

# family

# health



Kern Family  
Health Care

*The Friendly Face*  
Of Kern Health Systems

Spring 2007

questions & answers

**Q.** When should I start cleaning my baby's teeth?

**A.** It's best to start as soon as your baby's teeth come in. Until then, you can get a head start by cleaning your baby's gums.

To clean your newborn's gums, use a clean, soft cloth or a toothbrush made for babies. You can use either of those items when baby's teeth come in too.

Ask your doctor before using toothpaste on a child under 2. Otherwise, clean gums and teeth with plain water.

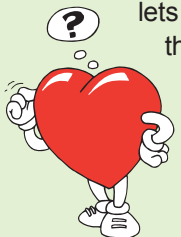
Clean your child's teeth twice a day, or at least before bedtime.

**Q.** What's the best way to treat a small scrape or wound?

**A.** Clean the wound first by pouring cool water over it. You can use soap and a washcloth to clean dirt from the skin around the cut, but don't get soap in the wound.

Cover it with a bandage that lets air and moisture into the wound. Change the bandage every day.

Antibiotic ointment usually isn't needed for minor wounds.



## Prevent choking

# How to keep small kids safe

Toddlers often put things in their mouths that don't belong there.

That's why you need to be careful about what's left lying on the floor or placed on your child's plate.

Small children have small throats. And it doesn't take much to make a child choke.

Kids under 3 are most at risk because that's the age when children tend to put all kinds of things in their mouths.

Children can choke on foods such as whole grapes, hard candy, marshmallows, popcorn, and chunks of meat or raw vegetables.

But kids can also choke on small rocks, buttons, coins, popped balloons and small toys.

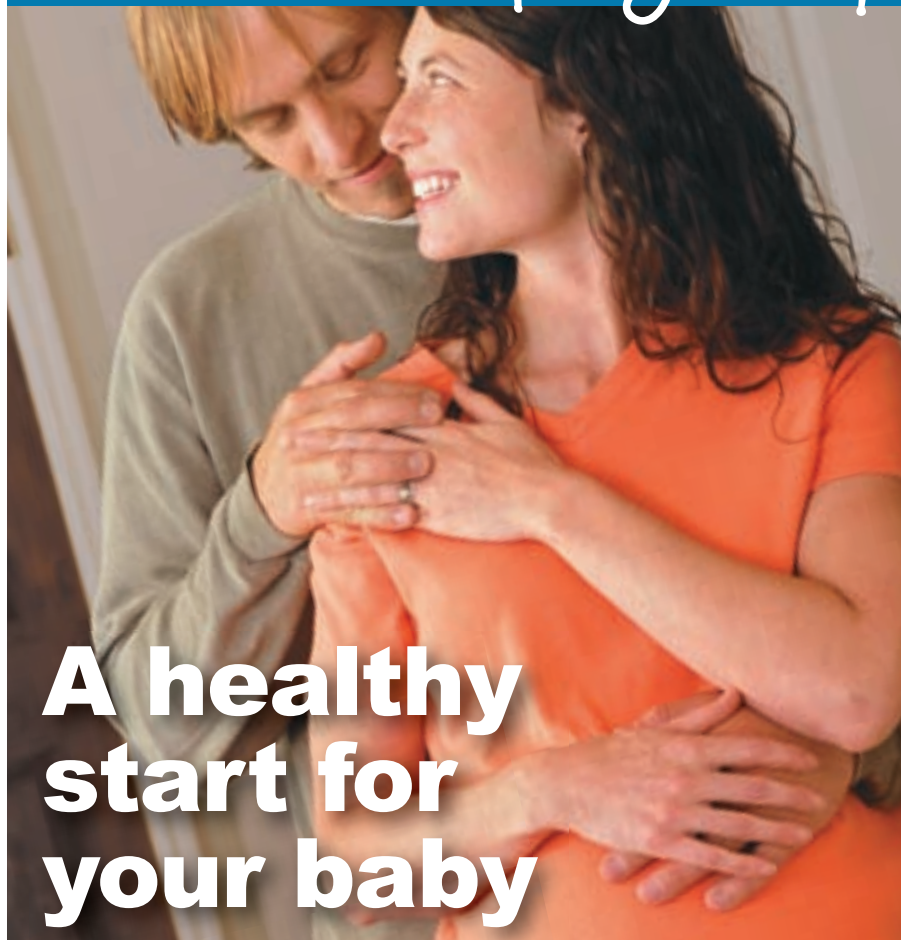


**Protect your child.** Be sure small items are picked up and are out of reach. Cut foods into small pieces. Check the recommended age on toys.

Source: Safe Kids Worldwide

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

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## A healthy start for your baby

Did you know you can start caring for your baby even before he or she is born?

With prenatal care, you can. It's a good way to give your baby a healthy start in life.

Prenatal care means routine trips to see your doctor. Your doctor will check how your pregnancy is going and look for problems before they get serious.

Call your doctor as soon as you think you might be pregnant. Your doctor will tell you when and how often to come in. Usually, it's once a month at first. As your due date nears, the visits are more often.

During the first visit, your doctor will:

- Ask about your health.
- Do a physical exam.
- Run tests.
- Answer your questions.

