

# family health

## Kern Care

**K**ern Family Health Care would like to introduce our Health Home Program, Kern Care. Kern Care started in 2017 and is made up of health care workers who are helping our members achieve better health.

There are four Health Home sites in Kern County. Kern Medical has REACH and GROW, Omni-Roberts Lane, and Dignity Comprehensive Care Clinic. Two more sites will open by the end of the year.

Kern Care offers:

- Free transportation for your medical visits.
- Helping your family and caregivers be part of your journey to better health.
- Helping you get in touch with community-based care that can help you.
- Free gifts for keeping your scheduled appointments and for taking part in Kern Care.
- Did we forget to mention it's a free service? Yes, it's free.

Eligibility depends on a few factors. Members with more than one chronic condition, a severe condition, and members who have had



emergency care or hospitalizations may be able to join Kern Care.

If you would like to learn more about the Kern Care program, please call **844-597-5342**.

## Member Rights

Do you have a service or quality of care complaint against Kern Family Health Care or a provider? Please call us first at **661-632-1590** (Bakersfield) or **800-391-2000** (outside of Bakersfield). Or visit our website: **kernfamilyhealthcare.com**.

You may call the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) for help if:

- Your grievance is an emergency.
- You are not happy with Kern Family Health Care's decision.
- It has not been resolved in 30 days.

The DMHC's toll-free number is **888-HMO-2219** (**888-466-2219**). Its TDD line (for people with hearing and speech impairments) is **877-688-9891**. You may also call the DHCS Office of the Ombudsman toll-free at **888-452-8609**.

**WE SPEAK YOUR  
LANGUAGE** Please call  
**800-391-2000**.

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# KFHC covers acupuncture for select members

**A**cupuncture is the practice of using fine needles at specific points in the body to relieve pain.

## What could you use acupuncture for?

Acupuncture is used to relieve discomfort from a variety of conditions, including pain that has not responded to traditional treatment, such as:

- Unexplained nausea and vomiting.
- Lower back and neck pain.

**What is covered?** Acupuncture services are covered when they are medically necessary and meet Kern Family Health Care authorization of coverage and utilization review requirements.

Acupuncture services are limited to a maximum of two services per calendar month.



## Should you be for probiotics?



If you spend any time in the yogurt aisles of supermarkets, you've probably heard of probiotics. But what are they? Are they good for your health?

To answer those questions, here are the basics. First, most probiotics are live cultures. These bacteria are similar to or the same as those naturally found in your gut that help your body function properly.

You can find probiotics in yogurt and other dairy products, like kefir and aged cheeses. They can also be found in some nondairy foods (like kimchi or sauerkraut) and supplements.

And what about their health benefits? There's evidence that some probiotics may help prevent diarrhea caused by infections or prescription drugs when your normal bowel flora has been altered. Some may also ease the symptoms of IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) or lactose intolerance.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration only approves health claims for drugs, not supplements. Much more research is needed to find out exactly how they work.

One caution: Be sure to check with your doctor before taking any probiotic supplements. They have a good safety record with healthy people. But they may cause severe side effects if you have serious health problems.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; National Institutes of Health



## Is it depression? Talk to your doctor

We all go through sad times. But if sadness casts a long and lasting shadow over your life, it could be more serious. For some, it is serious enough to commit suicide!

Feeling that way can be a sign of depression. Depression isn't a character flaw or failure—it's an illness that you shouldn't ignore. It shouldn't be ignored by a family or a community either. And if you are that family member, friend or stranger whom a person is reaching out to, stop and listen; be present; seek professionals and resources; and if you think the person is a danger to themselves or others, call 911. Be observant of others.

If you are depressed, you might lose interest in hobbies or other things you once enjoyed. And you might feel like you're empty inside.

