

# family health

## Exercise

WRITE YOUR OWN  
PRESCRIPTION FOR  
BETTER HEALTH



**S**ometimes, we need a pill to stay well. Sometimes, all it takes is a fitness program.

In fact, there are times exercise works as well as medicine.

Sometimes, it works even better.

For instance, when you're active you can:

■ **Ease arthritis pain.** Moving seems to reduce inflammation. It also prompts the body to release its own pain-fighting chemicals.

■ **Stop diabetes.** Weighing more than you should makes this disease more likely. Routine workouts help with weight loss. They also keep pounds from coming back.

■ **Boost bone health.** Lift weights. Or take walks. Moves that make your bones support your body weight trigger bones to grow stronger.

■ **Reduce heart disease.** Risk factors include high blood pressure and cholesterol. Exercise lowers both. It also makes it easier to quit

smoking and deal with stress—two other risk factors for heart disease.

■ **Relieve worry and depression.**

A routine walk—or something similar—does wonders to ease these problems. Exercise can also make them less likely to occur in the first place.

Talk with your doctor about your fitness level. Ask how you can improve your health with exercise.




## Enroll in our text messaging service

Kern Family Health Care can now send you text messages about new health programs and services for you and your family.

Messages cover healthy lifestyle tips, such as healthy eating and exercise. Other topics include blood sugar control, blood pressure control, dental care and foot care.

Signing up for this service is easy. We will need your mobile phone number and the name of your mobile phone service provider. Call our Member Services Department at **800-391-2000** to enroll in this service.



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

# Protect that smile with fluoride varnish

**T**ooth decay is a common disease seen in kids. Kids as young as 12 to 18 months can have tooth decay. The good news is that it can be prevented!

Fluoride varnish is the best way to prevent and stop tooth decay. It is painted on children's teeth by a doctor or dentist to protect their teeth. It can help stop cavities that have already started and prevent new ones.

Fluoride varnish is safe for babies and young kids. It is fast

*February is National Children's Dental Health Month.*



and easy to apply. Plus, only a small amount is used. There is no pain, and it does not have a bad taste. Your child's teeth may change color after the fluoride varnish is painted on, but the color will come off when you

brush your child's teeth the next day.

Start protecting your child's teeth early for a happy, long-lasting smile. Talk to your child's doctor or dentist about fluoride varnish for your child.

## Wellness Reward Program

Did you know that many childhood illnesses can be avoided? A once-a-year checkup or wellness exam can help your child stay strong and healthy.

If your child has not had his or her wellness exam this year, your child may be able to join our once-a-year Wellness Reward Program. The Wellness Reward Program rewards both you and your child. For each child in your household, you will get one chance to win one

of 10 \$25 gift cards raffled each month. Each child will also get two free movie tickets.

1. If you receive a letter in the mail about scheduling a wellness exam for your child, schedule your child for a visit with his or her doctor before Dec. 31, 2015.
2. Take the letter with you to the visit.
3. Ask your doctor's office to sign and stamp the letter. Then mail it back to us in the enclosed envelope.
4. After we see that your child had a full exam, we will send two movie

tickets for your child. We will also enter your name in a raffle to win one of 10 \$25 gift cards.

The raffles will be held on the last day of each month and will continue through December 2015. We will tell you by mail if you have won.

If getting to the doctor's office is a problem, you can get bus passes for their visit. Just call our Member Services Department at **800-391-2000** for help. Together we can help your child stay healthy. Please call us if you have any questions.



## Prevent SIDS/ SUID with safe sleeping

Did you know that October is SIDS Awareness Month? When infants die suddenly without explanation, the cause of death is determined to be Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID).

In 2014, the Kern County Child Death Review Team determined 17 SUID deaths to be related to unsafe sleep environments among children under the age of 1 year. Examples of unsafe sleep environments include sleeping in an adult bed, a car seat, or even a crib with loose sheets, blankets, and/or pillows.

A baby's sleep environment should be free of any loose items, such as stuffed animals or bumpers that pad the walls of the crib. Babies can share a room; however, they should not share a bed. For those who do not have a crib, a pack-n-play is the next best option. Pack-n-plays are portable cribs, which babies can safely sleep in. Babies should always be placed on their backs to sleep. They should never sleep on a couch or in the arms of others.

Share these safe sleeping tips with family and friends so they can reduce the risk of losing a child. For more information, call the Kern County Public Health Services Department at **661-321-3000**.



## Save money with WIC food benefits

If you have a child age 5 or under, are pregnant, or have an infant, you may be eligible to apply for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

With WIC, you have access to helpful nutrition information and breastfeeding guidance. You also receive:

- Bread, rice, tortillas and cereal.
- Peanut butter or beans.
- Eggs, milk and cheese.
- Fruits and vegetables.

You can now receive lactose-free and soy milk.

These food benefits have a value

of \$66 per month or \$792 per year.

What could you buy with an extra \$66 every month instead of spending it on groceries?

You could buy:

- Diapers and wipes.
- Two or three new outfits for your child.

You can also pay for:

- An oil change and air filter for your car.
- A tank of gas.
- A pizza party for the kids.
- A family day at the zoo.

