

# health sense



Fall/Winter 2015



## No flu for you

**FLU SHOTS KEEP  
PEOPLE FROM  
GETTING VERY SICK**

**W**hy are flu shots so important? Some people can get very sick if they get the flu. They can even die.

Even if you are not in this high-risk group, you still need the flu shot. It helps you avoid the flu and protects those around you who are at high risk.

The high-risk group includes those who:

- Have a long-term disease, like lung or heart disease or diabetes.
- Have a disability.
- Are pregnant.
- Are under 5 years old.
- Are 50 or older.

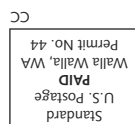
If you get the flu shot and still get the flu, you will likely not get as sick as you did not get the shot.

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

## ✓ Mark your calendar Get your flu shot at our walk-in flu clinics

<b>Antioch Health Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Oct. 19, 21, 28</li> <li>■ Oct. 26</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6–8 p.m.</li> <li>■ 1–4:30 p.m.</li> </ul>
<b>Brentwood Health Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Oct. 12, 26</li> <li>■ Oct. 13, 20</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6–8 p.m.</li> <li>■ 1–4:30 p.m.</li> </ul>
<b>Concord Health Center, Building 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Oct. 13, 20</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6–8 p.m.</li> </ul>
<b>Martinez Health Center, Building 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Oct. 21, 22</li> <li>■ Oct. 23</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6–8 p.m.</li> <li>■ 9–11 a.m.</li> </ul>
<b>Miller Wellness Center Martinez</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Oct. 17</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 8:30–11:30 a.m.</li> </ul>
<b>Pittsburg Health Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Oct. 13, 15, 20, 22</li> <li>■ Oct. 24</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6–8 p.m.</li> <li>■ 9–11 a.m.</li> </ul>
<b>West County Health Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Oct. 14</li> <li>■ Oct. 16</li> <li>■ Oct. 17</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 5–8 p.m.</li> <li>■ 8 a.m.–noon</li> <li>■ 1–4:30 p.m.</li> </ul>

**If you cannot make it to these walk-in clinics, please call the appointment line at 877-661-6230, option 5, and ask for a flu shot appointment.**





# Across cultures

## 5 WAYS TO HELP YOUR DOCTOR UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU NEED

**Y**our doctor is trained to give you the best health care. But if the two of you are from different cultures, your doctor might need your help to understand what is best for you. Here's what you can do:

- 1.** Share your culture. Describe the medicines you use. Tell your doctor if there are any foods you can't eat.
- 2.** Explain how you and your family make decisions about health.
- 3.** Tell your doctor if there are medical treatments that go against your beliefs. It will help him or her choose the right care for you.
- 4.** Answer your doctor's questions. It's OK to say if a question makes you uncomfortable. But give as much information as you can. It

will help your doctor keep you healthy.

- 5.** Repeat what your doctor tells you in your own words. That way he or she will know when to explain something again in a different way.

You are the expert on something your doctor needs to know about—your culture. So take time to make sure he or she understands. It's for your health.

Sources: American Geriatrics Society; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**» TALK TO YOUR DOC.**  
Doctors know a lot of things, but they can still learn from you. Tell your doctor about your culture. It will help him or her give you the best care.

## CCHP can help you quit smoking

Need help quitting smoking or using other types of tobacco? Medi-Cal members can call the California Smokers' Helpline at **800-NO-BUTTS**. You can get free cessation classes, information and counseling—all over the phone.

CCHP members can also get meds to help them quit smoking. Options include gum, lozenges, patches and bupropion. These options are available without an authorization. Nicotine inhalers and sprays do require prior authorization.

When you call the Smokers' Helpline, ask about programs like First Five and the Asian Smokers' Quitline. For more information, visit: [www.nobutts.org/county-listing](http://www.nobutts.org/county-listing).

## New features for our members on the CCHP website

CCHP is excited to announce 2 new features on our website. Members can now go to our website and request an identification card or change their primary care physician. You can access these services at our main page at [www.cchealth.org/healthplan](http://www.cchealth.org/healthplan). From the main page, choose "Member Services" and you will see the options listed in the left-hand column. Members still have the option to call Member Services at 877-661-6230 (press option 2 after language selection), but we encourage you to try the new options.

# Cigarette-free stress relief

PUT SOME CALM INTO YOUR QUIT-SMOKING PLAN

If you have ever tried to quit smoking, you know it's not an easy thing. It can be even harder when you have a bad day at work. Or a flat tire. Or a bill that's late.

Really, any stressful moment can trigger a craving. And if you give in and light up, you might feel like it's no use trying to quit.

