

Measles and the vaccine (shot) that prevents it

The best way to protect against measles is to get the measles, mumps, and rubella shot (called the MMR shot). Doctors recommend that all children get the MMR shot.

Measles is a serious respiratory disease (in the lungs and breathing tubes) that causes a rash and fever. It is very contagious. In rare cases, it can be deadly. Measles starts

with a fever that can get very high. Some of the other symptoms that may occur are:

- Cough, runny nose and red eyes.
- Rash of tiny red spots that starts at the head and spreads to the rest of the body.
- Diarrhea.
- Ear infection.

Measles spreads when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs or sneezes. It is very contagious. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been and up to two hours after that person is gone. You can also catch measles from an infected person

even before they have a measles rash. Almost everyone who has not had the MMR shot will get measles if they are exposed to the measles virus.

The MMR shot:

- Protects your child from measles, a potentially serious disease (and also protects against mumps and rubella).
- Prevents your child from getting an uncomfortable rash and high fever from measles.
- Keeps your child from missing school or child care (and keeps you from missing work to care for your sick child).

The MMR shot is very safe, and it is effective at preventing measles (as well as mumps and rubella). Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. But most children who get the MMR shot have no side effects.



To learn more about the MMR shot, talk to your child's doctor or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.

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

QUICK TIPS

When talking with your doctor

How well you and your doctor communicate with each other is one of the most important parts of getting good health care. Here are some tips to help you make the most of your visit.

Give information. Don't wait to be asked! Be sure to tell your doctor about any current and past health care issues or concerns. It's important to share any information you can, even if you're embarrassed.

- Tell your doctor about any symptoms you are having, such as urinating more or less often, pain, or unexplained weight loss or gain.

- Tell your doctor if you have had a fall, are feeling sad or have thoughts of hurting yourself.

- Bring a health history list or a health journal with you, and keep it up-to-date. Always bring any medicines you are taking or a list of those medicines. Talk about any allergies or reactions you have had to your medicines.

- Tell your doctor about any vitamins, supplements or herbal products you use.

- Bring any x-ray films, test results or medical records you have.

Ask questions, and get information. Don't be afraid to speak up. If you don't ask questions, your doctor will think you understand what he or she

has told you. Here are some tips on asking your doctor questions during the exam:

- Take notes.

- Ask questions every time you don't understand something.

- Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first.

- You might want to bring a trusted friend or family member along to help you ask questions. This person can also take notes for you.

- Ask your doctor to explain your health screening results, such as blood pressure, blood sugar or cholesterol. Ask about what you can do to improve those results.

- Ask your doctor to draw pictures if that might help explain something.

- Ask your doctor if it's OK to tape-record your visit.

- Let your doctor know if you need more time to talk. If there is no time that day, try to schedule another appointment.

Take information home.

- Ask for written instructions.

- Your doctor may have brochures and other educational materials that can help you. If not, ask how you can get such materials.

Once you leave the doctor's office, follow up.

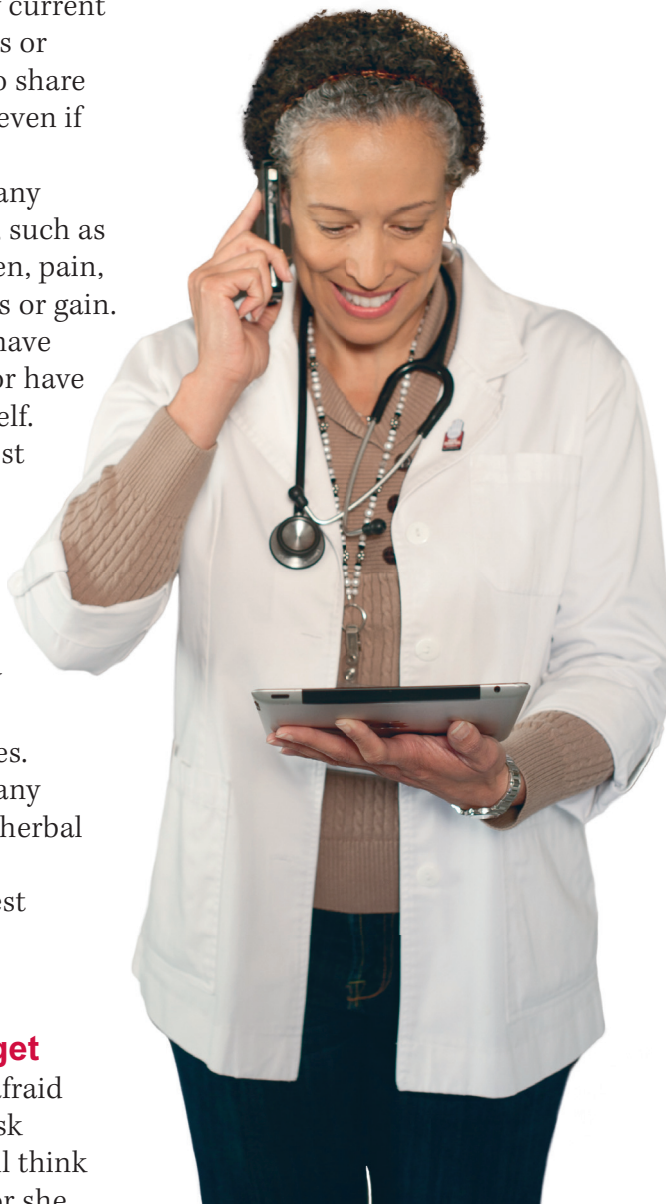
- If you have questions, call.

