

# health sense



Spring/Summer 2015



## Have a safe summer

**S**ummer is a laid-back time—think flip-flops, T-shirts and barbecues.

Although it's easy to be casual about many things in the summer, it's not good to be casual about safety. With warm weather comes the risk for certain injuries and health problems.

Here are some ways to keep you and your family safe:

■ **Secure home windows.** Opening the windows is a must if you don't have air conditioning or if you're simply trying to keep your electric bill in check. But keep safety in mind if children are in your home. Every year thousands of kids in the U.S. are killed or injured in falls from windows. Don't count on screens to keep kids safe. Your best choice is to install window guards

or window stops. You can buy them online or at hardware stores.

■ **Make helmets a priority.** Many kids practically live on their bikes during the summer. Before yours hop on theirs, make sure they're wearing a helmet. (The same advice applies to you.) Helmets help reduce the risk of head injury and death from bicycle crashes. Helmets are also a good idea when riding a horse or skateboard, batting

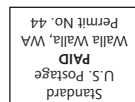
or running bases in baseball or softball, or using inline skates.

■ **Watch out for heatstroke.** It is a medical emergency. Signs and symptoms include a body temperature above 103 degrees; hot, red, dry or moist skin; a rapid and strong pulse; and possible unconsciousness. Call 911 immediately if you think someone has heatstroke. Move the person to a cooler environment. Try to bring his or her temperature down with cool cloths or a bath. Do not give the person fluids.

■ **Know the signs of anaphylaxis.** This is an allergic reaction. It can be deadly. It is most often caused by foods, insect stings, medications and latex. Watch for a red rash (usually itchy) with hives or welts; swelling in the throat or other areas of the body; wheezing; and trouble breathing or swallowing.

Anaphylaxis requires immediate medical attention, including an injection of the drug epinephrine and a trip to the hospital emergency department.

Sources: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Safe Kids Worldwide; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



# Eat well, be well on vacation

**T**aking it easy is one of the best parts about a vacation. But while the rest and scenery may do you some good, the same can't always be said of the food—especially when you're driving to your destination. Think empty-calorie, gas station munchies.

And that could spell trouble if you're watching your waistline or trying to eat a healthy diet. Also, the risk of food poisoning rises in summertime. So you'll also want to keep foods safe while you travel.

**5 to remember.** Before you hit the road, take these tips in tow:

**1. Pack some healthy snacks.** Nutritious, portable foods include whole-grain crackers; fresh fruit (washed ahead of time); peanut butter sandwiches; pre-cut veggies; wasabi peas; dried mixed fruit; and unsalted nuts or popcorn.



**2. Cool it.** If you bring a cooler, pack plenty of ice or a frozen pack. Put a refrigerator thermometer in the cooler to make sure the temperature inside stays below 40 degrees—the safe zone for foods.

**3. Choose wisely.** If you stop for a bite, look for healthier options. Those include low-fat smoothies, grilled chicken breast sandwiches, and veggie-based dishes.

**4. Wash up.** Remember to scrub your hands with soap and water before preparing and eating food. Bring along sanitizer too.

**5. Know when to toss it.** You might picnic at parks or grill at campgrounds. If you do, don't eat anything that's been sitting out for more than 2 hours—or 1 hour on a 90-degree or hotter day.

Source: American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

## CCHP ADVICE NURSE

# 24/7 health advice

**T**he Advice Nurse Unit is here to help Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) members. We are open 24/7, including holidays. Please call **877-661-6230, option 1**, to speak to an Advice Nurse.

When calling about your child, please make sure your child is with you at the time of your call. To give the best care, the Advice Nurse needs up-to-the-minute information. You may need to ask

the child questions. If your child is not with you when you call, the Advice Nurse will not be able to help you. That may delay getting care for your child.

We can help with:

- Emergencies.
- Serious medical issues.
- Advice when your provider is not available.

Depending on your symptoms, you may be eligible for the following:

- An urgent care appointment.

- A telephone appointment with a CCHP primary care provider.
- A standing order for medications for many symptoms.

