

Thank you for trusting us with your health for 20 years!

# living healthy

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A newsletter for the members of Central California Alliance for Health



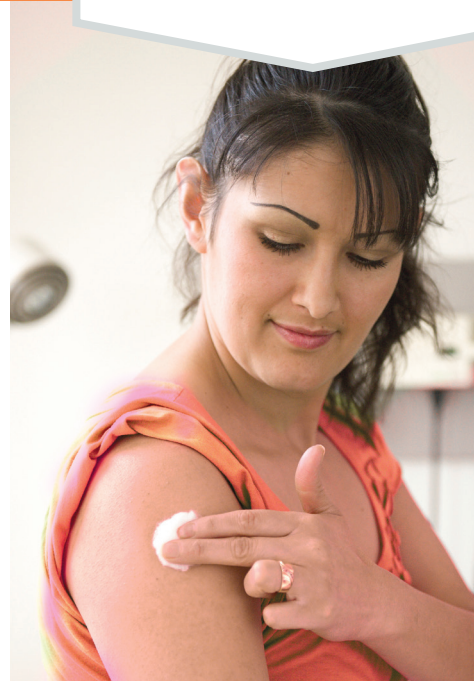
PROTECT EVERYONE YOU LOVE

## Get the flu vaccine!

It may seem early, but now is just the right time to get vaccinated against the flu. The Alliance recommends that all persons over the age of 6 months are vaccinated each year. We recommend that you are vaccinated when the vaccine is available in your doctor's office, usually late summer or early fall.

- Cough, sneeze or just talk near others
- Touch or sneeze on an object that someone else touches later

There are many different kinds of flu vaccines available. Talk to your doctor about the type of flu vaccine that is best for you. It is time to get you and your family protected!



### Why get vaccinated against the flu? You can avoid a serious illness.

The flu usually comes on quickly. Symptoms can include high fever, chills, headaches, exhaustion, sore throat, cough, and all-over body aches.

Even if the symptoms are mild, when the flu strikes your family, the result is lost time from work and school.

### Flu spreads quickly, even before you start to feel sick.

People with the flu don't have to feel sick to spread it to others. They can spread it when they feel well—before their symptoms have even begun. This can happen when they:

**» IMPORTANT NOTICE:**  
Member Services will not be available the following dates and times due to companywide and departmental meetings:

Sept. 7	Closed all day	Sept. 15	Closed from 12:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.
		Oct. 13	Closed from 11:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
		Dec. 15	Closed from 10:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

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## THE FOOD BANK

### More than food, it is about health

Our state is No. 1 in supplying food for the world, yet there are some people who may not have access to low-cost and healthy foods here. This is where your local food bank can help! The main goal of the food bank is to feed those in need. It does this by collecting, storing and redistributing food to people as well as nonprofit agencies that serve seniors, persons with health conditions and those in need.

But it is more than food: it is about health and wellness and ensuring that everyone gets access to healthy foods. In addition to providing food, the food

bank seeks to improve the overall health of its participants. Food banks supply fresh fruits and vegetables, and some may offer nutrition education and exercise classes.

If you or someone you know has a hard time getting healthy foods, the food bank is a great resource. All three of our service areas have a local food bank. To receive help, people need to: 1) provide proof that they live in the area of service, and 2) meet the income guidelines.

To get dates of events or more information, please call your local food bank or visit their website:

County	Phone number	Website
Monterey	831-758-1523	<a href="http://www.foodbankformontereycounty.org">www.foodbankformontereycounty.org</a>
Merced	209-726-3663	<a href="http://www.mercedcountyfoodbank.org">www.mercedcountyfoodbank.org</a>
Santa Cruz	831-722-7110	<a href="http://www.thefoodbank.org">www.thefoodbank.org</a>

## Formulary changes

Medication name	Changes
Adapalene 0.1% gel	Addition
Azithromycin packet	Addition
Budesonide ampules	Remove age limit restriction
Diclofenac 1% gel	Addition
Disulfiram tablets	Addition
Divalproex sodium tab ER	Addition
Glipizide ER	Addition
Lidocaine 5% patches	Addition
Metoprolol succinate SR 24HR	Addition
Metronidazole 0.75% cream	Addition
Repaglinide	Addition
Spiriva respimat	Addition
Tretinoin gel all strengths	Addition
Valacyclovir tablets	Addition





## Don't miss your doctor visits

It's one date you don't want to miss—your doctor visit.

