



**CenCalHEALTH**  
The Regional Health Authority

# YOUR Health

Winter 2011

CenCal Health serves Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties providing health coverage for Health Initiative, Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, Access for Infants and Mothers, and In-Home Supportive Services programs.

## Getting Care When You Need It

**W**e know that children (and adults) don't always get sick during "normal business hours." That's why many CenCal Health doctors and clinics offer evening and Saturday appointments. This means

you don't need to go to the emergency room for urgent problems.

Find out if your Primary Care Provider is open late or has Saturday hours. If not, you can use one of our other CenCal Health providers if you or your child is sick and needs

to be seen when your doctor's office is closed. Either way, it's always a good idea to call your own doctor first, even after-hours, if you have a sudden illness or concern. There is usually someone "on call" to talk with you.

If you would like a list of doctors and clinics with evening or weekend hours, call us at **1-877-814-1861**.

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4050 Calle Real  
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## Questions & Answers



## Access to Care for You and Your Family

**Q: Which insurance card do I show at my doctor's office?**

**A:** Show all of your insurance cards when you arrive for a medical appointment. This includes your CenCal Health ID card and, if you have Medi-Cal, your Medi-Cal ID card. If you have other health insurance—such as Medicare or Blue Cross—show these insurance cards, too. The doctor's office uses the cards to verify if you are eligible and to identify who your Primary Care Provider is.

Carry your health insurance cards with you at all times. Make sure you tell your doctor that you are a CenCal Health member so that you will not get billed for covered services.

**Questions? Call the Member Services Department at 1-877-814-1861.**

CenCal Health and our providers are committed to giving you and your family timely access to medical care for primary care and specialty visits, medications, testing, and medical supplies. Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) or specialist will help you schedule your appointment as soon as possible, depending on your medical need.

Time frames for receiving routine or urgent care are as follows:

- Routine appointments with your PCP—within 10 business days
- Urgent appointments (no prior authorization required)—within 48 hours (2 days)
- Urgent appointments (prior authorization required)—within 96 hours (4 days)
- Non-urgent appointments with specialty physicians—within 15 business days
- Non-urgent appointments with a non-physician mental health provider—within 10 business days
- Non-urgent appointments for ancillary services such as tests, medical supplies, X-rays, or lab tests—within 15 business days
- Initial prenatal care appointment—within 14 calendar days (during the first trimester)
- Preventive health care appointments—within 30 calendar days
- Emergency appointments—immediately



### Pregnant? New Mom?

Get FREE messages every week on your cell phone to help you through your pregnancy and baby's first year. To sign up, text the word **BABY** to 511411 or learn more online at [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).



## Q & A: Take Control of High Blood Pressure

### Q. What is high blood pressure?

A. People have high blood pressure if their blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. High blood pressure is a serious problem that can lead to stroke, heart disease, and other health problems.

### Q. Who is most at risk for high blood pressure?

A. High blood pressure affects 1 in 4 adults in the United States. People most likely to have high blood pressure are those who:

- Are older than age 60
- Have diabetes
- Smoke
- Are overweight
- Have a family history of high blood pressure

### Q. Can you prevent high blood pressure?

A. Healthy choices may help you avoid and control high blood pressure. These include the following:

- Try to stay at a healthy weight.
- Watch your salt intake.
- Exercise 30 to 45 minutes on most days.
- Eat fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy and lean meats.
- Get enough calcium and other minerals.
- Don't smoke.

If healthy habits alone don't control high blood pressure, many medicines are available that can help.

## Tips for Kicking the Salt Habit

You should limit the amount of salt you eat to prevent—and control—high blood pressure. Keep salt intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium or about 1 teaspoon of table salt a day.

Here are some ideas on how to reduce salt in your food:

- Read food labels, especially on canned soup and frozen foods, before you buy. Salt is listed as “sodium.”
- Rinse canned fish or vegetables before using.
- Choose low-salt condiments, such as low-salt soy sauce.
- Use oregano, garlic powder, vinegar, lemon juice, and other salt-free seasonings instead of salt.

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## Keep Track of Your Blood Pressure

If you have high blood pressure, it is a good idea to check it often and write it down. We can

send you a handy **Blood Pressure Tracking Card**.

Call our Health Education line at **1-800-421-2560, ext. 3126.**



# What's Your Stress Level?

Over time, too much stress can impact many types of chronic disease. The good news? When you're in over your head, your body sends warning signs. Symptoms of stress overload include:

- Sleep problems
- Upset stomach
- Memory problems
- Feeling angry or anxious
- Pain in your chest, head, neck, or back
- Getting colds more often

Talk with your doctor if you spot these signals. He or she can make sure they're not

caused by other health problems—and also help you cope with stress.

## Learn Ways to De-Stress

Recognizing you have too much in your life is only the first step. Try these tips to manage or reduce stress:

- When you can't bypass stressful situations, change your reaction. Let go of things you can't control and try to see change as a positive challenge.
- Practice stress management techniques. You might try some yoga, meditation, or

deep breathing.

- Stay healthy to better cope with life's challenges. For example, walk or exercise most days of the week to relieve tension.

