

living healthy

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A newsletter for the members of Central California Alliance for Health



New service for Alliance members

When you have health questions, the **Alliance Nurse Advice Line** is a good place to start. It's free, fast and easy. You won't spend hours waiting in the emergency room. You'll get expert advice and quick answers to your health care questions.

The Alliance Nurse Advice Line connects you to a registered nurse for a one-on-one conversation to discuss your health problem. The nurse can help you decide:

- If you need to see a doctor

- If it is safe to wait or if you need care right away
- What to do if your symptoms get worse
- What you can do at home to feel better

The Alliance Nurse Advice Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call toll-free at **1-844-971-8907**. The phone number is also on your Alliance ID card. Hearing- or speech-impaired members can call **1-800-735-2929**.



Important dates

Member Services will not be available the following dates and times due to companywide and departmental meetings.

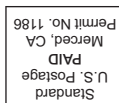
September 9	Closed for the day
September 17	Closed from 12:30 to 4:15 p.m.
October 15	Closed from 11:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.
December 10	Closed from 10:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Committed to serving you better. The Member Services Call Center has new hours—you can now speak to a Member Services Representative until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Call us if you have a question about how to use your Alliance

health plan, if you want to choose or change your doctor, or if you want to let us know you've changed your address or phone number.

Our physical office locations will close at 5 p.m., but our Member Services Representatives will take your calls until 6 p.m.



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Tips to read your medication label

Medicines, or drugs, come as either a prescription or over the counter (OTC). Prescription drugs are used under a doctor's care. OTC drugs can be bought and used without a doctor's prescription, and you buy them at a pharmacy or a store.

When using any kind of drug, it's important to read the drug label for instructions. Not following the instructions can hurt your health. Be sure to read the label each time and space your

doses out as evenly as possible.

See the drug label below to know what to look for. If you read the label and still have questions, call your doctor for help.

Other tips. The expiration date is when the medicine will expire. If only the month and year is written (for example, 05/2015), it will expire on the last day of the month (for example, 05/31/2015).

The labels on the side contain important information about your medicine, such as dietary restrictions (Do not take with grapefruit juice), activity restrictions (May cause drowsiness—do not drive), and/or drug interactions (Do not take with acetaminophen).

Direction	Tip
Take 1 tablet once daily	Take dose at the same time each day
Take 2 tablets once daily	Take both tablets at the same time
Take 1 tablet twice a day	Take doses 12 hours apart
Take 1 tablet three times a day	Take doses 8 hours apart

Pharmacy name and address

Drugstore phone number

Number used by the drugstore to identify this drug for your refills

Person who gets this drug

Instructions about how often and when to take this drug

Number of refills before a certain date

Don't use this drug past this date

Doctor's name

Prescription fill date

You just returned home from the hospital. What now?

If you or a loved one recently stayed at the hospital, you were probably sent home with a lot of papers. You may also not remember exactly what the doctors and nurses said to do. The guide *Taking Care of Myself: A Guide for When I Leave*

Formulary changes

Drug name	Used for	Action
Trospium 20mg and Trospium ER 60mg	Overactive bladder	Added
Alfuzosin ER 10mg	Benign prostatic hypertrophy	Added
Tudorza Pressair 400mcg, Breo Ellipta 100-25mcg and Anoro Ellipta 62.5-25mcg	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	Added
Daliresp 500mcg	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	Added as step therapy after trial and failure of two formulary alternatives
Alvesco 80mcg, 160mcg	Asthma	Added
pentoxifylline 400mg and cilostazol 50mg, 100mg	Intermittent claudication (leg pain caused by poor circulation)	Added
Pyrantel Pamoate 50mg/ml oral susp. (generic only)	Pinworms	Added
Didanosine 125mg, 400mg and Zidovudine 300mg	HIV	Added
fluvoxamine maleate 25mg, 50mg, 100mg	Obsessive-compulsive disorder	Added
acetic acid-aluminum 2% drops and neomycin sulfate 500mg	Antibiotic	Added
leucovorin calcium 5mg, 10mg, 25mg	Oncology	Added (quantity limit applies)
Emend 40mg, 80mg, 125mg	Nausea/vomiting	Added (quantity limit applies)
acetic acid 0.25% irrig. soln.	Irrigation of bladder	Added (quantity limit applies)
Carnitor 330mg, Carnitor SF 100mg/ml soln.	Levocarnitine deficiency	Added (quantity limit applies)
sodium chloride 0.9% vial and syringe and heparin flush	IV care	Added (quantity limit applies)