And Advice Nurses answer questions about:

- Health care and medications.
- Infectious disease exposure.
- Caring for yourself or a family member.
- If and when you need to be seen.
- If a visit to the emergency room is required.
- Current immunization information for you or your child.
- Health-related resources in your community.
- Contacting your provider.

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

# Members get rewarded for their dedication to health

**Diabetes.** We offer a \$20 Target gift card to Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) Medi-Cal members ages 18 to 75 for getting recommended care. To get this incentive, members need to complete 6 diabetes-related examinations or tests in 12 months. These include a dilated eye exam, HbA1c, LDL cholesterol, microalbumin, foot exam and blood pressure. Members can get the incentive once every 12 months.

**Pediatric obesity.** We offer a \$20 Target gift card to overweight and obese children ages 2 to 18. They need to participate in CCHP-approved programs for healthy eating habits and/or exercise. Each child is able to receive 1 incentive per year. The incentive is given to Medi-Cal children and their families that complete 3 sessions (within a 12-month period). The family member and the child must attend a doctor visit and 2 other visits or approved classes on the importance

of nutrition or exercise.

**Prenatal/postpartum.**

We offer a gift card incentive for pregnant CCHP Medi-Cal members. You may earn up to \$40 for participating in the program. For the first prenatal visit during the first trimester, the member receives a \$20 Target gift card. Also, a \$20 gift card is given when they complete 1 postpartum visit. The postpartum visit must be within 3 to 8 weeks after delivery.

» **TAKE ACTION.** To learn more or sign up, contact Lourdes Jensen, RN, CDE, at 925-313-6968. Or email her at [Disease.Management@hsd.cccounty.us](mailto:Disease.Management@hsd.cccounty.us)

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» **TAKE ACTION.** To learn more, contact Catherine Harrell, MSW, at 925-313-6427. Or email her at [Catherine.Harrell@hsd.cccounty.us](mailto:Catherine.Harrell@hsd.cccounty.us)

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

## Measuring and improving

**C**ontra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) cares about your health care needs. We work to make sure you get the right care at the right time. For the first time, CCHP earned Accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance. We earned it for our ability to protect and improve the quality of care our members receive. The chart at right shows some of the things we measure and how we compare to other plans like us.

You can learn more about the Quality Management (QM) Program. Visit [cchealth.org/healthplan/about-us.php](http://cchealth.org/healthplan/about-us.php) or call 925-313-6917. We will send you a copy of the QM description.

How we compare to other plans	
Care for members with back pain	Better
Appointments for children 3–6 years old	As good
Care for pregnant women	As good
Vaccinations for children and adolescents	Better
Access to care	Improving



SKIN CANCER

ABCs



ASYMMETRY

Half of the mole or spot is unlike the other half.



BORDER

It has an irregular or undefined border.



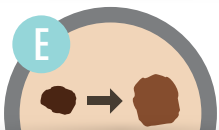
COLOR

The color changes from one area to another.



DIAMETER

The mole or spot is larger than a pencil eraser. (Can be smaller.)



EVOLVING

It looks different from others on your body or is changing.

Source: American Academy of Dermatology

# Say bye-bye to the burn

## PROTECT KIDS FROM THE SUN

**T**he sun may be 93 million miles away, but it's close to most kids' hearts. That's because sunny days are great for the outdoor activities that many kids love. But without proper protection, kids can end up with a painful sunburn today that may lead to some serious problems in the future—including skin cancer.

**Sun-savvy tips.** It only takes about 15 minutes for the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays to damage unprotected skin. Because these powerful rays can even break through clouds, kids need to have their skin protected on overcast days as well as on sunny ones.

To make sure your kids are covered every day:

**Layer wisely.** About 15 minutes before going outside, kids need their first layer of protection: sunscreen. Use one that's labeled *broad spectrum*, which means it screens out both UVA and UVB rays. It should also have an SPF

(sun protection factor) of at least 30. For extra protection on sensitive areas, like noses and shoulders, choose a product with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide.

Clothes that offer the best sun protection—long-sleeved shirts and long pants with a tight weave—aren't always practical in hot weather. In that case, T-shirts, long shorts and beach cover-ups are good choices. Top off every outfit with a brimmed hat that covers the scalp and shades the ears, face and neck.