There are other warning signs too. For instance, you may:

- Sleep too much or not enough.
- Overeat—or lose your appetite.
- Feel restless.
- Easily get distracted or have trouble remembering things.
- Feel like you don't have any energy.
- Feel hopeless or worthless or dislike yourself.
- Get irritated easily.
- Think about death or suicide.
- Attempt suicide.

If you think you might be depressed, tell your doctor or a family member or friend. Reach out to someone! Your doctor may want to learn more about your symptoms. Depressed? It's treatable. Medicines, therapy or an attentive ear help most people feel better.

Sources: American Psychiatric Association; crisiscallcenter.org; Mental Health America; suicidepreventionlifeline.org

# Know your asthma medicines

**A**sthma is treated with two kinds of medicines: controller medicines to **prevent** symptoms and rescue medicines to stop asthma symptoms.

**Controller medicines are also called long-term medicines.** They help **prevent** asthma symptoms and should be used every day, even if you feel well. They work by helping to reduce swelling and mucus buildup inside the airways (breathing tubes). They also relax the muscles around the airways. This opens the airways, which allows more air to be breathed in and out. Controller medicines will not help you during an asthma attack.

**Rescue medicines are also called quick-relief medicines.** They work fast to relieve asthma symptoms when they occur. Rescue inhalers are the most common rescue medicines.

- Take them when you are coughing, wheezing, having trouble breathing or having an asthma attack.
- They can be used just before exercising to help prevent asthma symptoms that are caused by exercise.
- Tell your doctor if you are using rescue medicines twice a week or more. Your asthma may not be under control, and your doctor may need to change your dose of daily control medicines.

Sources: American Lung Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute





## Valley fever

*Bernardo Ochoa, MPH, Member Health Educator*

### Q Do I have valley fever or the flu?

**A** Valley fever has common symptoms like the flu. This may lead to a delay in diagnosis. Many people who are exposed to the fungus that causes valley fever have never had symptoms. Other people may have flu-like symptoms, like fatigue (tiredness), cough, fever, shortness of breath, headache, night sweats, muscle aches, joint pain, and a rash on the upper body or legs. For more information, please go to **cdc.gov**.

Don't forget to wash your hands! And get a FLU SHOT today!



## Tuberculosis (TB)

*Carlos Bello, MPH, CHES, Senior Health Educator*

### Q Who is at high risk for developing TB disease?

**A** There are two common groups of people at high risk for TB disease:

■ People who have recent TB infections. This includes children less than 5 years old and people from areas of the world with high rates of TB. Other high-risk groups include homeless people, injection drug users, and people with HIV infection.

■ People with a weak immune system. This includes babies and young children. Other high-risk groups include people with certain health conditions, such as HIV infection, substance abuse, diabetes, and organ transplants.



## Winter recipes

*Flor Del Hoyo, MPH, Member Health Educator*

### Q What should I do to balance my meals in the cold months?

**A** Most of us struggle to keep a healthy balance during the fall and winter. This season, take a breather. Stock up on veggies that are in season, like Brussels sprouts, winter squash, carrots and sweet potatoes. It's time for warm soups and roasted veggies.

## Oral health

In Kern County, 1 out of 3 children does not have a yearly oral health exam. Oral health includes the person's ability to bite, chew, smile and speak. Here are some tips to improve oral health:

- Reduce sugar intake to prevent tooth decay and tooth loss.
- Use fluoride toothpaste to prevent cavities.
- Brush teeth in the morning and at night.
- Floss between the teeth to remove dental plaque.
- Ask your doctor about fluoride varnish if your child is under 6 years old.

Always talk to your dentist if you have any concerns about dental health.

If you have Medi-Cal, you may be approved for Medi-Cal's Dental Program. For more information, call the Department of Human Services at **661-631-6000**.

Sources: California Health and Human Services; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; World Health Organization

» **CHECK OUT** our weekly recipes on Facebook: **@KernFamilyHealthCare**.





# Healthy pregnancy, healthy baby

**A**re you thinking of starting or growing your family? Take good care of your health as soon as you think about getting pregnant. Mom's health is vital to a growing baby. KFHC will reward you for visiting your provider in the first trimester and after the birth of your child.