Take heart. There are other ways to relax besides smoking a cigarette. Here are a few nerve-calmingers that can help you find peace in a smoke-free life.

**1. Take a short stroll.** A quick walk around the block can ease stress and the urge to smoke. It might even put you in a better mood.

**2. Chat with a friend.** Pick up the phone and talk about your day with someone you trust.

**3. Find distraction.** Do something fun for a few minutes. Play a game. Or listen to a soothing song.

**4. Find a quiet moment.** When you start to feel stressed, close your eyes and sit quietly. It may help to picture yourself in a relaxing place, such as beside a peaceful stream.

**5. Go for a soothing massage.** You might not realize how much tension your muscles can hold. Try giving your neck or shoulders a quick rub to relax.

**6. Think happy thoughts.** Quitting smoking is one of the healthiest things you can do. And you'll save money. Focusing on the good you're doing may help get you through a stressful moment and cravings.

**7. Take a cool drink of water.** Caffeine in coffee or tea can make you feel nervous and make your stress worse. So try cutting back.

For help quitting smoking, talk with your provider. To read more quit tips, visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov).

Sources: American Heart Association; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



## WHAT'S IN CIGARETTE SMOKE?

○	<b>ACETONE</b> FOUND IN NAIL POLISH REMOVER
○	<b>ACETIC ACID</b> FOUND IN HAIR DYE
○	<b>AMMONIA</b> USED IN HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS
○	<b>ARSENIC</b> FOUND IN RAT POISON & PESTICIDES
○	<b>BENZENE</b> FOUND IN RUBBER CEMENT & GASOLINE
○	<b>BUTANE</b> FOUND IN LIGHTER FLUID
○	<b>CADMIUM</b> FOUND IN BATTERY ACID
○	<b>CARBON MONOXIDE</b> FOUND IN CAR EXHAUST FUMES
○	<b>FORMALDEHYDE</b> USED IN EMBALMING FLUID
○	<b>HEXAMINE</b> FOUND IN BARBECUE LIGHTER FLUID
○	<b>HYDROGEN CYANIDE</b> USED AS A CHEMICAL WEAPON
○	<b>LEAD</b> USED IN BATTERIES
○	<b>METHANOL</b> FOUND IN ROCKET FUEL & ANTIFREEZE
○	<b>NAPHTHALENE</b> FOUND IN MOTH BALLS
○	<b>NICOTINE</b> USED AS INSECTICIDE
○	<b>TOLUENE</b> USED TO MAKE PAINT THINNERS

KNOWN TO CAUSE CANCER

MAY CAUSE CANCER

Sources: American Lung Association; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



## 5 things to do with your leftover Halloween candy

**H**alloween is a glorious holiday. Inventive costumes that show off all your abs work. Parties galore. And of course, the chance to treat your sweet tooth to all kinds of candy. Even better? You can enjoy Halloween indulgences without derailing your healthy-eating goals. Just try these tactics to get rid of excess candy—and maybe even do some good!

**Treat your office.** Upgrade the candy into dessert! Bake sweets into cookies, brownies or cupcakes. You can chop them up finely and fold them into batter. Or just sprinkle bits and pieces on top of the finished product. Then take the whole batch to work. Everyone wins: You get to experiment in the kitchen, and your co-workers will get an unexpected snack.

**Donate it.** Unload your stash somewhere that needs an extra dose of sweetness. That might be a nearby police station or a women's

and children's shelter. To make this one even better, ask your neighbors and friends for their extra candy. That way there's more to share.

**Ship it to troops.** If anyone could use a brighter day, it's troops overseas. Operation Gratitude's Halloween candy program ships packages full of goodies to troops as another way of thanking them for their service. You can also send along toothbrushes, floss and toothpaste.

**Make your own care package.** Almost everyone has a loved one who lives far away. Maybe your sister is off at college,

or you moved halfway across the country from your parents. Grab a shoebox and fill it with your leftovers. Then top it off with a few other things you know your loved one will be ecstatic to get in the mail. Send it off, and just wait for their delighted phone call!

**Freeze it.** Tuck the candy away in the freezer. You can pull it out for holiday-related crafts like gingerbread houses. Most freezers are like vortexes that can often make you forget what's even in there. So it's an easy way to keep the candy out of sight and out of mind, until it's time to use it.

Source: [www.womenshealthmag.com](http://www.womenshealthmag.com)

### Pumpkin patch trivia

- Pumpkins are cucurbits. This family of vine plants also includes cucumbers and squash.
- Pumpkins grow on every continent but Antarctica.
- Pumpkin was once thought to remove freckles.
- The largest pumpkin on record weighed 2,323 pounds.