- If your symptoms get worse or if you have problems with any of your medicines, call.

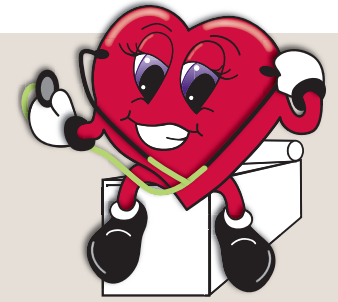
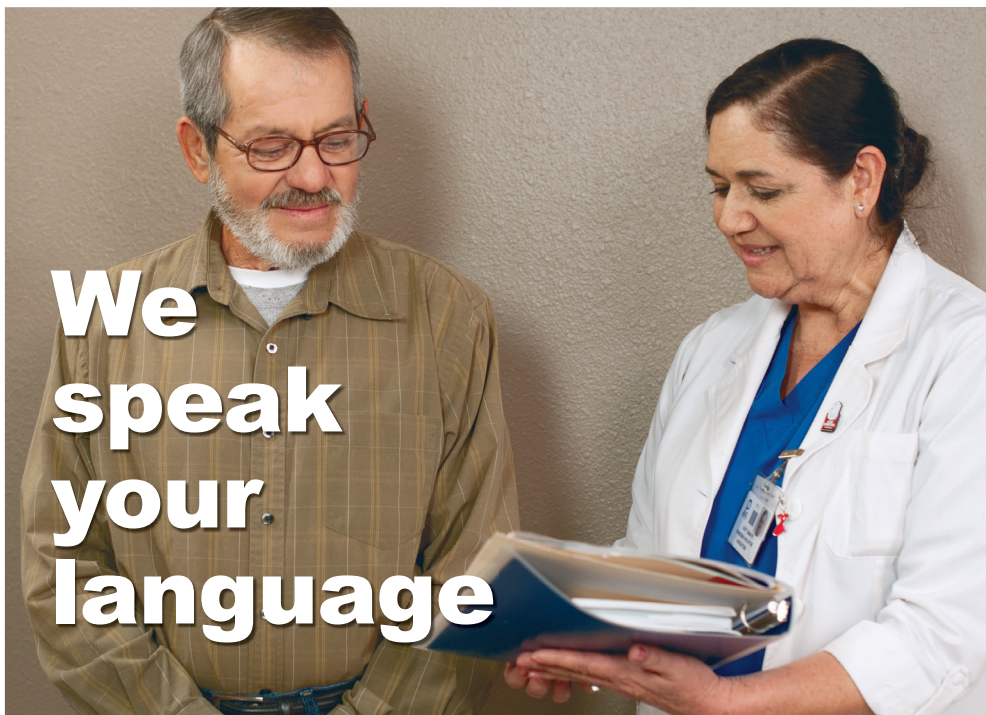
- If you had tests and do not hear from your doctor, call for your test results.

- If your doctor said you need to have certain tests, make appointments to get them done.

- If your doctor said you should see a specialist, make an appointment.



Sources: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; FamilyDoctor.org; Medline Plus; National Institute on Aging



Kern Regional Center special services

Kern Regional Center provides services to people with special needs. Some of the services are:

- Counseling.
- Help with family support.
- Autism screening.

The Kern Early Start program is also offered through Kern Regional Center. It serves children who have special needs from birth until age 3 years. These special needs include:

- Problems due to premature birth.
- Major learning or muscle tone problems.
- Down syndrome.
- Cerebral palsy.

Kern Early Start also helps children who:

- Have been seriously ill.
- Have a developmental delay in areas such as walking or talking.
- Have parents who need help due to their own special needs.

Kern Early Start will work with you and your child. The goal is to increase the child's skills and development. There is no cost to take part.

Take action. To learn more about how Kern Regional Center can help you and your child, call **800-479-9899**.

