

family health



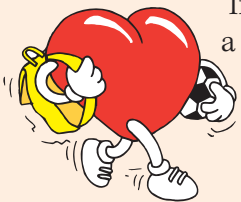
Winter • 2010

Things to Know

Sports injuries: Keep kids safe

Sports can boost a child's fitness and self-esteem.

And while young athletes also can be injured, there are ways to protect kids. Most sports injuries involve sprains and strains of the muscles and other soft tissues. But more severe injuries can happen.



If your child plays a sport, he or she needs a physical exam. Kids should also be in shape. And

be sure that your child:

- Wears the right protective gear for the sport or activity. This can be shin or mouth guards, knee pads, or a helmet.
- Knows and plays by the rules of the game, such as safety rules for tackling in football.
- Warms up first. This might be a few minutes of stretching or light jogging.
- Stops playing if there is any pain. A possible injury could get worse.

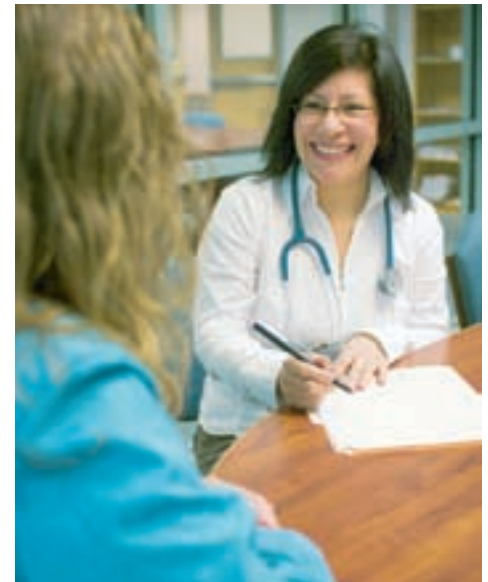
Primary Care Providers

Important change

Kern Family Health Care (KFHC) is committed to providing quality health care. In order to improve the quality of care provided to our members, **KFHC members will no longer be allowed to receive primary care services from any KFHC primary care provider (PCP). You must see the PCP or clinic you are assigned to.**

This is why it is important for you to choose a PCP that you will be happy with for a long time. The longer you are treated by your PCP, the more he or she will know about your health.

If you are not happy with your PCP, you can only change your



PCP once a month. Requests made by the 24th of the month will take effect the first day of the following month. Requests made after the 24th of the month will take effect the first day of the second month following the request.

If you need help choosing a PCP, please call Member Services at **800-391-2000.**

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

Helping kids deal with stress

Kids may not pay bills or manage the family schedule. But they can still feel stress.

Kids may worry about friends, schoolwork, peer pressure or family issues—such as divorce or illness.

When you help your kids learn how to manage stress, you give them the tools to handle stress in adulthood.

Stress can be good and bad

Stress is the uncomfortable feeling you get when you're scared, worried or angry. It gives your body the message to be on alert for danger or threat. Symptoms may include: » Faster heart rate. » Faster breathing. » Clammy hands and feet. » Upset stomach. » Headache.

Not all stress is bad. Sometimes stress helps us to be more alert, work harder or deal with a problem.

But intense or ongoing stress

can make your children feel tired and can increase their chances of getting sick.

Help kids cope

There are many ways to help kids learn how to relax and release stress. Try a few until your kids find what works for them. You can:

- Remind kids to be active.
- Offer healthy meals at regular times.
- Teach kids how to relax. Take deep breaths, or flex and release muscles.
- Listen when your kids need to talk.
- Show kids how to break big tasks into smaller tasks.
- Tell kids to draw, listen to music or talk to a friend.
- Encourage kids to choose friends who help them feel positive.
- Teach kids how to turn negative thoughts into positive ones. Instead



of thinking, “I’ll never make new friends,” try, “Today, I can say hello to one new person.”

Talk to your doctor if your kids have trouble with sleeping, eating or behavior.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Kids need iron

Anemia happens when there are not enough red blood cells. The body needs red blood cells to carry oxygen.

In kids, it's most often caused by a lack of iron in the diet. It can also lead to learning disabilities and other problems. But it can be treated.

Lack of iron is mostly treated with iron supplements. But

be sure to talk with your doctor before giving your child an iron supplement. Too much iron can be toxic.

Signs of anemia can include:

- Pale skin, lips and nail beds.
- Mild weakness.
- Tiredness.

If you think your child has anemia, talk with your doctor. It can be found with a blood test.

