



CenCal Health serves Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties providing health coverage for Health Initiative, Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, Prenatal Plus 2, and In-Home Supportive Services programs.

Using Medicine Safely



the foods we eat can affect certain medicines.

Tell your doctor about everything you take. This includes over-the-counter and prescription medicines, vitamins, herbs, and other dietary supplements.

Why Mixing Medicines Can Be Bad

Mixing medicines can cause some medicines to stop working. Or mixing can make medicines more dangerous—even life threatening. Herbs also can cause problems.

Questions to Ask

Before you start a new medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist these questions.

- Can I take this with other medicines?
- Do I need to avoid certain

foods, herbs, or other medicines?

- What signs of possible side effects should I watch for?
- How can I reduce the risk for side effects?

Be sure to read the medicine label before starting a new medication. If you don't understand the written instructions, have the pharmacist or doctor explain how to use the medicine. If you need instructions or a medicine label in Spanish, ask for it. ●

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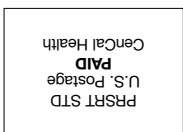
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Many people take more than one medicine. Sometimes medicines can be harmful or cause problems when taken with another medicine. Even



Questions & Answers

Q: Are there services I can have without a referral from my doctor?

A: Yes! CenCal Health members do not need a referral from their primary care provider (PCP) for these services:

- Birth control and family planning
- Pregnancy testing and counseling
- Prenatal care for pregnancy—including nurse midwife services
- Lactation (breast-feeding) education
- Sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment
- Nutrition education—first visit
- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic services
- HIV screening and counseling
- AIDS treatment
- Drug and alcohol abuse services and counseling
- Outpatient mental health services and counseling
- Sexual assault services
- All medically necessary urgent care and emergency services

If you need to know where to get these services, call CenCal Health Member Services at **1-877-814-1861**.

Getting a Referral to a Specialist

If you want to see a specialist, you usually need to get a referral from your primary care provider (PCP). Your PCP will refer you to a CenCal Health specialist. Before you have your appointment, make sure the specialist has received the referral from your PCP.

New Changes as of March 1, 2009

CenCal Health must approve your PCP's referral:

- When you visit an out-of-area specialist. "Out-of-area" means a provider or facility that is outside of Santa Barbara or San Luis Obispo counties.
- When your child is sent to a specialist for a service that may be covered under the

California Children's Services (CCS) program.

Prior Approval for Therapy Services

Effective January 2009, prior authorization (approval) from CenCal Health is now required before you can receive the following services:

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy

Has Your Specialist Referral Been Approved?

Once CenCal Health receives a completed authorization request from your PCP, it will be processed quickly. If authorization is not approved, you and the PCP will be notified in writing.

If you have any questions about these changes, please call the Member Services Department at 1-877-814-1861, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hearing impaired members can use the CA Relay at 711.





Keep Your Child Safe from Lead

Lead is a poison that can cause harm to young children. Since young children tend to put things in their mouths, they are at greater risk for swallowing lead in dust, dirt, and paint chips from walls in older homes. Lead can also be found in toys and even some candies from Mexico. Lead can harm a young child's brain and other organs, slow their growth, and cause learning problems.

Children with lead in their bodies usually do not look or act sick. A blood test is the only way to know if there is an unhealthy level of lead in your child's body. **All children should get a blood test for lead when they are 12 months old and again at 2 years of age. Talk with your**

doctor about getting this test done.

Other ways to help protect your child from lead poisoning:

- Make sure your child eats a healthy diet. A good diet helps a child absorb less lead.
- Wash your child's hands, bottles, and toys often.
- Move cribs, high chairs, and playpens away from cracked or peeling paint.
- Mop floors and dust windowsills often with a wet cloth to reduce dust from outside.
- Wipe or take off your shoes before coming indoors. This helps keep out lead found in dirt.
- Make sure the candy you give your child is safe from lead. A list of safe candy is at the Web site www.leadinmexicancandy.com. ●

Don't Guess. Call the Poison Action Line

If you suspect that you or someone else has swallowed or been exposed to something harmful, act fast. Always call the California Poison Action phone number at **1-800-222-1222** to get advice on what to do. Experts are available 24 hours a day, every day. Most of the time they can help take care of the problem over the phone and save you a trip to the emergency room. The service is free and confidential.



FREE!

To get a FREE magnet and sticker for your home with the Poison Control number, call our Health Education Line at **1-800-421-2560, extension 3126.**



FAMILY PLANNING AND BIRTH CONTROL

If you want to avoid pregnancy, it is important to use a birth control method. You may go to your own doctor or to any Medi-Cal provider that has family planning services. You do not need a referral from your primary care provider (PCP) for these types of services.

Family planning services include birth control, pregnancy testing, and counseling.

There are different birth control methods available. When you make an appointment for family planning, you will find out what method may work best for you.

You also have the right to privacy when getting family planning services. If you are younger than 18, you do not



need the consent of your parent to get family planning services. ●

Family planning and birth control are paid for by Medi-Cal. You will need a prescription for most types of birth control. If you need the name of a family planning provider, call our Member Services Department at 1-877-814-1861.

Prenatal Care Is Important— For You and Your Baby

Q: What is a prenatal visit?

A: Prenatal visits are the doctor's visits you have before your baby is born. Prenatal visits can help keep you and your baby healthy.

Q: When should I start prenatal visits?

A: As soon as you think you are pregnant. The goal is to

begin care during the first 3 months of pregnancy.

Q: What happens at prenatal visits?

A: The doctor will check you over and ask how you are doing. Tests will be done to see if you and your baby are healthy. The doctor will check to be sure the baby is growing.

FREE!

Are you pregnant? Receive a FREE booklet about the 9 months of pregnancy! Call 1-800-421-2560, extension 3126, and ask for the Pregnancy Baby Book in English or Spanish.



Pregnancy Baby Book is a publication from the March of Dimes.



YOUR HEALTH is published for the members and community partners of CENCAL HEALTH, 110 Castilian Drive, Goleta, CA 93117, telephone 1-800-421-2560, Web site 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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