To help shield their eyes from the sun, kids also need sunglasses. (Exposure to UV rays can cause cataracts later in life.) Look for sunglasses with labels that say they offer at least 99% UV protection.

**Watch the time.** The sun's UV rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.—good hours for indoor activities. But if your kids are playing outside, make sure they get an additional dose of sunscreen every 2 hours.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





## Safer sunscreen

**S**hopping for sunscreen soon? That's a smart move.

The right sunscreen will help you prevent early skin aging and reduce your risk of skin cancer.

Some sunscreens help prevent only sunburn, not skin cancer. Pay attention to labels. You'll want a product that will do both.

The brand name does not matter. Instead, look for a sunscreen that says that it:

- Blocks both ultraviolet (UV) A and B rays. Some labels call this broad-spectrum. Both wordings mean the product will help prevent skin cancer.
- Has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher.
- Is water-resistant.

**How to apply.** No sunscreen will help for long if it's not used the right way. To help keep your skin safe from the sun's harmful rays:

- Apply sunscreen about 15 minutes before going outdoors.
- Use plenty of sunscreen to cover all bare skin well.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours.

Also reapply right away after swimming or sweating a lot.

■ Remember to use sunscreen all year round. Toss the bottle after the "use by" date.

### Ingredients to avoid

■ **Oxybenzone.** This chemical helps other chemicals penetrate the skin. It can cause chemical reactions and may disrupt hormones.

■ **Octinoxate.** This is the most common ingredient in sunscreen. It can lead to hormone disruption and premature aging.

■ **Retinyl palmitate (vitamin A palmitate).** This ingredient may damage DNA and lead to cancer.

■ **Homosalate.** This UV-absorbing ingredient accumulates in the body and disrupts hormones.

■ **Octocrylene.** When exposed to UV light, this chemical can damage cells.

■ **Paraben preservatives.** They can cause allergic reactions, disrupt hormones and affect reproduction in humans.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology; U.S. Food and Drug Administration; [www.womenshealth.com](http://www.womenshealth.com)

## Healthy barbecuing

**G**rilled, fresh zucchini and peppers. Smoky corn on the cob. Turkey burgers with shallots and cilantro.

These tasty treats could be the stars of your next barbecue.

You can still grill up family favorites like burgers and hot dogs once in a while. But try out leaner meats, fruits and veggies. They not only taste great—they're good for you too.

For a healthier grill night:

- 1. Put fruits and veggies first.** Drizzle large mushrooms with olive or canola oil and cook them like steaks. Marinate and skewer pineapple or bell pepper chunks. Wrap chopped carrots, onions and herbs in foil to grill.
- 2. Choose low-fat meats.** Try turkey, chicken or fish instead of red meat. Use a meat thermometer to be sure food is cooked to the right temperature and is safe to eat.
- 3. Make a marinade.** Let meats marinate for at least 30 minutes before you grill. It can help cut down on charring, which makes harmful chemicals.
- 4. Cook slowly.** To avoid charring, don't put foods directly over the heat source. Set them to the side and keep flames low.
- 5. Beware of germs.** Wash hands before, during and after cooking. Pack a hand cleaner in your cooler. Wash knives and plates that touch raw meat before you reuse them. And never reuse marinade unless you boil it first.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Institute for Cancer Research

SUMMER FUN

# Be wise around water

**S**ummer and water just seem to go together. That makes this a good time to review some water safety rules. When you're at a pool or the beach, they may help keep you and your family safe.

1. Make sure everyone learns how to swim. It's best to get lessons from a qualified teacher.
2. Swim where lifeguards are present. Stay away from boats and people fishing.
3. Always watch your children when they're near the water. They should never be left alone while playing near or swimming in water. Toddlers should not be farther than arm's length from an adult. Make sure you don't get distracted.
4. Get everyone out of the water if you can hear thunder or see lightning.
5. Don't rely on blow-up toys to protect your child. They can lose their air quickly.
6. Empty blow-up pools after each use.
7. Don't allow diving in shallow water. Always check the water depth. And make sure there are no hazards.
8. Don't let kids run or goof around near water.
9. When in a boat, always wear a life jacket.