Sources: American Institute for Cancer Research; Guinness World Records; University of Illinois Extension

# Tricks for a safe Halloween

Once upon a time, Halloween had more tricks than treats. Well into the 20th century, pranksters roamed the streets every October 31, making plenty of noise—and mischief. Some towns actually appointed special police to make sure things didn't get out of hand.

Today's annual costume-and-candy extravaganza probably seems tame by comparison. Still, Halloween safety is as important as ever—and not that tricky to achieve. Here's how:

Choose a fitting disguise. Help kids pick costumes that:

- Fit well and won't make them trip.
- Are made of flame-resistant materials.
- Aren't too dark and have reflective tape for nighttime visibility.

■ Include light sticks or a flashlight with fresh batteries.

Accessorize with nontoxic makeup (which won't block vision like a mask might) and sturdy, well-fitting shoes. Make sure any objects that are part of the costume, such as swords, are soft and flexible.

Follow the safest treat trail. Kids of all ages should know—and practice—these door-to-door rules:

- Stay with the group. For kids under 12 years old, that group should include a parent or other trusted adult.
- Never go inside a house or apartment without a parent.
- Stay on sidewalks, and avoid dark areas and all alleys.
- Cross streets in groups and only at crosswalks.
- Walk, don't run.
- Save all treats so they can be

inspected at home before they're eaten.

If kids are mature enough to go trick-or-treating without an adult, insist they carry cellphones and IDs, follow a predetermined route in a familiar area, and meet their curfew.

At evening's end, the best treat goes to parents: peace of mind that Halloween can be both safe and fun.



## Halloween food safety tips for parents

Take these simple steps to help your children have a fun—and safe—Halloween. If your kids go trick-or-treating, remember:

- Children shouldn't snack while they're out trick-or-treating. Urge your children to wait until they get home. Look through their goody bags first to make sure everything is wrapped properly.
- To help prevent children from snacking, give them a light meal or snack before they head out.
- Tell children not to accept—and especially not to eat—anything that isn't commercially wrapped.
- Parents of very young children should remove any choking hazards.

Keep an eye out for gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys.

■ Inspect treats for signs of tampering. That might be unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in the wrapper. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.

For Halloween parties hosted at home, keep these tips in mind:

- If juice or cider is served to children at Halloween parties, make sure it is treated to destroy harmful bacteria. Juice or cider that has not been treated will say so on the label.
- No matter how tempting, don't taste raw cookie dough or cake batter.
- Before going bobbing for apples,

an all-time favorite Halloween game, rinse the apples under cool running water. It'll help remove bacteria. As an added precaution, use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.

■ Scare bacteria away by keeping all perishable foods chilled until it's time to serve them. These include, for example, finger sandwiches, cheese platters, fruit or tossed salads, cold pasta dishes with meat, and anything with whipped cream and cream cheese frosting. Cold temperatures help keep most harmful bacteria from multiplying. And don't leave the food out for more than 2 hours.

Source: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)



## Mammograms: Now available digitally

**A**ll mammograms start the same way—with an x-ray of the breast. But a digital mammogram records and stores images on a computer instead of on x-ray film.

Digital mammograms still require compressing the breasts to get good images. But they have some advantages over film.

**Viewing and sharing.** After you have a mammogram, a radiologist examines the images. The radiologist can adjust digital

images on the computer screen to get a better look. That might mean changing the size, brightness or contrast. Some studies show that this reduces the number of women who need to return for extra tests.

Doctors can also share the images electronically. It's similar to how digital photos are viewed and shared.

Both film and digital mammograms work well at finding breast cancer. But some studies show that digital images may be better for women younger than 50.

**» DON'T PUT IT OFF.** Talk to your health care provider today about your personal risk for breast cancer. And ask about scheduling a mammogram. It could save your life.

They may also be better for women with dense breast tissue.

**Safe and effective.** All x-rays use radiation. But the dose from both film and digital mammograms is very small. In fact, one mammogram delivers about the same amount of radiation as you would be exposed to from natural surroundings over about 7 weeks.

If you only have access to film mammograms, don't worry. Both types are very good at finding breast changes early. That's when treatment works best.

Women should begin having yearly mammograms at age 50. To find out more, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

### Spread the word

#### OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

This fall, let the women in your life know this. You can do 2 things to beat breast cancer.