As soon as you know or think you're pregnant, schedule a visit with your primary care provider (PCP). Your PCP will confirm pregnancy. The PCP may also find your due date!

Once you have a confirmed pregnancy, choose an obstetrician (OB). OBs are doctors trained to care for women during pregnancy. During your pregnancy visits, expect full examinations to make sure you and the baby are healthy. You will also need lab tests and will answer questions about your health. Keep

all your OB visits to ensure a safe and healthy pregnancy.

Once you're home with your new baby, don't forget about your own health—even if the birth went smoothly. Your OB will check to make sure you're healing well. Schedule your postpartum visit for 3 to 7 weeks after birth. Your OB will discuss your plans for future pregnancies. Talk to your OB about how you are feeling (body and mind). This visit focuses on you, your health and well-being. Ask any questions you may have!

"What's missing? Am I ready?" These are common thoughts for new parents during a pregnancy. Start a list of things to ask your provider during the follow-up visits.

To qualify for our KFHC Member Pregnancy Incentives, do the following:

**As soon as you know that you're pregnant:**

- Make an appointment for your first prenatal visit within the first 3 months of pregnancy.
- Schedule transportation for your appointment, if needed.
- Have your provider's office fill out, sign, and return the incentive form to KFHC.
- At your appointment, have your provider fill out the form.
- Send the form by mail or fax to receive a \$30 Target gift card by mail.

**After the birth of your baby:**

- Schedule your postpartum care visit soon after the birth of your baby.
- Make sure your visit is between 3 to 7 weeks (21 to 56 days) after the birth of your baby.
- You will receive a \$30 Target gift card by mail.

Have more questions about your pregnancy? Talk to your provider. They can help answer your questions and guide you to make the best choices possible.

Sources: Office on Women's Health; World Health Organization

**» IF YOU NEED HELP with any of the items above, call 800-391-2000. A Member Services Representative can help with finding a provider, scheduling appointments and transportation.**

Kern Family Health Care 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 **800-391-2000**.

**ATENCIÓN:** Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **800-391-2000**.

**注意:** 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 **800-391-2000**。

## Ask your provider

Have you been to the emergency room recently? Not sure when to go to the urgent care center? Write down three questions for your provider to help you decide what would be your best care option when you get sick.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Take them to your next provider visit.



## Help stop fraud!

You can help us stop health care fraud.

Here are some kinds of fraud:

- Letting someone use a Kern Family Health Care (KFHC) member ID Card that does not belong to him or her.
- Giving wrong information on forms.
- Visiting many doctors and pharmacies for the same drug.
- Trying to get medicines that a doctor didn't order.

Do you know someone doing these things? If so, call KFHC's Member Services Department at **661-632-1590** or toll-free at **800-391-2000**. Ask for the Compliance Department.

## Timely access to care

Kern Family Health Care has standards so that you receive timely access to care. The amounts of time you should have to wait when scheduling an appointment with your primary care provider (PCP), specialists and other health professionals are listed to the right. If you have to wait longer than these appropriate wait times when scheduling an appointment, please call our Member Services Department at **661-632-1590** (Bakersfield) or **800-391-2000** (outside of Bakersfield) and we will help you schedule a more timely appointment.

TYPE OF MEDICAL APPOINTMENT	APPOINTMENT WAIT TIMES
PCP routine and follow-up	10 business days*
Specialists	15 business days*
Mental health	10 business days*
Urgent appointments for services that do not require prior authorization	Within 48 hours*
Urgent appointments for services that require prior authorization	Within 96 hours*
Ancillary services such as x-rays, lab tests and physical therapy	15 business days*

\*Health care providers can be flexible in making appointments if a longer waiting time is not harmful to the member's health. It must be noted in the member's record that a longer waiting time will not be harmful to the member.

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Information in FAMILY 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. Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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