Call WIC today at **661-862-5422** or **661-327-3074**.



## Health topics just a phone call away

Did you know that Kern Family Health Care has a Health Information Library? You can access it 24 hours a day. Our library has over 100 topics. Each topic can be listened to in English and Spanish. You can learn about:

- Fevers.
- Common colds and coughs.
- Head lice.
- Headaches.
- Stroke.

As always, your call is free and confidential.

To access our Health Information Library, call us at **800-391-2000**.

# Urgent care or emergency?

It's tough to think clearly when you're sick or hurt. You might not be sure where to go for treatment. When should you go to the urgent care center or to the emergency room (ER)?

When you need urgent care or you need to be seen within 48 hours, it is important to call your primary care provider (PCP) first to see if there is an available appointment or to get medical advice. You can also call the Kern Family Health Care (KFHC) Advice Nurse Line to get medical advice.

If your PCP does not have an available appointment within the

next 48 hours and you have an urgent medical concern, please go to one of the urgent care centers we contract with. Call us to find out about the nearest KFHC contracted urgent care center.

Go to urgent care for:

- Sprains and strains.
- Ear infections.
- Allergy flare-ups.
- Animal bites.
- Minor broken bones, such as a finger.
- Minor cuts that may need stitches.
- Sore throats, coughs, colds or the flu.

- Sinus infections.
- Mild asthma symptoms.
- Insect bites.
- Skin rashes.
- Nausea.

When should you go to the ER? Go to the ER for:

- 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.



# Are you being abused? Make a personal safety plan

In the U.S., 1 in 4 women has been beaten by a domestic partner.

Most abused women try to get away at some point. But there are a lot of reasons why that can be hard to do. For example, an abused woman might:

- Be afraid that her abuser will find her and hurt her.
- Not have enough money to support herself or get help from a good lawyer.
- Fear she will lose custody of her children.
- Believe her abuser is sorry—and can change.

## Making a personal safety plan

A woman cannot change her abuser's behavior. But she can make a plan to keep herself safe. Having such a plan might help her feel strong enough to leave when she decides the time is right.

To prepare herself to get away from an abusive partner, a woman can:

1. Tell someone she trusts that she is being harmed. Family and friends can help if they know what's going on.
2. Choose a code word. Using her code word tells people she needs help.
3. Always carry some money.
4. Memorize the phone numbers for:
  - The police.
  - A domestic violence hotline.
  - A lawyer.
  - Trusted friends and family members.
5. Keep important personal papers in a safe place, ready to go. That includes:
  - Her Social Security card.
  - Her own and her children's birth certificates.
  - Her checkbook, credit cards and bank statements.
  - Proof of past abuse (such as



*October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.*

photos and medical reports).

6. Locate the nearest shelter for abused women.

Free help is available. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: **800-799-SAFE (800-799-7233)**. For urgent help, call **911**.

## Baby blues

This should be one of the happiest times of your life. After months of waiting, you finally have a baby to hold and love.

Then why do you feel so moody and weepy?

You might have what's called the *baby blues*. Many new moms get them about two to three days after giving birth. Instead of feeling happy, they feel sad and stressed.

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

The good news: The baby blues usually go away on their own in a week or so. In the meantime, these things can help:

- Get as much sleep as you can. Nap when your baby does.
- Ask for help. See if your friends or family might lend a hand with household chores.
- Don't bottle up your feelings or spend too much time alone. Tell your partner or a good friend how you feel.

## SEE YOUR PROVIDER

Taking care of yourself also means seeing your provider for a checkup about four to six weeks after you have your baby.

But if you feel worse—or your blues don't go away in about a week—tell your provider right away. You might have something called postpartum depression. It's a more serious problem. Still, it can be treated so you feel like yourself again.

# Keep your Medi-Cal active

**T**he 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, the renewal will be considered complete and your Medi-Cal benefits will be renewed with no action needed by you. You will receive a Notice of Action only if there is a change in your Medi-Cal benefits. If they are unable to complete your renewal electronically, 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

- 4. By fax.** Please fax verifications to: **661-633-7498**.

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, 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.

## Timely access to care

Kern Family Health Care has standards so that you receive timely access to care. The amounts of time you should have to wait when scheduling an appointment with your primary care provider (PCP), specialists and other health professionals are listed to the right. If you have to wait longer than these appropriate wait times when scheduling an appointment, please call our Member Services Department at **661-632-1590** (Bakersfield) or **800-391-2000** (outside of Bakersfield) and we will help you schedule a more timely appointment.

TYPE OF MEDICAL APPOINTMENT	APPOINTMENT WAIT TIMES
PCP routine and follow-up	10 business days*
Specialists	15 business days*
Mental health	10 business days*
Urgent appointments for services that do not require prior authorization	Within 48 hours*
Urgent appointments for services that require prior authorization	Within 96 hours*
Ancillary services such as x-rays, lab tests and physical therapy	15 business days*
Emergency	Immediate

\*Health care providers can be flexible in making appointments if a longer waiting time is not harmful to the member's health. It must be noted in the member's record that a longer waiting time will not be harmful to the member.



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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