During later visits, he or she

will check the baby's growth and talk about what will happen during childbirth.

Prenatal visits are important, even if you feel fine.

## Morning sickness: How to feel better

Morning sickness is no fun. But for many moms-to-be, it's a normal part of pregnancy.

Many women have morning sickness. But most feel sick and throw up just during the first few months of pregnancy.

Morning sickness is usually gone by the fourth month. In most cases, it won't harm you or your baby.

Here are some things you can do to feel better:

- Get enough rest.
- Stay away from smells that

## Pregnancy and alcohol don't mix

One of the best things you can do for your growing baby is to not drink alcohol.

No amount of alcohol is safe for a pregnant woman. When you drink, your baby gets some of the alcohol too.

That can cause many problems for your baby. Your baby could have physical or mental problems. Your baby also may be born too soon or be too small to survive.

So don't drink any kind of alcohol if you're pregnant. Even if you have been drinking, you can still help your baby if you quit now.

If you need help to stop drinking, talk to your doctor.

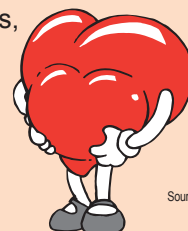
Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists



**For help making your doctor appointments, call 800-391-2000.**

make you feel sick.

- Don't eat too much at once. Eat small meals more often.
- Eat crackers when you feel sick.
- Try eating plain baked potatoes. White rice or dry toast may help too.
- Avoid fatty foods and spicy foods.
- Drink fluids often.



If morning sickness still bothers you, see your doctor. He or she may suggest medicine that can help.

Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

# Living with heart failure



Heart failure may sound scary. But it doesn't mean that your heart will stop working.

With heart failure, health conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes can cause the heart to grow weak. When the heart weakens, it has trouble working the way it should.

Heart failure is a serious condition, but it can be treated. If you have heart failure, it's important to follow your treatment plan. Not only will treatment help you feel better, but it can help keep heart failure from getting worse.

## Caring for your heart

To treat heart failure, your doctor may suggest that you:

**Cut back on salt.** Too much salt can cause extra fluid to build up in your body. This can be hard on your heart.

Try these tips to eat less salt:

- Take the salt shaker off the table. Season with low-salt seasonings or herbs and spices instead.
- Check food labels when shopping. Try to choose foods with less salt and sodium.

**Get more exercise.** You may need more or less exercise depending on how serious your heart failure is. Your doctor can suggest safe activities for you.

**Take medication.** You may need to take certain medications

to manage heart failure. Be sure to take your medicine just as your doctor tells you.

You may also need to:

- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Quit smoking if you smoke.
- Avoid alcohol.

Finally, make sure to keep all

your doctor's appointments. Part of managing heart failure means seeing your doctor often.

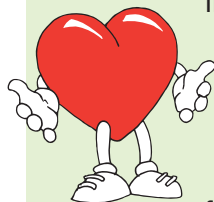
Source: American Heart Association



To learn more, go to the American Heart Association Web site at [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org).

## Are your symptoms getting worse?

To manage heart failure well, you'll need to keep track of your symptoms. This can help your doctor know if your heart failure is getting worse.



If you have any of the following signs, let your doctor know right away:

**Increased swelling.** Heart failure can cause some swelling in legs, ankles and feet. However, watch for an increase in swelling or swelling in a new area of the body.

### Sudden change in weight.

In general, this means a weight gain of more than 5 pounds in one week. Keeping a daily weight record can help you keep track.

Other signs to watch for:

- Shortness of breath that doesn't get better.
- Feeling light-headed.
- Chest pain or a heavy feeling in your chest.
- Feeling that your heart is fluttering or racing.
- Coughing or wheezing when you lie down or during sleep.
- A general feeling of weakness.

Source: American Heart Association

Your Kern Family Health Care benefits

## What you need to know about screenings

### STD testing

Anyone can get sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). They are spread through having sex—any type of sex (including oral sex). The more sex partners you have, the more likely you are to get an STD.

You probably know about some STDs, such as AIDS, herpes or syphilis. But here's something you might not know: You can have an STD and not have symptoms. And you can infect other people with your STD.

The only sure way to protect yourself from STDs is not to have sex, any type of sex. If you do have sex, always use a condom. You can reduce your risk of getting infected.

To know if you have an STD, you must be tested. Kern Family Health Care (KFHC) does not need to approve STD services. You can go to your primary care provider (PCP) or another PCP or obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/GYN) in the KFHC provider network, the local Health Department clinics, the family

planning clinics, or a provider who is not contracted with KFHC (you can only see this type of provider once for each STD episode).

### AIDS/HIV testing

You probably know that AIDS can be a deadly disease. You can get HIV if you have unprotected sex with an infected partner. You can also get it from blood or needles that are infected. You can't get HIV from a toilet seat, touching an infected person or drinking water from a water fountain. It's possible to have HIV and feel perfectly healthy.

If you think you might be infected, get tested right away. If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, get tested for HIV. A mother with HIV can pass it on to her baby.

KFHC does not need to approve HIV testing. You can go to your PCP or another PCP or OB/GYN in the KFHC provider network, the local Health Department clinics, or the family planning clinics.

AIDS is a serious disease, but it can be treated.

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

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