10. Don't drink alcohol if you're swimming, boating or watching your kids swim.
11. Make sure you and your kids

wash your hands before eating.  
12. If you can't find your child, look in the water first.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Red Cross; National Institutes of Health

## Preventing insect bites and stings



When you're outdoors, you don't need to let insects bug you.

For protection:

- Wear long sleeves, long pants and socks.
- Wear a hat.
- Use insect repellent. But don't use insect repellent on babies. And check the labels of products before using on older kids. They should contain no more than 10% DEET.
- Avoid standing water.
- Stay out of wooded, brushy and grassy areas.
- Don't use scented soaps and perfumes. These can be inviting to insects.
- Avoid wearing bright colors. They can attract bees.

Most bug bites are harmless. But if you have a bad reaction or feel sick after being stung or bitten, see your primary care provider right away.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration



## DEHYDRATION

# Summer time, thirsty time

**D**uring the long days of summer, it's natural to think about watering your lawn and garden, the houseplants, and the pets. But what about your need for water?

Getting plenty of fluids every day is essential for good health. Water is in every cell in the body. It helps regulate body temperature. It also cushions and lubricates joints, protects sensitive tissues, and

helps the digestive system.

Most people get enough water by drinking when they are thirsty and with meals. But with hot weather, vigorous physical activity or an illness, your body needs even more water.

### The need for hydration.

You need water to replace what your body loses through everyday functions. You lose water by

sweating, going to the bathroom and exhaling. You must replace lost fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.

Among the symptoms of dehydration are dry mouth, irritability, weakness and dizziness. In athletes, dehydration may also lead to muscle cramps.

Being thirsty is a signal that your body is already on the way to being dehydrated. You should drink fluids even before you are thirsty. And you should drink more than your thirst demands.



**Getting plenty of fluids the healthy way.** When quenching your thirst, take care in choosing what you drink. Beverages such as soda and sports drinks do contain water. But they are high in sugar and calories.

Along with water, other healthy choices for keeping well-hydrated include:

- Fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Unsweetened, 100% fruit juices.
- Unsweetened iced tea or coffee.
- Fruits and vegetables with a high water content, such as watermelons, grapefruits, apples, lettuce, broccoli and carrots.

When you do choose water, you can give it a kick by adding a wedge of lemon or lime.

Individual water needs vary widely. They depend on factors such as physical activity, exposure to heat and age. Some people need to restrict fluids because of health conditions. Be sure to talk with your primary care provider about the amount of water you need each day.

Sources: American Council on Exercise; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; International Food Information Council Foundation

## Getting a vision exam

Reminder:

Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) members in either the County Network or Community Network do not need a referral or authorization to go to CCHP Community optometrists for vision exams.

The names of contracted optometrists and other providers can be found in our online directory at [cchealth.org/healthplan/provider-directory.php](http://cchealth.org/healthplan/provider-directory.php).

# Kid-friendly beef sliders

Makes 4 servings.

## Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef, extra lean
- 1½ tablespoons oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 8 mini sandwich buns
- 1 large plum tomato, cut into 8 slices
- 4 slices low-fat cheddar cheese (optional)

## Preparation

- Gently combine beef, salt and pepper in a bowl.
- Divide beef mixture into equal portions, each about a ¼-inch thick patty.
- Brush burgers with oil and place them on grill.
- Cook for 3 minutes on one side;



turn them over and continue to cook for another 4 minutes on other side. (If topping with cheese, add after 3 minutes, leaving last minute for cheese to melt, while covering the burgers with a foil tent.)

## Nutrition information

Serving size: 2 sliders. Amount per serving: 416 calories, 16.5g fat, 29.7g protein.

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

# Blueberry peach push-ups

Makes 6 to 8 push-up pops. For additional pops, increase ingredients.

## Ingredients

- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 ripe peach
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- ½ cup vanilla almond milk (substitute low-fat coconut milk or other milk)

## Preparation

- Blend together in blender until smooth.
- Pour into molds and freeze for about 4 hours or overnight. Note: Push-up molds are sold at many stores.

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

