

A Legacy *of Good Health*



Summer get-togethers

Make them fun and healthy

AH, summer! It's time to kick back and get together—at backyard bashes, picnics in the park and parades on the Fourth of July. Here are some tips on how to keep those celebrations as healthy as they are fun.

Get everybody moving. Organize gatherings around activities that get guests on their feet. Explore a local trail together, or if kids are attending, head out on a neighborhood scavenger hunt. Play active games—maybe soccer in a nearby field or croquet or volleyball in your backyard.

Serve thirst-quenching, crowd-pleasing drinks. Beat summer heat by rethinking drinks. Skip sugary sodas and offer pitchers of ice-cold water instead. Add thinly sliced lemons, limes, watermelon or strawberries for flavor.

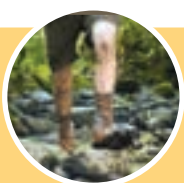
Pile on fresh produce. Serve family and friends just-picked summer fruits and vegetables. Fresh, in-season produce is at its peak in flavor and nutrition, so be ready for requests for seconds. Think veggie kebabs, leafy green salads and big bowls of cut-up fruit.

Keep uninvited guests away. Don't let disease-causing bacteria contaminate your food at outdoor gatherings. Place perishable foods—such as burgers, deviled eggs and potato salad—in a well-insulated cooler with plenty of ice or freezer gel packs. And keep the cooler in the shade. Bacteria multiply rapidly in warm temperatures.

Dish up a patriotic ending. Serve a red, white and blue dessert: a no-bake watermelon cake. It's topped with white yogurt-based frosting and mouth-watering blueberries. This sweet treat is packed with nutrients and low in calories. For the recipe, go to www.morehealth.org/watermeloncake.

Finally, be a cheerleader for healthy habits. Keep in mind that children of all ages copy what adults around them do—whether that's eating well or moving more, even at parties.

Sources: American Institute for Cancer Research; U.S. Department of Agriculture



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Asthma

Make an action plan

ASTHMA has a variety of symptoms: coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath. But there's one thing it shouldn't make you feel: powerless.

There's a lot you can do to keep asthma symptoms from flaring up. Your doctor can show you how.

Find your triggers

Your physician can work with you to develop a plan that will help keep your asthma under control so you can live a healthy, active life.

The first step is to identify your asthma triggers. These are irritants and allergens that cause your asthma symptoms. Triggers vary from person to person but may include dust, animal dander, tobacco smoke, mold, pollen, polluted air and chemicals from products such as hair spray.

Your doctor can give you advice on how to reduce your exposure to triggers.

Keep symptoms in check

The next step is to faithfully take the medicines that help prevent and control your asthma symptoms. Most people with asthma use both long-term and fast-relief medicines.

Long-term medicines help keep the

Need to fill your asthma medication?

Go to Kern Medical for the greatest cost savings and a 90-day supply.

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Generic/preferred brand/nonpreferred brand:

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Kern Medical pharmacies: \$0/\$20/\$40

Retail pharmacies: \$5/\$45/\$65

Kern Medical Main Campus Pharmacy

2014 College Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93305

Phone: 661-326-2506

Refill line: 661-326-2860

Fax: 661-862-7652

airways open and can prevent asthma symptoms from flaring up. They come in both inhaled and pill form and should be used daily as advised by your doctor.

Fast-relief medicines can help control asthma symptoms when they occur. You should carry a quick-relief inhaler throughout the day and use it as directed.

Your doctor also may recommend

using a peak flow meter. When you blow into the device, it displays a number that shows how well your lungs are working. Your doctor will help you determine your personal best peak flow number. When your peak flow meter shows this number, your asthma is under control.

Prepare for emergencies

You'll also need to know what to do if you have a serious asthma attack. You should call your doctor if:

- Your medicines don't provide relief.
- Your peak flow number is less than half of your personal best.

And you should call 911 if:

- You have trouble walking or talking because you're out of breath.
- Your lips or fingernails are blue.

Your doctor can give you further advice on what to do in an asthma emergency.

Check with the experts

See your doctor regularly to make sure your asthma plan is working well. These visits are also a good time for you to voice any questions or concerns about your asthma treatment.

Call your doctor if you'd like to learn more about keeping asthma under control.



Say goodbye to hip and knee pain

WHETHER you're walking down the street or climbing up some stairs, moving your knee or hip shouldn't make you wince in pain. But that's exactly what can happen when arthritis wears away the shock-absorbing cartilage at the ends of bones in a hip or knee joint. And it's no way to live.

If hip or knee pain has become a part of your life, here's welcome news. There are more ways to ease your pain than you might realize. Here are some of the most effective strategies:

Trim down. If you're overweight, those extra pounds place extra stress on weight-bearing joints, like the hip and knee. Losing weight reduces that stress and can curb pain.

Give your hip and knee some TLC. Rest your joints and do your best to avoid any activity that makes your pain worse. Applying heat or cold to your joint—for example, by using warm towels or cold packs—can also ease pain. Check with your doctor to see whether you should try heat, cold or both.