To help kids get enough iron:

- Don't give babies younger than 12 months low-iron milk, such as cow's milk. If you can, breastfeed your baby for at least one year.
- Give older kids foods rich in iron. Foods like lean red meat, beans, eggs and nuts are good choices.
- Give kids foods with lots of vitamin C. This helps the body absorb the iron in food.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; National Anemia Action Council



Blood pressure matters in kids

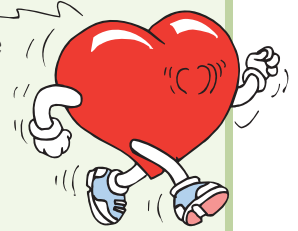
Obesity is a growing problem for many kids. And that extra weight can bring one more health problem into your child's life: high blood pressure.

Kids with high blood pressure are at risk for other severe health problems. As adults, they are more likely to have heart disease or stroke.

Your child should have yearly blood pressure checks, starting at 3 years old. Talk to your child's doctor about whether your child's blood pressure is in a healthy range.

To help your child get a heart-healthy start in life, support:

- Lots of physical activity. Exercise helps control blood pressure. And it can help an overweight child lose weight.
- A good diet. Limit salt and high-fat foods. Provide fruits, veggies and whole grains.



Source: American Heart Association

You may say that you hope never to have a heart attack. But you can do a lot more than hope. You can take action.

Healthy habits help prevent heart disease and heart attack. Start with these steps:

Avoid tobacco.

Smoking is a huge risk factor for heart disease.

All forms of tobacco smoke can hurt your heart, including: » Cigarettes. » Cigars. » Pipes. » Secondhand smoke.

If you smoke, talk to your doctor for help in quitting.

Be more active. Being active helps keep the heart and blood vessels healthy. It also helps control other problems that can affect heart health, like high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

To do your heart the most good,

try to be active for 30 minutes on five or more days of the week.

Even a little exercise is good for you. If you aren't active now, try five minutes of exercise to start. Slowly add more until you are doing 10 minutes, then 15 and so on.

If you find it hard to fit in a longer workout, even 10-minute

Take action now to help head off a heart attack.

chunks of activity can add up in favor of your heart.

Talk to your doctor before getting started if you haven't exercised in a while or have other health issues.

Choose good nutrition. Poor eating habits can lead to problems that harm the heart. You might gain too much weight or develop high blood pressure or diabetes.

Go for heart-smart foods, such as:

- Fruits and veggies.
- Whole-grain and high-fiber foods.
- Fish and lean protein.
- Low-fat or nonfat dairy products.

Know the signs

You can save a life by knowing heart attack signs and getting help right away. Call 911 for:

■ Chest aches that last more than a few minutes or that come and go. This may feel like pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the middle of the chest.

■ Aches in other parts of the upper body, such as one or both arms or the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

■ Shortness of breath. This may happen before or along with chest aches.

Other signs can include cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

Remember, it is never too early—or too late—to get on track to a healthy heart.

Source: American Heart Association

Live well with COPD

It can be hard to breathe when you have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). But there are things that can help.

With COPD, the tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs become partly blocked. This can make it hard to breathe.

You might have a cough that won't go away, shortness of breath and wheezing.

But if you have COPD, there are steps you can take to manage it and stay active.

First, you should quit smoking. Your doctor may also suggest:

- Medicines that relax the muscles around your airways.
- Breathing and strength-training exercises.
- Oxygen treatment to help with shortness of breath.



It's also important to see your doctor right away if your COPD gets worse all of a sudden. And be sure to get help if your medicine isn't working and you have:

- Trouble breathing.
- Trouble walking or talking.

With the right steps, you can manage COPD and stay active.

- An irregular or rapid heartbeat.
- Blue or gray fingernails or lips.

Talk to your doctor to learn how you can live well with COPD.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Breathe better by being active

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) shouldn't keep you on the couch.

In fact, staying active is one of the best things you can do. Being active can help you breathe and feel better.

Walking, gardening and biking are all good ways to stay active.



Always talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program. Also be sure to:

- Warm up.
- Vary your activities.
- Choose something you enjoy.
- Pace yourself. Don't try to do too much at once.
- Stop right away if you are in pain or don't feel well.
- Cool down when you are done.

Your doctor can tell you more about safe exercise with COPD.

Source: American Association for Respiratory Care

Eating well when you have COPD

Eating good foods can help you feel better if you have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Healthy foods give you more energy and help you avoid getting sick. Eating right is also good for your lungs.

A few food tips:

- Eat fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, cereals, grains

and foods containing protein.

- Cut back on salt.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine.
- Try to eat your main meal early. This helps give you more energy through the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

Eating right won't make COPD go away. But it can help you feel better.