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**If you need help or someone to talk with, call a free 24-hour helpline in your community:**

- **San Luis Obispo County, call 211 or the SLO Hotline at 1-800-549-4499.**
- **Santa Barbara County, call 211 or 1-800-400-1572.**

# We Can Help You Quit Smoking

There are many good reasons to quit smoking. And we can help. Nicotine patches and other approved products are free for Medi-Cal members with CenCal Health. But we do require you enroll in a stop-smoking program. A stop-smoking program will give you the information and support to help you be more successful in quitting.

## Getting a Prescription

If you want a prescription to help you quit smoking, here are the steps to take:

- ① Talk with your doctor about the best method for you. Your doctor will give you a prescription.
- ② Sign up for a stop-smoking program in your community or through the California Smoker's Helpline. (See phone numbers at right.) You will receive a Certificate of Enrollment.
- ③ Take the prescription and certificate to the pharmacy. The smoking-cessation product you receive needs to be on the list of medications (formulary) covered by CenCal Health.

If you have trouble getting your prescription or have questions about what is covered, call our Member Services representatives at **1-877-814-1861**.

## Stop-Smoking Programs

Call the California Smoker's Helpline for phone counseling at **1-800-NO BUTTS (1-800-662-8887)**. For Spanish, call **1-800-456-6386**.

Or, for classes in your community, call:

- Lompoc: **737-7775, ext. 7275**
- San Luis Obispo County: **781-5564**
- Santa Barbara: **681-5407**
- Santa Maria: **346-7275**





## What to Do for a Backache

### Which one of the following will *not* help ease your back pain?

- A. Several days of bed rest
- B. An over-the-counter pain reliever, like acetaminophen
- C. Ice applied to your back during the first day, followed by heat on the following days
- D. Gentle stretching exercises for the back

If you chose “A,” then you were correct. Too much bed rest weakens muscles and can slow healing.

### How to Help Your Back Pain

It’s best to go about your regular activities. But avoid activities that make your pain worse, such as heavy lifting or intense exercise.

Most back pain gets better in a few days or weeks. Once pain gets better, you can help prevent future episodes with regular exercise.

### Prevent Backaches

If you are overweight, losing weight will help your back. But what else can you do to protect your back from pain?

1. **Standing.** Stand straight. Keep your shoulders back.
2. **Sitting.** Sit up straight in a chair that supports your lower back.
3. **Lifting.** Bend your knees when you lift anything. Don’t bend your back.
4. **Sleeping.** Sleep on your side with your legs bent. If your back hurts, sleep with a pillow between your knees.

**To receive a helpful hand-out with more information about back pain, call our Health Education Line at 1-800-421-2560, ext. 3126.**



### Did You Know?

For a healthy weight, try doing these **4** things each day:

- Eat **5** or more fruits and vegetables
- Spend no more than **2** hours watching TV or on the computer.
- Engage in **1** hour of walking or other exercise
- Drink **0** sodas or sweetened drinks.

And don’t be afraid to ask your doctor, “What is a healthy weight for me?”

# Member Rights and Responsibilities

As a member of the Health Plan, you have the right to:

1. Receive information about the Health Plan, the providers, and the health services available to you, and your rights and responsibilities as a member.
2. Be treated with respect and dignity by your health care providers and Health Plan's staff.
3. Choose your Primary Care Provider (doctor) from our Provider Directory.
4. Get appointments within a reasonable amount of time.
5. Have the privacy and confidentiality of your records and your relationship with your doctor protected (this means we will not share your health care information without your written approval or unless it is required by law).
6. Receive information about your medical condition in terms you can understand in order to participate in making decisions about your care with your health care provider.
7. Have an open discussion of appropriate treatment options, including the right to refuse treatment, for your condition, regardless of cost and benefit coverage.

8. Make recommendations about the Health Plan's rights and responsibilities policies.

9. Request a copy of your medical records and to correct or change your medical records.

10. Obtain needed interpreter services at no charge when receiving covered medical services and to be able to file a complaint if your language needs are not met.

11. Receive medical services from an Indian Health Clinic without approval from the Health Plan if you are a Native American Indian.

12. File a complaint or appeal (by phone or in writing) about the Health Plan or health care provided and to be assured by CenCal Health that there will be no discrimination or retaliation against you for filing a complaint.

**You have a responsibility to:**

1. Learn how to use the Health Plan and provide the information to the Health Plan that is needed to give you the best care possible.

2. Follow the instructions and treatment plan you have agreed on with your health care provider.

3. Treat your providers and Health Plan staff with courtesy and respect.

4. Always present your member identification ID card when getting services

5. Help CenCal Health keep correct records by providing timely information regarding changes in address, family status, and other health care coverage.

6. Notify CenCal Health as soon as possible if a provider bills you inappropriately.

7. Understand your health problems and take part in making a treatment plan with your provider that you both agree on.

8. Be on time for your appointments and inform the provider's office if you must cancel at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.

9. Call your Primary Care Provider first when needing medical care, except in an emergency.

10. Follow the recommendations for preventive care, yearly check-ups, and a healthy lifestyle.

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If you have questions about your rights and responsibilities, call the Member Services Department at **1-877-814-1861**.



YOUR HEALTH is published for the members and community partners of CENCAL HEALTH, 4050 Calle Real, Santa Barbara, CA 93110, telephone 1-800-421-2560, Web site [www.cencalhealth.org](http://www.cencalhealth.org).

Information in YOUR 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.

To report FRAUD call 1-800-421-2560, extension 3012.

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