

health sense



Fall–Winter 2017

Your flu shot could save a life



The flu shot is the best protection from the flu—for you and the people around you. Why is it so important to get your flu shot?

You may have less sick time. The shot isn't perfect. You might still get the flu. But you're likely to be less sick—or for a shorter time—than if you didn't get a shot.

It helps you avoid getting even sicker. The shot can help you avoid illnesses that often travel with the flu. One of these is pneumonia. It can be deadly.

It's safe. Some people believe the vaccine causes the flu. But it can't.

You will help keep others well. Some people say, "I never get the flu." In fact, they might be getting the flu but not be sick enough to know they have it. And they can still spread the flu, which leads to 1 of the best reasons to get the shot: The more people who get the shot, the fewer people who get sick.

It can save lives. Thousands of people die every year from the flu and the illnesses it can cause. So getting a shot gives you a shot at saving lives.

Who needs it? Everyone 6 months and older should get a shot as soon as the vaccine arrives in your area. That's often in the fall, but flu season lasts for months.

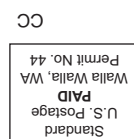
Contra Costa Health Plan Flu Shot Clinic Schedule: October and November 2017

LOCATION	DATE	TIME
Antioch Health Center	■ Oct. 17, 24 and 26	■ 6 to 8:30 p.m.
	■ Nov. 2	■ 6 to 8:30 p.m.
Brentwood Health Center	■ Oct. 11, 18 and 30	■ 6 to 8:30 p.m.
	■ Nov. 8	■ 6 to 8:30 p.m.
Concord Health Center	■ Oct. 17, 18 and 24	■ 5:30 to 8:15 p.m.
Martinez Health Center	■ Oct. 10	■ 1:30 to 8:30 p.m.
	■ Oct. 11, 12 and 13	■ 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Miller Wellness Center Martinez	■ Oct. 20 and 27	■ 1 to 4 p.m.
Pittsburg Health Center	■ Oct. 17 and 19	■ 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
	■ Oct. 21 and 28	■ 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
	■ Oct. 24 and 26	■ 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
West County Health Center	■ Oct. 11 and 12	■ 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
	■ Oct. 14 and 21	■ 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

How do I get the shot? See your doctor or call **800-495-8885** for an appointment with the Treatment Nurse. Or visit a Flu Shot Clinic (see schedule).

Members age 10 and older can also get their shot at Walgreens and Rite Aid pharmacies, September 1 through April 30.

Sources: American Lung Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



PROSTATE CANCER

To screen or not to screen

When it comes to cancer, we hear a lot about early screening. And for the most part, that's great advice. But times are changing when it comes to prostate cancer. As it turns out, many cancers of the prostate develop so slowly that treatment might not be needed. And treatment can have serious side effects, such as loss of bladder control and loss of sexual function. So experts no longer recommend prostate cancer screening. Instead, talk with your doctor. You can decide on a screening plan together.

Key risks include:

- Age.
- Family history.
- Ethnic background.
- Diet.
- Overall health.

And if you're over 70? Or have serious health problems? You probably don't need screening at all. In these cases, the benefits rarely outweigh the risks.

If you decide on screening.

Screening means a simple blood



test. It looks for prostate-specific antigen (PSA). If this test shows signs of cancer, the next step is a biopsy. If a biopsy confirms cancer? Weigh the risks of treatment. In many cases, watching and waiting is a better choice.

What to watch for. Prostate cancer usually has no symptoms early on. Later symptoms can include:

- Blood in the urine.
- Trouble urinating.
- Sexual problems.
- Weakness or numbness in the legs or feet.

But note: Other conditions can also cause these. See your doctor

to get the right diagnosis.

Start the conversation.

Ask your doctor about screening around age 55. Screening offers a small benefit of reducing the chance of dying of prostate cancer. But screening itself has risks. Those include:

- False-positive results. These can lead to a prostate biopsy.
- Overdiagnosis and overtreatment. Treatment complications include loss of bladder control and loss of sexual function.

Basically, it's a serious decision. Talk to your doctor and decide together.

Source: American Cancer Society

Access standards

The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) has established target wait times for Contra Costa Health Plan and other California plans for access to care. Below are those standards.

Telephone wait times. You have access to the Advice Nurse Services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call anytime you are worried

about your health and do not know what to do. Your call will usually be answered in less than 30 seconds, which is our goal. Call **877-661-6230 (press 1)**. We are also working to make the wait time to speak to Member Services less than 30 seconds. Right now, the average wait time is 2 to 3 minutes. Their business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and their number is **877-661-6230 (press 2)**.