Make all the right moves. Appropriate exercise—specifically, physical activity that strengthens the muscles that support your hip or knee but doesn't stress them—can help you move more comfortably and freely. For a customized exercise program that can help you improve range of motion and relieve pain, your doctor may refer you to a physical therapist.

Partner with your doctor for pain relief. Many different medicines ease arthritis pain, and your doctor can help find the right match for you. You might be able to control your pain with over-the-counter or prescription pain relievers. If not, your doctor may recommend a corticosteroid injection into your joint, which can reduce inflammation and pain.

Is it time for surgery?

If steps like these don't help—and your pain is severe—your doctor may advise surgery to replace your damaged knee or hip

with an artificial one. As many as 4 out of 5 people who undergo replacement surgery are completely pain-free within a year, the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons reports. But even with an increasingly speedy recovery, it is still major surgery. So be sure to carefully explore its pros and cons with your doctor.

Additional sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; National Institutes of Health

Are you being treated for hip or knee pain?

Here is some helpful information about your plan. Kern Legacy offers:

Advanced radiology procedures (CT scan and MRI) with a \$25 copay if you select an exclusive provider organization (EPO) provider.

EPO providers include:

- Kern Medical Radiology.
- Truxtun Radiology.
- Stockdale Radiology.

If you do not see your provider of choice on the EPO, you can use a provider from the preferred provider organization (PPO) list with an applicable 20 percent coinsurance after the annual deductible is met.

Physical therapy evaluation, when ordered by a physician, does not need prior authorization. Take your order to any EPO or PPO provider. Once the physical therapist does an evaluation and develops a plan of care, he or she will submit that plan of care along with an authorization request to the plan for medical review.

EPO physical therapy provider:

- Terrio Physical Therapy and Fitness: multiple locations to serve your needs.

For a complete list of EPO and PPO providers, see the plan website, www.kernlegacyhp.com, or call Member Services at 661-868-3280.

Diabetes?

Don't let it slow you down

IF someone took a family photo of diabetes risks, high blood sugar would be standing in front, getting all the attention. But in the background are two other major players: high blood pressure and poor cholesterol levels.

The truth is, if you have diabetes and want to protect your health, you need to give equal attention to controlling all three of these risks.

Trio of trouble

Together or separately, this troublesome trio of problems can damage blood vessels throughout the body, explains Sue McLaughlin, R.D., C.D.E., former President of Health Care and Education at the American Diabetes Association (ADA).

High blood sugar can damage small blood vessels, leading to kidney damage and vision loss. High blood pressure can also cause increased pressure in blood vessel walls, while high levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol can cause narrowing of the walls. Both effects increase the risk for heart attack and stroke.

"That's why it's so important to keep all these levels within goal ranges," McLaughlin says.

That may seem like a tall order. But, fortunately, making a few changes in your health habits can help reduce your risk for all three of these problems at once.

Learn your ABCs

These tests will help you know if your levels are too high:

► **A1C.** This is a measure of your average blood sugar over the past two to three months. The goal for most people is below 7 percent. The ADA recommends getting the test at least twice each year.



► **Blood pressure.** For people with diabetes, high blood pressure starts at 130/80 mm Hg. Have your blood pressure measured at each checkup. And test it at home if advised by your health care provider.

► **Cholesterol.** LDL cholesterol should be under 100 mg/dL of blood. Triglycerides, another harmful type of blood fat, should be under 150 mg/dL. And levels of HDL (good) cholesterol should be above 40 mg/dL in men and above 50 mg/dL in women. Have your cholesterol measured at least yearly, advises the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Write down your ABC results so that you can keep track of changes over time.

Don't try changing all of your health habits overnight. Make changes gradually, and seek support from friends and family.

Eat smart

Making wise choices about foods can have a big impact on your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Try to:

- Choose low-fat or nonfat dairy items and lean cuts of meat.
- Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables and whole-grain breads and cereals.
- Choose good fats that can help lower cholesterol. You can find them in fish—such as albacore tuna, herring, mackerel, rainbow trout and salmon—and in olive oil, canola oil and nuts.
- Use low-fat cooking methods. Bake, roast or grill foods instead of frying them.
- Season food with herbs instead of salt.

Move more

Regular exercise burns calories and helps keep blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol low. If you've been inactive, start with five minutes of exercise daily and work your way up to at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. Brisk walking is a great way to start.

Take your meds

Your doctor may prescribe medications to help control blood sugar, blood pressure or cholesterol. Be sure to use these as directed. They'll help you stay healthy. Also ask your doctor if you should take daily aspirin to help prevent a heart attack or stroke.

Don't smoke

If you smoke, try hard to quit. Among people with diabetes, those who smoke have double the risk for cardiovascular disease as those who don't smoke, reports the NIH. Your doctor can prescribe medicines or suggest stop-smoking programs.