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 providers and their staff. Our Member Services staff can help you find a doctor's office that speaks your language. They can also get you an interpreter so you can talk to your doctor or to Kern Family Health Care (KFHC).

It is important that you do not use family members, friends or especially children as interpreters.

If you cannot find a doctor 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 200 languages.

■ Sign language interpreters. This must be scheduled five to seven days in advance for regular appointments and as soon as possible for urgent appointments.

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.

It is also important that you read all the materials we mail you. All our written materials are available in English or Spanish. If KFHC sends you something in English and you need it in Spanish, please call us. If you receive an important letter from us and you cannot read it, please call us and we can have somebody help you read it.

It's free! These services are free and easy to use. Just call us at **661-632-1590** (Bakersfield) or **800-391-2000** (outside of Bakersfield), day or night.

HPV: Protect your tween or teen

A vaccine that could protect your child from cancer later in life?

It's the HPV vaccine. And it can do just that.

HPV is a virus that's spread through sexual activity. Nearly everyone is exposed to HPV at some point in their lives.

HPV can cause several types of cancer. One of the most common is cervical cancer.

But the HPV vaccine can help prevent these cancers.

The vaccine is proven safe and effective. It is given in a series of three shots over six months.

WHO NEEDS IT? Boys and girls should get the shots around age 11 or 12. That's the age when the body responds best to the vaccine.

But older kids who missed having the shots still need them. The vaccine is good for boys up to age 21 and for girls up to age 26.

If your child is 11 or older, call his or her provider's office to set up a visit. Let them know you want your child to have the HPV shots.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

» APRIL IS SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AWARENESS MONTH—and a great time to talk to your teen.

TEEN LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Give your child the facts

Teens may pretend that they don't listen to their parents. But they do.

In fact, as a mom or dad, you're the biggest influence in your child's life. So use your power to help your teen be healthy and stay safe.

Talk with your child often—not just once—about risky behaviors. But don't lecture. Instead, share facts to help your teen make safe choices about:

■ **Tobacco, alcohol and drugs.**

Most teens already know that smoking causes cancer. But that might seem like a faraway problem. So tell your teen that smoking stains teeth and can cause bad breath and a nasty cough.

And what about alcohol and drugs? They can hurt your teen's brain and body and make it hard to learn or even play sports.

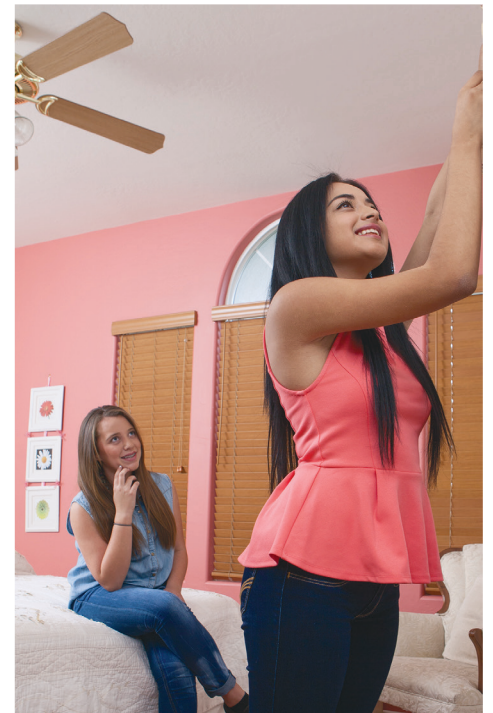
■ **Sex.** Your teen needs to know it's possible to get pregnant anytime birth control isn't used—or isn't used correctly. Speak up, too, about sexually transmitted infections. Tell your teen they can be easily spread through sex and that always using a condom can help prevent them.

■ **Risky driving.** Tell your teen how dangerous it is to use a cellphone behind the wheel. Texting is especially unsafe. It takes your eyes, hands and mind off the road. And alcohol affects judgment. It can cause drivers to make deadly mistakes. That's particularly true for new drivers like teens.

Be a good role model.

Remember that actions speak louder than words. So set a good example for your teen. If you make safe choices—such as not lighting up—your teen is more likely to do the same. You'll protect your health too.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



» APRIL IS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH. Give your teenager the facts. If you are interested in finding out more about our health education services, please call us at 661-632-1590 (Bakersfield) or 800-391-2000 (outside of Bakersfield) and ask for the Health Education Department.



A plan for better asthma control

On a good day, your asthma is under control. But on a bad day, it's controlling you. You may have trouble breathing. You may cough or wheeze. It may be hard to do your normal activities.

On those days, you'll want to feel better fast. You'll need to know exactly what to do and when to do it.