the Hospital will help you ask the right questions and keep track of important information.

The guide is available here: www.morehealth.org/ahrq-ghg.

Here are some questions you should ask your doctor or nurse before you leave the hospital.

KNOW YOUR MEDICATIONS.

- What are the names of the medicines I have to take? How much/many should I take?
- Why do I have to take these medicines?

- How do I take this medicine? With or without food? At a certain time of day?

- Can I take over-the-counter (OTC) medicines?

KNOW WHO TO FOLLOW UP WITH.

- When should I call my primary care doctor to make a follow-up appointment?
- Do I have to see any specialists? Ask for name, specialty, phone number, address and reason for appointment.
- When should I go to the emergency room?

OTHER QUESTIONS.

- Do I need any special equipment at home?
- Who will help me with my daily activities?

You may think of other questions to ask. Remember, it is your nurses' and doctors' job to answer your questions so you can get well and be safe.





FLU SHOT

Facts and myths

Myth: The flu is not a serious disease.

Facts: Influenza (flu) is a serious disease of the nose, throat and lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia.* There are 200,000 people hospitalized and thousands who die each year from flu in the U.S.

**Pneumonia is a lung infection that can make you very sick. You may cough, run a fever and have a hard time breathing.*

Myth: The flu shot can make you sick.

Facts: The flu shot cannot make you sick. The flu viruses in the flu shots are not alive, which means they cannot cause infection. However, the nasal spray flu vaccine does contain live viruses. The viruses in the nasal vaccine are weakened, which means they also cannot make you sick.

Myth: The flu shot does not work.
Facts: Most of the time, a flu shot will prevent the flu. Studies show that the flu shot works between 70 and 90 percent of the time when there is a good match between the viruses in the vaccines and those circulating. **Getting the flu shot is your best protection during flu season.**

Myth: The side effects are worse than the flu.

Facts: The worst side effect you are likely to get from a shot is a sore arm. The nasal spray flu vaccine might cause nasal congestion. The risk of having a severe allergic reaction is less than 1 in 4 million.

Myth: Only older people need the flu vaccine.

Facts: Everyone needs to be protected against the flu! Doctors recommend that children 6 months and older get a flu shot every year. Children are two to three times more likely to get the flu than adults, because their immune systems are not completely developed.

The Alliance pays for flu shots

Getting a flu shot each year can protect you and your family. Alliance members 6 months to 18 years old must get the flu shot from their doctor. Call your doctor today to make an appointment.

Members 19 years and older can get a flu shot from their doctor. They can also get a flu shot at most Alliance pharmacies. Call your pharmacy and ask if they offer free shots for Alliance members 19 and older. (The Alliance cannot refund members who pay for a flu shot on their own.)

If you are not sure who your doctor is or if you need help finding a pharmacy, please call the Member Services Department at 1-800-700-3874.



Myth: You must get a flu shot in the fall to be protected against the flu.

Facts: You should get a flu shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available, even in August or September. The flu virus tends to spread from October through May. However, it's never too late to get a flu shot. You can get a flu shot anytime during flu season to help protect you and your family.

