



A Legacy *of Good Health*

WINTER 2015

HEALTHY EATING

The holiday solution

IF you've ever felt sluggish—or stepped on the scale—after a big holiday meal, then you know that overindulging on food doesn't make the season any more special.

However, you don't have to completely avoid the pie and stuffing to look and feel better. The solution is to enjoy your favorite holiday foods in moderation.

Smart dietary choices and daily exercise can help give you the energy and stamina you need to carry you through the holidays and into a healthy new year without a bigger waistline.

Here are a few suggestions:

- ▶ Before going to a party, eat a healthful snack. High-fiber foods, such as fruit or whole-grain crackers, can help take the edge off hunger and reinforce your willpower to not overindulge. Also consider bringing a nutritious, low-calorie side dish to share.
- ▶ When at a buffet, opt for a small plate if it's available and keep portion sizes reasonable. Fill at least half

your plate with fruits and vegetables, and only take bite-sized samples of the rich foods and desserts.

- ▶ Alternate high-calorie drinks with glasses of water to help fill your stomach and stay hydrated. Dilute eggnog with low-fat milk to get

the flavor with fewer calories.

- ▶ To help keep calories and fat at reasonable levels, try substituting healthful ingredients in dessert recipes.

For example, try replacing butter with cinnamon-flavored

applesauce. Or substitute dried fruit—such as blueberries, raisins or cherries—for chocolate chips or candies.

- ▶ After pies or cookies are prepared (and sampled!), put them out of sight to help deter impulse snacking.
- ▶ Finally, remember that the holidays aren't just about food. Enjoy conversations with family and friends. Play games with the kids. Or start a new tradition of taking a walk after a meal.

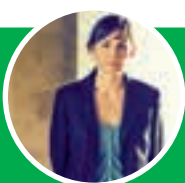
From all of us
at Kern Legacy
Health Plan, we
wish you and your
family a happy
and healthy
holiday season!

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



More health plan
options for you

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Make chronic pain
take a minor role

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Stay healthy—with
no extra costs

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Kern Legacy Health Plan is offering 'Network Plus'

The benefits and service you love. *Plus.*

KERN Legacy Health Plan Network Plus takes the plan you know and amplifies it to the next level in this coming year.

Our members asked us for more flexibility—more options when they need them—and we listened!

What would make the perfect health plan option?

For most, it is going to be a plan that your primary care doctor participates in so that you are able to have routine preventive care, have all your maintenance medications covered, and seek urgent care or emergency services when those unexpected health incidents come up.

For those illnesses or conditions that hit us or our family members when we least expect them to, we want options, and we want our health plan to give us those options. Our new plan design does just that.

We will still offer the services that you are used to with the Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO)—plus, you will now be able to access a **new** PPO-level benefit.

With the EPO benefit/EPO-level network, you:

- ▶ Have a substantial network of

providers for primary and specialty care.

- ▶ Have the use of Kern Medical Center (KMC) facilities for pharmacy, inpatient hospital and a variety of outpatient services.

- ▶ Receive services with little or no out-of-pocket expense to you.

New for 2016

With the PPO benefit/PPO-level network, you:

- ▶ Have an even broader network of providers in the Bakersfield area.
- ▶ Get initial consultations with the PPO-level network providers without needing a referral from your primary care provider (PCP). Any subsequent services or visits may require prior authorization.
- ▶ Pay only a 20 percent co-insurance for covered services after the deductible is met.
- ▶ Have a deductible for this benefit that is only \$250 per person or \$500 per family.
- ▶ Can use the PPO benefit for specialty care when you want to, but still use the EPO benefit for all other services. The choice is yours.

Same plan. Same excellent customer service. Now additional benefits for you.

It's the flexibility that you have been asking for in our premier plan.

- ▶ Take advantage of our Pharmacy Desk Delivery. Have your prescriptions delivered to your county office for no additional charge.
- ▶ Need help making appointments or accessing services? Kern Legacy is here for you. We can do more than just pick up the phone and greet you. We are here to help. We have a special relationship with KMC, our providers and our vendors that makes it easy for us to help you through any issue that you may have. Our knowledgeable staff can also assist you in understanding what your benefits are and how to go about accessing services. It is customer service with a personal touch.