Source: American Association for Respiratory Care

Eczema: Tips to stop the itch



If you have an itchy rash, you may have eczema. The most common type occurs when your body reacts to an irritant or allergen. Many things can bring on a rash or make it worse. This includes:

- Wool.
- Some perfumes and makeup.
- Cigarette smoke.
- Dogs or cats.

Signs include dry, cracked or itchy skin. You may also notice rashes on the face, hands, elbows and knees. Scratching can make the skin red and irritated.

Any person can get eczema. But it appears most often on babies. Keep in mind that you can't catch it from someone.

While there's no cure for eczema, you can take steps to avoid a breakout. Some tips:

- Moisturize your skin. Talk to your doctor about the best product for you.
- Avoid things that irritate your skin.
- Wear gloves when washing dishes.
- Wear clothes made of cotton. Wool and some other fabrics can irritate skin.

Keep skin well-moisturized to help avoid breakouts.

- Bathe with mild soap. Keep the water cool or warm, not hot.
- Avoid scratching itchy areas.

There are also medicines your doctor can prescribe to help manage eczema.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology; American Academy of Family Physicians

Diabetes and skin

Diabetes can lead to skin problems like dryness, itching and infections.

That's why you need to take care of your skin.

A few healthy skin tips:

- Watch your feet for sores and cuts.
- Use a humidifier in your home.
- Treat cuts right away.
- Wear comfy shoes.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- Try to stay at a healthy weight.
- Check your skin often.

If you think you have an infection or if you have open sores, see your doctor.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health

Quick tips for treating rashes

If your child has a rash, you'll want to know how to treat it.

Rashes can be caused by many things. For instance, diapers and soap can irritate the skin.

Most rashes aren't a big problem. And mild rashes can often be treated at home. Try:

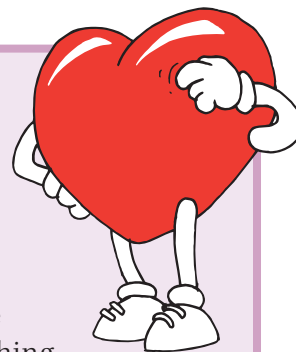
- Lip balm for rashes around the mouth.
- Moisturizer or petroleum jelly for dry skin.
- A cool, damp cloth for itchy skin.

Your doctor can suggest

an over-the-counter or prescription medicine. This can help relieve redness and itching.

Be sure to call your doctor if a rash gets worse. Also call if your child has a rash with other symptoms, such as:

- Fever.
- Fast or noisy breathing.
- A bad headache.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Seizures.



Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Medical Association

weight management



Steady going

Maintaining weight loss

One by one, the pounds are coming off. You're losing weight and feeling great.

Then, out of the blue, you hit a speed bump. The scale seems stuck. For days, weeks or even months your weight doesn't seem to budge.

What gives?

You may have reached what's called a weight-loss plateau. It's a stall of sorts that can be caused by many things. Among them:

- Your body may have gotten used to less food. In turn, it may

» action

take

Call Member Services at 800-391-2000 to learn more about our weight management programs.

be storing fat and burning energy more slowly.

- Your eating patterns may have changed. For example, you may be eating more than you realize. That can happen bit by bit. You may not have even noticed it.

Back on track

There's good news: You don't have to stay stuck in a weight-loss rut.

You can take steps to get back on track and leave those pounds in the dust. Try these tips:

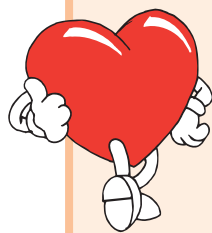
- **Choose more and less.** Opt for fruits and veggies more often and fatty foods less often. This type of trade can help trim calories from your plate.

- **Make a list.** Keep track of what, when and how much you eat and drink.

- **Shake things up.** If you're lifting weights, add a few pounds. If you're walking, pick up the pace. Or vary your routine this way: Do five or 10 minutes of slow movement. Then move faster for a while. Switch back and forth in one workout.

- **Boost your mood.** Talk with people who support you. And try to stay upbeat. Thinking on the bright side can help change health habits.

Weight loss: Watch what you drink



Trying to lose weight? Think outside the plate.

After all, it's not just food that counts. What you drink can affect your waistline as well.

Sip by sip, the calories you get from your cup can really add up. Sugary drinks can pack hundreds of empty calories.

So when you need to quench your thirst:

- Think water. A wedge of lemon or lime can add flavor.
- If you want a soda, choose a diet version.
- At the coffee shop, order a small drink with skim milk. And skip the sweet syrup.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

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