Staying healthy with diabetes

The Alliance and your Primary Care Provider (PCP) are here to help you control your diabetes to stay healthy. Your PCP may meet with you a couple of times throughout the year to help you manage your diabetes. Your PCP can also make sure you are getting the tests you need to stay healthy. Keeping blood sugar levels under control can help you stay healthy and prevent future health problems. By working with your PCP to manage your diabetes, you can live a healthier life.

The Alliance has a program called *Live Better with Diabetes* for members who have diabetes and who are 21 years or older. This program covers diabetes education and nutrition visits, classes, and blood glucose meters.

Talk to your doctor about when you should have these tests:

- Hemoglobin A-1-c (average blood sugar)
- Cholesterol
- Diabetic eye exam
- Urine test to check your kidneys

These tests can help you and your PCP know how well your diabetes is being controlled.

To find out more about this program, call the Alliance Health Education Line at **1-800-700-3874, ext. 5580**.

To learn more about diabetes, you can go to this website: **www.diabetes.org**.



Did you know that the Alliance can also give you a \$50 gift card for completing certain tests?

WIC works!

The Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) has been helping families in our communities for the last 40 years. WIC is a public health nutrition program made up of a team of health care workers dedicated to improving health.

WHO QUALIFIES?

- Women who are pregnant, are breastfeeding or just had a baby
- Children under 5 years old (as well as foster children)
- Families with low to medium

income (working families may qualify)

HOW CAN WIC HELP?

- Nutrition education
- Food vouchers
- Breastfeeding education and support
- Referrals for health care and community resources

WIC also has classes on how to start healthy habits and how to keep those healthy habits for life. Those who work at WIC have a goal of making you feel that you are not alone. WIC is a great resource,

and it helps our communities to be stronger and healthier!

If you need help with food, have questions about foods you should be eating during pregnancy, need breastfeeding support or would like to know more about how your child is growing, call your local WIC. The team is here to help!

HOW DO I CONTACT MY LOCAL WIC?

- Phone number: **1-888-WIC-WORKS** or **1-888-942-9675**
- Website: **www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx**



Stay covered

Don't forget to renew your Medi-Cal

If you are a Medi-Cal member, you will need to renew your Medi-Cal eligibility once a year. A renewal can also be called a redetermination. Renewals are done by county Medi-Cal offices, not the Alliance.

How will I know when I need to renew? You will get a notice and the renewal forms in the mail two months before your renewal date. The notice will be sent to the last address the Medi-Cal office has on file for you. If you have moved since you signed up, call your local county Medi-Cal office to give them your new address.

How do I renew? Your renewal notice will tell you what you need to do. It will tell you what information you need to provide. It's important to do your renewal before the due date. If you do not, your Medi-Cal benefits will end.

You can renew by mail, by phone, in person or online. All of the information you need will be on the forms that are sent to you. Even if you don't have everything the renewal form is asking for, call, send or bring in what you have. This will let the Medi-Cal staff know you got the form and want to keep your Medi-Cal. You can also call the number listed on the form if you have any questions.

If you don't complete your renewal, your Medi-Cal benefits

will end. After that, you will have 90 days to complete the renewal to reopen your Medi-Cal. If you reopen your Medi-Cal within 60 days of your Medi-Cal ending, you should still be an Alliance member. If you reopen your Medi-Cal between 60 and 90 days after your Medi-Cal ended, you will have state Medi-Cal for a month or two before becoming an Alliance member again. After 90 days, you will have to reapply if you want Medi-Cal again.

What does it mean if I lose my Medi-Cal? If you lose your Medi-Cal, you will lose your health care coverage. You will not be an Alliance member any more. You can reapply, but you may have a break in your coverage.

If you have Medi-Cal through Social Security. If you have Medi-Cal because you are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) through the Social Security Administration, you have a different process. The Social Security office will let you know when you need to renew your eligibility.

County Medi-Cal contact information:

- Santa Cruz County, **1-888-421-8080**
- Monterey County, **1-877-410-8823**
- Merced County, **209-385-3000**