An asthma action plan can help. It's a written plan that you and your provider make. It takes the delay and guesswork out of asthma control.

How an asthma action plan works. For good days, it tells you how to control asthma with daily treatment. It tells what medicines to take each day and when.

For not-so-good days, the plan tells you when and how often to take your quick-relief drugs and how much to take. It also tells you when to call your provider and

If you have a child with asthma, share the management plan with his or her caretakers.

when to go to the hospital.

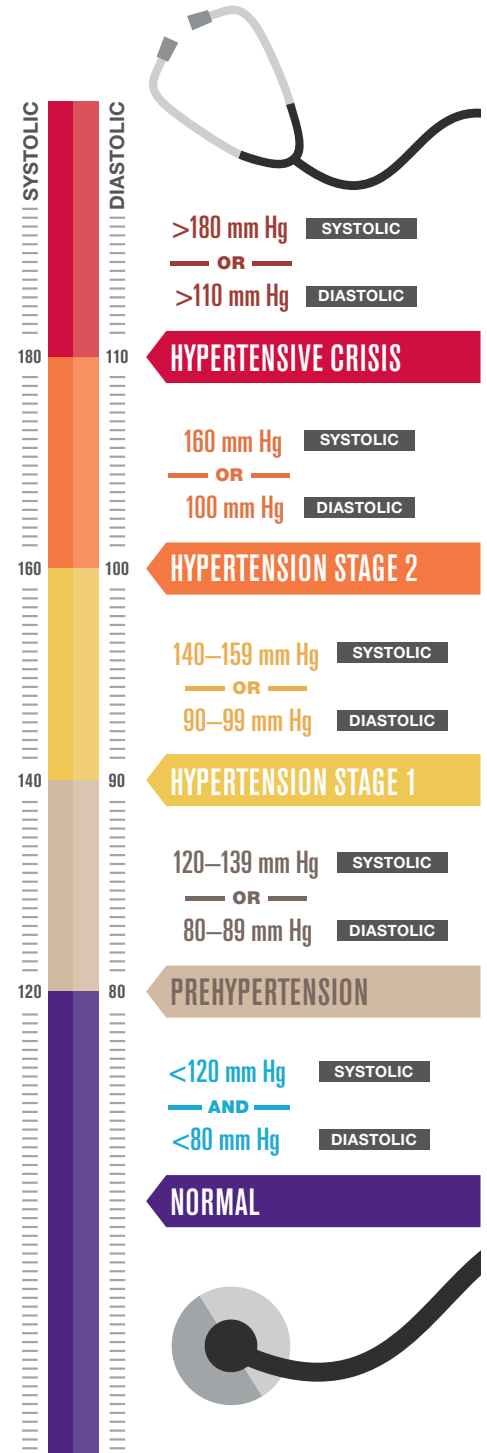
Your plan will also list your asthma triggers—and give tips for how to avoid or reduce them. And, if you use a peak flow meter, the plan will cover when and how to use it.

Once you have your plan, be sure to let your provider know when it's not working. He or she can make changes as needed.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institutes of Health

» MAY is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, and it's a great time to develop your asthma action plan. Call your provider, and take control of your health today.

Blood pressure by the numbers



Sources: American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Keep your Medi-Cal active

The way Medi-Cal renewals are processed has changed. The Kern County Department of Human



Services (DHS) will try to verify your information electronically at your renewal. If they are able to complete your renewal electronically, you will receive a Notice of Action letting you know that your Medi-Cal has been renewed. If they are unable to do so, you may receive paperwork in the mail. Please fill out and return the forms with paper copies of the information that's being requested. There are three ways you can give DHS the renewal information they need:

1 By mail. Please use the postage-paid envelope DHS provides to return the forms to:
Human Services
P.O. Box 511
Bakersfield, CA 93302

2 By phone. You can give DHS this information by phone.

Call their Customer Assistance Telecenter (CAT) at **877-410-8812**.

If you file taxes, have your most recent federal tax return on hand when you call.

3 In person. You can give DHS this information at any local office. Or you can visit the main DHS office in Bakersfield:

100 E. California Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93307

Remember: Changes in your home, including income or mailing address, need to be reported to DHS within 10 days. You can report a change by mail, by telephone or in person. Also, when filing your taxes, if you were a recipient of Medi-Cal anytime last year, you can self-certify you had health insurance. No proof of Medi-Cal is required to be submitted with your taxes; self-attestation is accepted.

Member rights

If you have a service or quality-of-care complaint against Kern Family Health Care or a provider, call us first at **661-632-1590** (Bakersfield) or **800-391-2000** (outside of Bakersfield) or visit our website at 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**.

family health

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 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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