Keep at it

"Behavior and lifestyle changes take a lot of work but are worth it," McLaughlin says. Don't try changing all of your health habits overnight. Make changes gradually, and seek support from friends, family and your health care team.

"Any change in the right direction is helpful," adds McLaughlin. Controlling your diabetes risks will help you live a healthy, active life.

Kern Medical expands services

Receive Kern Medical services in the comfort of off-site private offices

KERN MEDICAL Hospital has long been a vital part of Kern County.

For decades, our community has depended on the hospital for comprehensive health care and specialized services. The hospital is staffed with highly qualified physicians, nurses, technicians, therapists and other health care professionals serving patients and families with the latest in expertise, technology and training.

With Kern Legacy Health Plan's EPO Network, many specialty services are exclusive to Kern Medical physicians only. In the past, most of these services were limited to a hospital setting. However, to provide extraordinary care, Kern Medical has expanded service availability to include private offices off the main hospital campus.

There are two locations: an office suite on the Truxtun Extension and suites on Stockdale Highway in the River Walk Medical Plaza. These newer locations will enhance your Kern Medical experience with the luxury of access to care in a modern, comfortable, private practice setting.

By adding more off-site medical facilities, Kern Medical is making it easier for Kern Legacy members to schedule appointments and see specialty physicians in a timely manner closer to home. These facilities are equipped with new advanced tools and technology. Care is provided by the most highly qualified and experienced physicians and care teams anywhere in Kern County.

Kern Medical will continue to expand the scope of services available at these locations. The following specialty services are either already offered or will be available soon:

Kern Medical Physicians Group—6401 Truxtun Ave., Suite A-1



Kern Medical at River Walk Medical Plaza
9300 Stockdale Highway, Suites 100 and 300



Kern Medical—Stockdale Highway Office Suites

9300 Stockdale Highway, Suite 100 and Suite 300
Bakersfield, CA 93311

For scheduling, call **661-664-2200**.

Available now in Suite 100:

- Obstetrics and gynecology
- Urogynecology
- Urology

Coming soon!

Suite 300:

- General surgery
- Orthopedic surgery
- Thoracic surgery

Coming soon!

Kern Medical's Ambulatory Surgery Center

Look for more news as these upcoming services become open for business. These are exciting additions to the Kern Medical services already available at the Stockdale location.

Kern Medical Physicians Group—Truxtun Suite

6401 Truxtun Ave., Suite A-1
Bakersfield, CA 93309

For scheduling, call **661-868-6480**.

Services available now:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| ► Cardiology | ► Plastic surgery |
| ► Ear, nose and throat | ► Podiatry |
| ► General surgery | ► Pulmonology |
| ► Infectious disease | ► Rheumatology |
| ► Neurosurgery | |

Kern Legacy is proud to work in partnership with a hospital that is doing so much for our members and our community!

A LEGACY OF GOOD HEALTH is published as a community service for the friends and members of KERN LEGACY HEALTH PLAN, 1115 Truxtun Avenue, First Floor, Bakersfield, CA 93301, telephone 661-868-3280 or 855-308-5547.

Information in A LEGACY OF GOOD HEALTH comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

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THE more you know about breast cancer—and especially how to detect it—the more you might be able to protect yourself from this all-too-common disease. Here are potentially lifesaving answers to two key questions about this cancer:

What are the warning signs of breast cancer?

The most common symptom is a new lump in your breast. Often, cancerous lumps feel different from noncancerous ones.

Two key questions and answers about breast cancer

Lumps that are painless, hard and oddly shaped and that feel as though they are firmly attached within the breast are more likely to be cancerous. But breast cancers can also be tender, soft, smooth, round and moveable. They might even be painful.

So don't take chances. Alert your doctor if you notice any new lump or mass. Also tell him or her if you have any of these other possible signs or symptoms of breast cancer:

- ▶ Swelling of all or part of a breast, even if you can't feel a distinct lump.
- ▶ Dimpling or puckering in the breast skin.
- ▶ Redness, scaliness or thickening of a nipple or breast skin.
- ▶ A nipple turned inward.
- ▶ Breast or nipple pain.
- ▶ Nipple discharge other than breast milk, such as blood.

Keep in mind, too, that breast cancer sometimes spreads to lymph nodes under the arm or around the collarbone—even

before the original tumor in a breast is large enough to be felt. This means you should also tell your doctor about any lumps or swelling in these areas.

How often should I have a mammogram?

Most women should have a mammogram, or breast x-ray, every year starting at age 45. At age 55, talk to your doctor about switching to every other year. Regular mammograms are a must, because they can find tumors that are still so tiny that they can't be felt by a doctor. And detecting breast cancer at an early stage increases the chances that it can be treated successfully.

However, if you have an above-average risk for breast cancer—for instance, if you have a family history of the disease—you may need to start getting mammograms earlier. Talk to your doctor about a screening schedule that is best for you.

Sources: American Cancer Society; National Cancer Institute