What is the CCHP Utilization Management (UM) Unit's role?

UM's role is to review your doctor's medical requests so that we make sure the requested services match your benefits and assure that appropriate medical care is received. These include requests such as the need to see a specialist or approval getting a wheelchair or hospital bed.

We make decisions based on what care is needed to best support your health and what is covered through your insurance plan. Clinical guidelines are used to make these decisions and are available to you. Our doctors and staff are **not** rewarded or given incentives to deny or to cover any of these requests.

The UM Unit's office hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you have a question regarding a request, please call the UM department at **877-661-6230 (press 4)**.

If you call after work hours or on weekends or holidays, stay on the line to be directed to the Advice Nurse Unit.

Type of service	Wait time for appointment
Routine/follow-up	10 business days
Ancillary services, such as x-rays, lab tests and physical therapy	15 business days
Routine mental health	10 business days
Specialist	15 business days
Urgent care for services that do not require prior authorization	48 hours
Urgent care for services that do require prior authorization	96 hours
First prenatal visit	10 business days
Emergency	Immediate

Case managers

GUIDES FOR YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Would you like help with your health care needs? That's what our case managers do. We are a team of nurses and social workers. Our health care experts can help you get the care you need. They will work with you, your family and your doctor to improve your health. In addition, they can connect you to needed local resources. The service is free for Contra Costa Health Plan members. This service is offered over the phone.

Ask for a case manager if you have:

- A hard time getting to your doctor visits, taking your meds as you should or eating well.
- Gone to the emergency room a lot (more than 3 times this year).
- Gone to, or had to stay in, the hospital a lot (more than 2 times this year).
- Difficulty with stable housing, lack of transportation to get to medical appointments, lack of food, or any other situation that may negatively affect your health.
- Changes in your memory, mood, personality or behavior.
- Health issues that need to be watched closely.
- Any worries about caring for yourself or your loved ones.



Call now

Get in touch with a case manager. Call **925-313-6887**.

- Please leave a message.
- Be sure to tell us what time we can reach you.
- We will return your call.
- You have the right to decline or stop this service at any time.

Give the greatest gift

BE AN ORGAN DONOR

If you could save lives, would you? You can. Just sign up to become an organ donor.

You could save up to 8 lives. You might also help those who need tissue to recover from burns and other wounds. Or to regain vision or hearing.

A widespread need. Your gift is sorely needed. On any given day in this country, about 79 people receive organ transplants. But 18 people die waiting for transplants.

Right now, there are more than 100,000 people on waiting lists for a kidney, heart, liver, lung or other organ. Others need tissue—such as skin, veins, heart valves, and the cornea and the middle ear.

Don't rule yourself out. There are very few fixed limits on who can be an organ donor. Age doesn't matter. But donors younger than 18 do need a parent's consent. Newborns as well as seniors have saved and improved lives.

Some medical problems might exclude you as a donor. They include HIV or a spreading brain cancer. But most people can donate.

Sign up. You can sign up to become an organ donor online at organdonor.gov. Click on "Sign Up to Be a Donor." But to cover all bases, it's best to:

- Show your choice on your driver's license, if you can.
- Tell your doctor, family and friends about your choice.
- Include organ donation in your will and advance directives.



QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

How we improve your care

Contra Costa Health Plan's Quality Management (QM) Program always works to improve the care that our members get.

One way we do that is by checking to see if our members are getting the right health checks at the right times. Also, we bring together teams to do Performance Improvement Projects. Their goal is to improve care. Right now we are working to improve care related to pregnancy and to asthma.

The program also supports adults with diabetes and families with obese kids. We also look into problems with clinical care.

We ensure that members can get health education, translation and interpreters as needed.

To learn more about the program, visit cchealth.org/healthplan/quality.php. Or call us at **925-313-6917**, and we will send you a copy of the QM Program description.

How CCHP compares to similar health plans

Immunizations for children	Better
Care for pregnant women	Better
Well-child visits	As good
Controlling high blood pressure	As good
Asthma care	Needs improvement

Advice Nurses and urgent care

If you are sick or hurt, you may need urgent care. That means you need quick care, but it's not an emergency. Not sure what kind of care you need? Call the Advice Nurse line.

We're here to help Contra Costa Health Plan members. We are open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, including holidays. Just call **877-661-6230, option 1**.

In order for the nurse to refer your child to the right level of care, the nurse needs to be able to gather the most current symptoms



your child is experiencing at the time of the call. Therefore, if you are calling about your child, your child will need to be with you when you call. If your child is not with you at the time of the call, the nurse will either ask you to call back once you are with your child or offer to make a conference call to the person who is with the child.

