-based: Enfamil ProSobee LIPIL.

It is best to feed your baby when he or she is hungry. Most babies will change to a new formula without any problems. If you are having trouble, be patient and give your baby time to adjust. Always talk with your WIC staff or baby's doctor if you are having problems with the formula. They are there to help. You can learn ways to help your baby adjust to the new formula.

Source: California WIC

## Families grow healthy with WIC

Getting the foods that can keep you and your kids healthy isn't always easy. That's where WIC can help. WIC is a program that can provide you with ways to get healthy foods and teach you about eating well. For years,

WIC has helped families eat well, be active and stay healthy. WIC stands for Women, Infants and Children. WIC can help buy milk, juice, eggs, cheese, cereal, dry beans, peas, tuna and peanut butter. To qualify, you must be

### Member rights

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**.

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.
- Your complaint 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 DHS Office of the Ombudsman toll-free at **888-452-8609**.

### Editorial Board

CEO

Medical Director

Quality Improvement Manager

Carol Sorrell, R.N.

Lon A. Graves, M.D., FACOG

Louis Iturriria

Linda Howells, R.N.