Getting all the checkups, screenings and follow-ups you need can help you stay healthy.

Have a calendar handy and write appointments down as soon as you make them. That can help you remember when you have one scheduled.

If you can't make it to an appointment, call your doctor's office as soon as you can. This way, the office can use the time to schedule a visit for another patient. And they can set up a new day and time for you.

If you miss three or more visits in one year, the doctor may decide not to see you again. So try to keep your appointments and show up on time. Or call in advance to reschedule if something comes up. Keeping your

doctor visits is an important part of staying well.

### Keep your appointments and win a \$50 gift card.

You know that keeping your doctor appointments is part of staying healthy. But now there's another reason to make sure you keep your appointments. Alliance members who keep their doctor appointments will be entered into a drawing.

Each month the Alliance will pick one member from each county—Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced—who will win a gift card worth \$50. You are only eligible to win if you have not missed a doctor's appointment in the last six months. So be sure to show up for your appointments. You could be a winner!

## Communication with your Primary Care Provider

When it comes to health care, patients play a major role. One way to embrace your health care journey is by practicing good communication with your Primary Care Provider (PCP). A clear and honest communication between you and your PCP can help you both build a safe connection. This means you can voice your concerns and make informed choices about your health care. We know that talking with your PCP is not always easy. Below are some questions that can help you and your PCP address your health concerns during your visit.

Question	Example
What am I seeing or feeling that I want the doctor to check?	My left ear aches each time I blow my nose.
When did it begin?	It started about a week ago when I first caught a cold.
What makes it better or worse?	It feels worse when I blow my nose and feels better in the morning after I shower.
What questions do I have and what worries me?	When will I start to feel better? Does the medicine have side effects?



### Other tips:

- Bring a list of all the medications that you are taking.
- Consider asking a friend or family member to go with you.
- If you have any special needs, let your PCP know. This includes special medical needs such as wheelchair access or interpreting services.
- Ask what the office policy is for missed appointments. Some offices will have a charge if you miss an appointment.

# Medi-Cal and the Alliance— what’s the difference?

**M**edi-Cal and the Alliance are not the same. Medi-Cal is a State and Federal program that people apply for. If you qualify, you are able to get health care services. Central California Alliance for Health (the Alliance) is the health plan for most people who have Medi-Cal in Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced counties.

**Medi-Cal.** Your local county Medi-Cal office determines if you are eligible. If you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) through Social Security, your eligibility for

Medi-Cal is through Social Security. If you are eligible for Medi-Cal, you will get a Benefits Identification Card (BIC) in the mail. For the first month or two, you will have “fee-for-service” or “State” Medi-Cal. You can see any doctor that takes Medi-Cal. The doctor will bill the state.

**Call your county Medi-Cal or Social Security office to:**

- Ask if your Medi-Cal was approved or if you are still eligible
- Ask when you have to renew your Medi-Cal (Medi-Cal is renewed once a year)
- Update your address and phone

number

- Report you are moving or have moved to another county so your Medi-Cal can be transferred
- Report a change in income or family size
- Ask for a new BIC
- Let them know if you have other health insurance or if you used to have it but don’t have it any more

**The Alliance.** You will be automatically enrolled in the Alliance one or two months after you get on Medi-Cal. We will send you an Alliance ID card and a



## Service with a smile!

**H**ave you ever wondered who answers the phone when you call Member Services?

Our Member Services Representatives (MSRs) are caring, dedicated professionals. They are here to answer your calls Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

They are ready to:

- Tell you how the health plan works
- Answer questions about your benefits

- Explain how you can get covered medical care and services

Let you know which doctors and clinics you can go to

- Help you choose or change your Primary Care Provider
- Assist you with concerns or complaints

Our MSRs live and work in the communities we serve. And all of them share a desire to provide you with the best possible service. We have representatives who speak English, Spanish and Hmong.