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

- An urgent care visit.
 - A telephone call with a CCHP doctor.
 - An order for meds.
- Nurses can also give advice on:
- Test results.
 - Questions on health care and meds.
 - Infectious disease exposure.
 - Caring for yourself or a family member.
 - Current vaccine info for you or your child.
 - Health resources in your community.

Do you need an interpreter who speaks your language?



When you're sick, it's easier to talk to a doctor who speaks your language. Our Member Services can help you choose one who does. We have a lot of doctors who speak more than 1 language. But their location may not always work for you.

A second option is interpreter services. We have trained interpreters who can help you by phone and sometimes in person. They speak many languages, including sign language. Interpreters make sure that you and your doctor know what each other is saying. With their help, you can get all your questions answered.

This service is free and easy to use. If you think you need an interpreter at your next doctor visit, ask for one. If you have any problems getting an interpreter, call Member Services at **877-661-6230, option 2**.



Pneumonia: Who needs the shot?

Vaccines can prevent many illnesses. Some of them—like the one for flu—are well-known. But others don't get the same attention. Like the shot that helps prevent pneumonia.

A bad bug. Like the flu, pneumonia can make you very sick. It causes the air sacs in your lungs to fill with pus and liquid. That makes it hard for oxygen to get into your blood. It makes it hard for your body's cells to work the way they should. In some cases, pneumonia can lead to death.

Very young kids and older adults are at greatest risk. People with chronic health problems and weak immune systems are also at great risk.

Staying safe. There are **2 pneumonia vaccines. One is for:**

- Children younger than 2 years old.

- All adults 65 years or older.
- People 2 years or older with certain risk factors.

Most kids get this vaccine in 4 doses starting when they're 2 months old. They get the last dose when they're between 12 and 15 months old. Children who didn't get the shot on schedule can still be protected. They won't need 4 doses, though.

The second type of pneumonia vaccine is for:

- Adults 65 and older.
- People 2 through 64 years old who are at high risk.

We know this is a lot of information to remember. But you don't need to worry about knowing which one you need—when you go to your provider's office, they will check your records and recommend the vaccine to those patients who need it according to the latest guidelines.

- You are at high risk if you:
- Have long-term health problems. Those include heart or lung disease, asthma, and diabetes.
 - Would have a hard time fighting an infection because of illness or its treatment.
 - Smoke.
 - Live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.

Most people need only 1 dose. Some people will need a second dose. If so, you'll get it 5 years after the first one. Both vaccines are considered very safe. Side effects may include pain or redness at the site of the shot and a fever.

Are you protected? Talk to your doctor to learn more. Ask if or when you or your loved ones should get this shot.

Sources: American Lung Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Immunization Action Coalition



Baja Butternut Squash Soup

Ingredients

- 1½ pounds (1 small to medium) butternut or other winter squash
- 1 teaspoon canola oil
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon ground chipotle chile
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives or chopped parsley

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cut squash in half and seed. Place the halves on a baking sheet, cut-side down. Bake until tender when pierced with a knife, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Scoop out flesh when cool enough to handle.

Make-ahead tip:
Cover and refrigerate the soup for up to 3 days.

3. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add celery, onion and carrot and stir to coat. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring frequently, until soft, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in the squash flesh, cumin, chipotle to taste and cloves. Add broth and simmer, covered, until the vegetables are very tender, 20 to 25 minutes.
4. Puree the soup in a blender (in batches) until smooth. (Use caution when pureeing hot liquids.)
5. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with a drizzle of yogurt and sprinkle of chives (or parsley).

Source: eatingwell.com

Contra Costa Health Plan complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call **877-661-6230** (California Relay for hearing-impaired: **800-735-2929**).

El Plan de Salud de Contra Costa cumple con las leyes federales de derechos civiles aplicables y no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, discapacidad o sexo.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **877-661-6230, opción 2**, o al California Relay, el número para personas con discapacidad auditiva: **800-735-2929**.

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HEALTH SENSE is published for the members of CONTRA COSTA HEALTH PLAN, 595 Center Ave., Suite 100, Martinez, CA 94553, telephone 925-313-6000, website contracostahealthplan.org.

HEALTH SENSE contains educational health information of general interest. It is not intended to be medical advice and cannot be relied upon as medical advice.

HEALTH SENSE may also contain general information about plan benefits. Plan benefits vary, and for information about your

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particular benefit plan, please see your Evidence of Coverage booklet or call Member Services at 877-661-6230.

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Si desea este folleto en español, llame al **877-661-6230 (oprima 2)**.