

questions & answers

Q. Does my 11-year-old need to be vaccinated for meningitis?

A. Yes. Meningitis is rare, but it's very dangerous. Some people can die from it.

For teens, the risk for infection is highest at ages 16 to 18. But since it is so serious, doctors recommend vaccinations begin at age 11.

Ask your doctor about this vaccine.

Q. I was in a minor car crash. Is my child's car seat still safe?

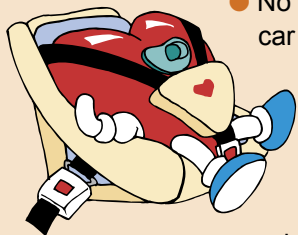
A. Maybe. Child safety seats can survive some crashes. First, check for any cracks or damage from the crash. If the seat looks OK, you can use it if:

- The vehicle it was in could be driven away from the crash.
- The vehicle door nearest the seat was not damaged.

- No one in the car was hurt.

- The air bags, if any, did not inflate. In some

areas, you may be able to get a safety seat on loan. Call your hospital to find out.



Smart medicine advice



Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines—those you buy without a prescription—can be very helpful. But they can hurt you if you don't use them right.

These tips can help you stay safe:

- Always read the label. Make sure you know how much to take and how often to take it.
- Know who should *not* take the medicine. For example, some medicines are not safe if you are pregnant.
- Only give children medicine that is made for kids. And use the dropper or cup that comes with the medicine.
- Ask your doctor what to avoid while taking an OTC drug. Some shouldn't be taken with certain foods, vitamins, supplements or other drugs.
- Don't buy a medicine if the safety seal is broken. And don't keep it past the date it expires.
- Keep medicines away from kids.

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

Si necesita esta información en español, llame al 1-800-391-2000.

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New members

See your doctor for an IHA and get a prize!

Are you or your child a new member with Kern Family Health Care? Or have you just had a baby? If so, you can win a special prize from Kern Family Health Care by getting an initial health assessment (IHA).

An IHA is a complete exam. It needs to be done within four months of becoming a new member with Kern Family Health Care. New members 18 months old and younger need to have an IHA within two months.

If you or your child are new members, here's what you have to do to claim your prize.

1. Make an appointment and go to your doctor, or take your child to his or her doctor, for an IHA. (Remember, this has to be done within four months of becoming a new member or within two months for babies 18 months and younger.)

2. Write us a letter and tell us:

- The patient's name, address and phone number.
- Date of birth.
- KFHC member number.

- The date of the IHA.
- The doctor's name, address and phone number.

3. Mail the letter to:

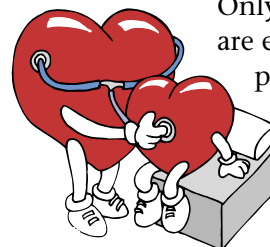
**Kern Family Health Care
Health Education and
Promotion Department
9700 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93311-3617**

We will verify your visit and check to make sure it was done in time. Then we will send you a prize. Prizes vary and quantities are limited, so hurry! Call your doctor and make an appointment today.

Only new members are eligible to participate.

For more information, please call

1-800-391-2000.



If you have questions about how you can win a prize, call 1-800-391-2000.

Understanding your prescription drug benefits

Your health plan helps you pay for the drugs your doctor says you need.

But your plan doesn't pay for every medicine. Those that we do cover can be found on a list called a formulary. We update this list every year. You can get a copy by calling Member Services.

Your health is important to us, so we talk to many experts when we put our formulary together. We want to have the medicines you need.

Every time your doctor prescribes a new drug, you should check if it's on our list. If it's not, tell your doctor right away.

He or she can:

- Give you another drug that works the same way but is on the list.
- Talk to us about what drugs are covered. We may pay for a drug that's not on the list if your doctor says you should have it. Your doctor simply fills out a form and sends it to our offices. A team will review it and give your doctor a decision.

If you have questions about what medicines are paid for, call Member Services.



Think safety this summer

Summer is fun. But it can be dangerous too.

Follow these tips to keep your family safe:

Crossing streets. Kids will be on the move visiting friends and going to the park during the summer. Teach them to cross streets safely. Don't let kids younger than 10 cross alone.

On wheels. Before you get on a bike, don't forget to put on a bike helmet. And helmets aren't

just for biking. They should also be worn when skateboarding and in-line skating.

Around water. It's important to always watch children near water. That means swimming pools, hot tubs, and a lake or river. And tell children to never swim alone. All children should wear life vests when boating.

From the heat. Stay out of the heat when possible. When exercising, wear light clothing and drink plenty of water. If you do not have air conditioning, visit places that do. Try the library or mall.

In the sun. To protect you and your family from the sun, wear sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or more. Put it on 30 minutes before going outside. And wear a wide-

brimmed hat and sunglasses that provide UV (ultraviolet) protection.

Before you get on a bike, don't forget to put on a bike helmet.

It's also a good idea to stay out of the sun when it's strongest—between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Near bugs. It's safe to use bug repellent on kids 2 months and older. Look for repellents that contain DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.

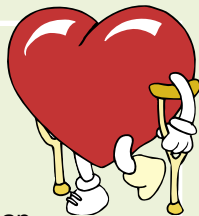
Avoid using scented soaps and perfume. They attract bees. And stay away from standing water and blooming gardens, where bugs gather.

If you've been hiking in tall grass or in the woods, check yourself for ticks. You can use tweezers to remove ticks.

See a doctor if you think a bug bite made you sick. Symptoms include fever, headaches and a rash.

At meals. To guard against food illness, wash your hands before cooking and serving food. Be sure meat is fully cooked. And keep cold foods in a cooler with plenty of ice. Fruits and vegetables should be washed in cool water.

Be prepared for emergencies



You want to stay calm in an emergency. That's easier said than done. Especially when it involves your child.

Here's how you can be prepared:

Keep important phone numbers handy.

This includes the numbers for your doctor, hospital and poison control center (1-800-222-1222). Call 911 if there's an emergency.

Know your health facts. Make a list of allergies and medications for all family members. Keep this list with you at all times.

Have a first aid kit at home. Ask your doctor what a good first aid kit includes.

Take a class. The American Red Cross offers first aid classes. You can learn how to treat burns, cuts and other injuries.

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Safe Kids Worldwide

Help us 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 kinds of 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.



To learn more about how to stop fraud, call us at 1-800-391-2000.



Here to help

If you have a service or quality complaint against Kern Family Health Care (KFHC) or a provider, call us first at **1-800-391-2000**. Call the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) for help if:

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

DMHC's toll-free number is **1-888-HMO-2219**. Their TDD line is **1-877-688-9891** for people with hearing and speech impairments.

Choose from these hospitals

As of Jan. 1, 2006, Kern Family Health Care (KFHC) is no longer contracted with Mercy Hospital or Mercy Southwest Hospital in Bakersfield. That means that KFHC members cannot use those hospitals except in an emergency.

These are the local hospitals KFHC members can choose from:

- Bakersfield Memorial Hospital.
- Kern Medical Center.
- San Joaquin Community Hospital.
- Delano Regional Medical Center.
- Kern Valley Healthcare District.
- Tehachapi Hospital.
- Antelope Valley Hospital.

And remember, if you have a real medical emergency, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911.

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