Have questions about the new Network Plus? To speak to one of our friendly health plan representatives, call 661-868-3283 or toll-free 855-308-KLHP (855-308-5547).



DIABETES

JUST GET THE NEWS? START HERE

IF you've just learned that you have type 2 diabetes, it's normal to have mixed emotions. You may feel angry about having the disease. You may feel relieved to have a diagnosis—and a plan. You might also think, "Why me?"

Having diabetes isn't your fault. The disease results from a complicated interplay between genetics and lifestyle. Scientists don't fully understand why some people get it and others don't. But they do know that there are ways to reduce the risk of the serious complications associated with diabetes.

So, now that diabetes has been diagnosed, it's time to look forward. Ask yourself: What can I do now to control this disease?

According to the American Diabetes

Association, things you should do include:

Creating a meal plan—and sticking to it. Your doctor or a dietitian will help you adjust your diet to meet your blood sugar (glucose) goals. You can probably expect to:

- ▶ Count carbohydrates, which raise blood sugar the most.
- ▶ Get more fiber, which can be found in fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains. And eat less salt, saturated fats and trans fats.

Exercising most days of the week.

Physical activity helps keep your blood sugar and blood pressure under control—and it even helps insulin work better.

Knowing your blood glucose level.

Medications, a healthy diet and regular exercise can help control your blood sugar. But you need feedback to make sure these interventions are working. That's why it's important to monitor your blood sugar as directed by your doctor.

He or she will help you determine your target glucose level and how often you should check your blood. Many people test several times a day. Record the results to share with your doctor.

You should also have an A1C test at least twice a year. It tests average blood glucose levels over time.

Managing blood sugar isn't always easy—but it's worth it. If you stick with it, you'll have more energy, feel less tired and avoid many of the health problems associated with uncontrolled diabetes.

Ways you can move more

If you're not in the habit of being active, start small and spread your exercise out over the day. You could:

- ▶ Walk around when you're on the phone.
- ▶ Stretch while you watch your favorite TV show.
- ▶ Play with your kids or your dog.
- ▶ Park your car a block or two away from your destination and walk the rest of the way.
- ▶ Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- ▶ Do some gardening or yard work.

Source: American Diabetes Association

Following up with your doctor regularly and complying with your plan of care will help you live well with your condition.



To learn more about controlling chronic pain, visit the American Chronic Pain Association at www.theacpa.org.

Chronic pain

Act to take control

AS players on the stage of life, we sometimes get handed scripts we aren't expecting. That's certainly true when chronic pain takes a leading role in everyday living.

However, you have the power to limit the part pain plays in your life. You can direct the action in four pain-management acts:

Act 1: Gather information

You probably already know plenty about chronic pain. You may be aware that chronic pain:

- ▶ Is any pain that lasts six months or longer.
- ▶ Has many causes and can be hard to treat.
- ▶ Interferes with your ability to enjoy life.

But do you know how many types of treatments are available? Do you know which health care professionals can help you? The more you know, the closer you come to bringing down the curtain on pain. Some of the information you need is included below.

Act 2: Meet with your doctor

This scene takes place in your primary care provider's office. He or she will help determine the cause of your pain. You may undergo imaging tests or electrodiagnostic procedures. You may also be referred to a pain specialist for further evaluation.

Finding a specific cause for

your pain will help determine your treatment. In some cases, no cause will be found. This may be very frustrating, but it doesn't take treatment out of the story line.

Act 3: Create a plan

A cast of health care professionals will work together to help you put a strategy into place. Your script for pain management may draw upon a variety of treatment options. Your plan could include a combination of:

- ▶ Medication.
- ▶ Physical therapy and rehabilitation.
- ▶ Relaxation techniques.
- ▶ Chiropractic care.

Doctors have come to understand that chronic pain is not just physical. It has psychological aspects as well. That's why cognitive behavior therapy, antidepressants and general counseling are recommended as supporting players in a pain control plan.

Act 4: Follow-through

Making progress means committing to your plan and continually acting on it. That's not always easy. It means you need to manage your stress, stay active and find a support network among friends and family. But it can be done. And the rewards are great—pain may still play a part in your life, but it won't run the show.