1. At age 40, talk with your health care provider about your risk for the disease.
2. From ages 50 to 74, have a mammogram every 2 years. This test can spot breast cancer in its early stages.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Source: American Cancer Society

# Women: Protect your heart at any age



If you're a woman, here's something you should know about heart disease: You don't need gray hair to get it—or die from it.

It's true that a woman's risk of heart disease increases with age. In fact, heart disease is the #1 cause of death for American women over 65.

But the disease is also the second leading cause of death for women 45 to 64. And it's the third one for women 35 to 44.

That's why it's crucial to protect your heart no matter how old you are. Experts recommend that you:

**Choose a heart-healthy diet.** Eat mostly fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy and whole-grain foods. Heart-smart protein options include lean meats, fish and beans.

**Try to limit the overall amount of fat in your foods.** Replace saturated and trans fats (like butter or partially hydrogenated oils) with healthy

oils, like olive and canola. Also, pay attention to portion size.

**Move more.** Most adults need to do at least 2 hours of moderate activity (such as brisk walking) every week. Also include strengthening exercises that work all the major muscle groups 2 or more days a week.

**Make it personal.** Talk with your doctor about your risk factors and what you can do to lower them. Those risks might include:

- Smoking.
- Having diabetes, high blood cholesterol or high blood pressure.
- Being overweight.
- Drinking alcohol.

Also, ask your doctor how to recognize the signs of a heart attack. They are sometimes different for women than for men. And if you notice them in yourself or someone else, call 911.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## SCREENING TESTS by age for WOMEN



AGE

20

### CHLAMYDIA

Test yearly through age 24, if sexually active.

### CERVICAL CANCER

Have a Pap test every 3 years, starting at 21.

### BLOOD PRESSURE

Start screening annually.

### CHOLESTEROL

Start screening if at risk.\*

25

### CHLAMYDIA

Continue screening, depending on risk factors.

30

### CERVICAL CANCER

Have a Pap test plus an HPV test every 5 years (preferred) or a Pap test every 3 years.†

### DIABETES

Ask your doctor about screening if your blood pressure is greater than 135/80 mm Hg.

45

### CHOLESTEROL

Start screening at age 45.

50

### BREAST CANCER

Have a mammogram every 2 years.

### COLORECTAL CANCER

Talk to your doctor about screening options.

65

### OSTEOPOROSIS

Start screening, depending on your risk factors.

These recommendations are for most women. Talk with your doctor about what's right for you.

\* Risk factors for cholesterol: obesity (BMI  $\geq$  30), hypertension, and coronary heart disease (CHD) in a mother or sister who is less than 60 years of age.

† Women who have been screened regularly and had normal results can stop screening at age 65.

Sources: American Cancer Society; American Heart Association; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease; National Osteoporosis Foundation; Office on Women's Health



## In praise of pumpkins

**R**ound and orange, the unmistakable sign of fall. But pumpkins don't shine only as jack-o'-lanterns. These nutritious golden stars of the harvest season—packed with fiber, potassium and vitamin A—have a long history of lighting up many a delish dish.

### The pie's not the limit.

Pumpkin can be found in everything from summertime smoothies to specialty coffees that taste like autumn.

In fall and winter, try fresh pumpkin in: ■ Chili. ■ Enchiladas.

- Pasta dishes. ■ Soups and stews.
- Stir-fries.

Be sure to pick a blemish-free pumpkin (labeled as *sweet* or *pie*) that's heavy and free of soft spots and has a 1- to 2-inch stem still attached. Peel it, cut it into cubes—and it's ready to cook.

Sound like too much work? Try plain, solid-packed canned pumpkin. It's as nutritious as fresh—and available year-round. The puree can add savory goodness to dips, breads, muffins, puddings and smoothies.

Sources: American Institute of Cancer Research; Penn State Extension; Produce for Better Health Foundation; University of Illinois Extension

### Pumpkin by the numbers

One cup of cooked pumpkin (fresh or canned) contains:

- 2 grams of protein.
- 3 grams of fiber.
- 49 calories.
- 564 mg of potassium.
- 22,650 international units of vitamin A.

Source: Penn State Extension



## Chocolate pumpkin chiffon pudding

Serves: 6

### INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup pumpkin puree (homemade) or canned pumpkin puree
- ½ cup coconut milk
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup coconut sugar or sugar substitute
- 1 cup chocolate chunks, melted
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- 5 drops vanilla

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a food processor, combine pumpkin, coconut milk and eggs.
2. Pulse in sugar, melted chocolate, salt and vanilla.
3. Transfer into ½ cup mason or jelly jars, and place in fridge for 2 hours to set.
4. Serve.

Source: www.elanaspantry.com