County	Medi-Cal office	Social Security
Santa Cruz	1-888-421-8080	1-800-780-1106
Monterey	1-877-410-8823	1-877-696-9397
Merced	209-385-3000	1-888-632-7069

new member packet. The packet has important information on how our plan works and what doctors you can see. You need to pick a regular doctor or clinic. This will be your Primary Care Provider. If you don't pick one the first month you are a member, we will assign you to one.

The Alliance covers most Medi-Cal services but not all. Dental services are covered by the Denti-Cal Program. Its phone number is **1-800-322-6384**.

**Call the Alliance to:**

- Learn how your health plan works and what services are covered

- Choose or change your doctor
- Ask for a new Alliance ID card
- Let us know if you are unhappy with your doctor, the care you are getting or a decision the Alliance has made

You can reach the Alliance at **1-800-700-3874**.

**Stay covered—don't forget to renew your Medi-Cal.**

Medi-Cal is renewed once a year. The date depends on when you became eligible. Renewals are done by the county Medi-Cal office, not the Alliance.

If the Medi-Cal office needs

information from you to renew your benefits, they will send you a notice. If you have moved since you signed up, call the Medi-Cal office and give them your new address. If you get a renewal notice, it will tell you what you need to do and by when. It is important to provide any information asked for by the due date. If you don't, your Medi-Cal benefits will end.

If you lose your Medi-Cal, you will lose your health care coverage. You will not be an Alliance member anymore. You may reapply, but you may have a break in coverage.

If you have Medi-Cal through Social Security because you get Supplemental Security Income, you have a different process. Social Security will let you know if they need any information from you so that you stay eligible.

And if you speak a different language, they will use a telephone interpreter service.

To help us serve you better when you call, please:

- Have your member ID ready—you'll find this on your Alliance ID card.
- Clearly explain the reason for your call.
- Do you need help finding a doctor?
- Would you like to change your doctor?
- Do you have a question about your benefits?

You and your health are important to us. Please call us

**Reach out to us online**

Did you know there are many things you can do from our website? If you have access to the internet, you can:

- See what your benefits are
- Find out what medications we cover
- Ask for a new Alliance ID card
- Look for a provider

- File a complaint
- Find a copy of the Member Handbook/Evidence of Coverage

Just go to **www.ccah-alliance.org** and click on the "Members" section. Select your health plan and then choose from the menu of links on the left.

at **1-800-700-3874** if you have questions, need help or have concerns about your care as an Alliance member. There are also

many things you can do online. Please see the information above to find out what you can do from our website.



# Health tips for women of all ages

**T**aking care of yourself and making healthy choices can help protect you and your loved ones. Getting regular exams that check your reproductive system health is an important part of staying healthy. Here are five tips on women's health:

- 1. Get to know** how your reproductive system works and what is normal for you. Knowing these things will help you know if you need to see a doctor.
- 2. Get the HPV vaccine.** Girls can receive the HPV vaccine starting at 11 or 12 years of age. Girls and women 13 to 27 years old should get the vaccine if they did not receive it when they were younger.
- 3. Get screened for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).** Once a woman is sexually active, it is recommended that you visit the doctor for STIs, HIV and cervical

cancer screenings (Pap testing). You may also talk to your doctor about birth control options to avoid unplanned pregnancies.

- 4. Schedule checkups and screenings.** Women should have checkups and screenings, including Pap and HPV testing, every three years until they are at least 65 years old. These tests are important to screen for cancer. Keep visiting the doctor for screenings after you are finished having babies and have stopped having periods. The risk for many cancers goes up with age. Cancer treatment is most effective when the cancer is found early.
- 5. Check your breasts** for lumps or abnormalities once a month, a few days after your period ends. Talk to your doctor about when and how often mammograms may be right for you.

» **TAKE ACTION.** Learn more at [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov) or by calling the Office of Women's Health helpline at 1-800-994-9662 from 6 a.m. through 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## Do you have questions about your health? The Alliance can help!

Call the **FREE Alliance Nurse Advice Line** for answers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **1-844-971-8907**.

Do you need help managing your health? Call the **Case Management Line** at **1-800-700-3874, ext. 5512**. Or if you would like health education information, please call the **Health Education Line** at **1-800-700-3874, ext. 5580**.

You can talk to someone on our **Care Management team** from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.