Sources: American Chronic Pain Association; American Psychological Association; National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke



Preventive care that's easy on the wallet

Many screenings are covered at no cost under the Affordable Care Act

WE all want to do what we can to maintain good health. Of course, we have budgets to balance too. So it's good to know that many important stay-well services—like recommended immunizations, tests and checkups—are covered under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) at no extra cost to you.

That means you typically don't have to meet any co-pays, co-insurance or deductibles when you get these services from an in-network provider.

What's covered?

We're talking about services that can help improve and, in some cases, save lives.

For example, is it time for a recommended mammogram or a cholesterol check? Covered. Are you ready to quit smoking? Help to do that is covered too.

In fact, there are actually dozens of preventive services that may be covered for adults and children. Some of them include:

- ▶ Blood pressure screenings.
- ▶ Breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings.
- ▶ Diabetes screenings.

- ▶ Screenings for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- ▶ Many types of vaccinations.
- ▶ Well-woman checkups.
- ▶ Many children's screenings, including vision and hearing checks.
- ▶ Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening.

The preventive services covered under the ACA have earned either an "A" or "B" rating from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force—meaning they're likely to provide either substantial or moderate health benefits.

But whether a test or other type of preventive care is actually recommended for you (or your family) depends on your age, medical history, and whether you're a man or a woman. Your doctor can tell you more.

See a full list of services

Remember: This is just a sample of the types of preventive health care services covered under the ACA. You can read about all of them at www.healthcare.gov. Search for "Preventive Care."

And it's always a good idea to check your health insurance plan for details about coverage too.

Looking for Dr. Right?

You could choose a doctor by throwing a dart at the phone book listings. Or you could just pick a name from your insurance company's roster of approved providers.

But medical experts suggest a more methodical approach.

Here are some tips for finding the right doctor for you:

Seek recommendations. Ask friends; co-workers; and, if you need a specialist, your current primary care provider for recommendations based off the network provider listing.

Dig a little. Call the offices on your list of names to make sure the doctor takes Kern Legacy and is accepting new patients. Ask about office hours and after-hours care.

Set up a first meeting. Bring a list of topics that are important to you for discussion to make sure that this doctor is right for you. Some good questions to ask: What hospitals does he or she use? Can someone on staff answer common questions over the phone?

You might also want to find out if you can make appointments or schedule tests online and what the process is for getting refill prescriptions.

Sources: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; American Academy of Family Physicians; American Board of Medical Specialties



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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Energy drinks: Is the jolt worth the risk?

ENERGY drinks and energy shots: They're enjoying a bull market. They make up a fast-growing segment of the beverage industry, thanks largely to teens and young adults.

But even as they've won over the young, these drinks are raising red flags in the medical community. Here's what you need to know before you—or your kids—reach for one of these drinks.

What's in them?

Energy drinks (and energy shots) are nonalcoholic beverages that contain stimulants, most notably caffeine. Other ingredients that often make the list: vitamins, herbal supplements and sweeteners. When cocoa, guarana, kola nut and yerba mate are added, they contribute something manufacturers don't have to list: more caffeine. This means there might be more caffeine in the drinks or shots than the label states.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the stimulants in energy drinks don't belong in the diets of children and adolescents. Specific health concerns for both kids and adults include:

➊ Consuming too much caffeine has been linked to serious health consequences, including stroke and sudden death. It's also associated with these adverse effects:

- ▶ In kids—potential harm to growing hearts and brains.
 - ▶ In adolescents—raised blood pressure and problems sleeping.
 - ▶ In pregnant women—risk for late-stage miscarriages, stillbirths and infants with small birth weights.
- ➋ Mixing caffeine with alcohol—common among young adults, who may wrongly think caffeine cancels out alcohol's effects—has been linked to:
- ▶ Drinking more alcohol than usual at one time.
 - ▶ Underestimating how badly one is impaired by the alcohol—which could contribute to higher rates of sexual assault and driving while drunk.

Adults (other than pregnant women) can probably safely consume up to 400 milligrams of caffeine a day. A 6-ounce cup of coffee, for example, has 77 to 150 milligrams. But one 8-ounce energy drink could have anywhere from 50 to more than 500 milligrams of caffeine.

Those are some jolting figures worth noting.

Additional sources: National Institutes of Health; *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 305, No. 6; U.S. Food and Drug Administration