



Living **Healthy**

A newsletter for the members of Central
California Alliance for Health



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Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that happen when someone is a child or teen. ACEs can happen to anyone, and most adults have experienced at least one.

Toxic stress is something that overwhelms you and can leave you feeling powerless and hopeless. This is different from everyday stress. Toxic stress can affect the way a child's body and mind grows. This can lead to health problems later in life such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease. Toxic stress can also affect development, behavior, learning and mental health.

At your next doctor visit, the doctor may ask if you or your child has experienced any of the events or stressors listed below:

- Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual).

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- Neglect (physical, emotional).
- Household instability (mental illness, incarcerated relative, substance abuse, divorce, sudden loss of a loved one).
- Violence, bullying.

It may be difficult to answer if you or your child has experienced ACEs or toxic stress. Answering “yes” is enough. Having open communication with your doctor is important. It helps your doctor to know if there are other services you and your child need to be healthy.

Benefit spotlight

Did you know about our health education programs?

We care about your health! That’s why our health education programs give members the tools they need to get healthy and stay healthy! There is no cost for Alliance members to participate.

We offer programs for managing chronic conditions, including:

Diabetes and Prediabetes Programs—for members managing diabetes or prediabetes.

Healthy Breathing for Life—for members managing asthma.

Healthier Living Program—for members living with chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure or depression.

The program is offered in three different ways:

- Over the phone.
- Virtually with online meetings.
- In person.

Members who complete all six classes can receive a \$50 Target gift card.

The Alliance also offers programs to help you and your family stay healthy, including:

Wellness that Works (formerly Weight Watchers)—helps members 18 years and older with weight management.

Healthy Moms and Healthy Babies—for pregnant members and members who recently had a baby. We have information on health for moms and babies, breastfeeding support, pediatric care and parenting. We can also give referrals to local resources.

- Members who see their doctor within the first 13 weeks of being pregnant are entered into a raffle for a chance to win a \$50 Target gift card.

- Members who see their doctor 1 to 12 weeks after having a baby will receive a \$25 Target gift card.

Healthy Weight for Life—for parents with children between the ages of 2 to 18. This program helps children reach a healthy weight and make healthier lifestyle changes. There are two different ways to attend:

- Virtually with online meetings.
- In person.

Members who complete all 10 classes can receive a \$100 Target gift card. Members can also be entered in a raffle to win a bike.

Tobacco Cessation Support—tools to help members quit smoking or using tobacco products.

If you would like to sign up for a program or have questions, call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**. If you need language assistance, we have a special telephone line to get an interpreter who speaks your language. For the Hearing or Speech Assistance Line, call **800-735-2929** (TTY: Dial **711**).

Language Assistance Services

To help members communicate better with their doctors and with us, the Alliance provides both telephonic and

face-to-face interpreting services. We also provide translation and alternative formats of written member information and health education materials—all at no cost to you.

Members can ask for:

- A trained American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter.
- A trained foreign language interpreter.
- Alliance-written information in braille, large print, audio CD or data CD format.
- Alliance-written information in a language they can understand.

If you need to reach the Alliance's Language Assistance Services or have questions, please call Member Services at **800-700-3874**. If you need language assistance, we have a special telephone line to get an interpreter who speaks your language. For the Hearing or Speech Assistance Line, call **800-7352929** (TTY: **Dial 711**).

Your voice matters!

The Alliance has a yearly member satisfaction survey called the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS). This survey is a way for you to tell us what you think about the care and service you receive. Your responses help us improve the services and programs we offer you.

The CAHPS survey asks members how happy they are with their doctors, care and health plan. This survey goes out to members who are chosen at random. If you receive a survey in the mail or by phone, we urge you to complete and return it! Member satisfaction is a key aspect of continued improvement. Thank you for helping us continue to improve the quality of your health care!

Ask the doctor

Colorectal cancer screenings

Dr. Arakawa is a Medical Director at Central California Alliance for Health, serving the Modesto-Merced areas.

With Dr. Gordon Arakawa

In the United States, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer found in men and women. Colorectal cancer happens when cells in the colon or rectum grow out of control. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and it's a good time to get a screening. Here are a few things you need to know.

What is a colorectal cancer screening? Why is it important?

A colorectal cancer screening is when your doctor checks to see if you have any precancerous polyps (small clumps of cells) or signs of colorectal cancer. The screening is used to check for disease even if you don't have any symptoms. It is important to check for cancer through regular screenings, because early treatment works best to help prevent serious health issues.

Am I at risk for colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer is most commonly found in adults ages 65 to 74. However, there has been an increase in colorectal cancer in adults 40 to 49 years old.

You might be more likely to develop colorectal cancer if:

- You have inflammatory bowel disease.
- Someone in your family has had colorectal cancer or polyps.

There are other parts of your lifestyle that can affect your risk level for colorectal cancer, including diet, exercise, and use of alcohol and tobacco products.

When should I get screened for colorectal cancer?

How often should I get screened?

If you are 45 to 75 years old, you should be screened once a year for colorectal cancer.

How do I set up a screening?

Talk to your doctor. They can help you understand which kind of screening will be best for you.

Does the Alliance cover colorectal cancer screening?

Yes. You can be screened for colorectal cancer at no cost to you.

What should I do if I have questions?

Contact your doctor's office if you have questions about colorectal cancer screening.

It is important to check for cancer through regular screenings, because early treatment works best to help prevent serious health issues.

Community Corner

How to get healthy food for your family

Do you know how to get fresh, healthy food for you and your family? Below are some resources to help individuals and families with food support.

Local food bank:

Anyone can access food at your local food bank.

Merced County

Merced County Food Bank

209-726-3663

Monterey County

Food Bank for Monterey County

831-758-1523

Santa Cruz County

Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County

Community Food Hotline

831-662-0991

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CalFresh program:

CalFresh is California's food stamps (SNAP) program. If you qualify for Medi-Cal coverage, you may also qualify for CalFresh benefits. You can apply for CalFresh benefits online at www.getcalfresh.org or by calling your county's CalFresh Office:

Merced County

209-385-3000

Monterey County

877-410-8823

Santa Cruz County

888-421-8080

Local farmers markets:

A fun activity your family can do is visit your local farmers market. You can look up local farmers markets that accept CalFresh online at **www.ecologycenter.org/fmfinder**.

Prescription drugs

If you are a Medi-Cal member, your prescriptions that are filled at a pharmacy are covered by Medi-Cal Rx, not the Alliance. You can view prescription drugs that are covered by Medi-Cal Rx at **www.medicalex.dhcs.ca.gov**, or you can request a printed copy by calling **800-977-2273** (TTY: Dial **711**), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you are an IHSS member, pharmacy services are managed by MedImpact. You can view covered prescription drugs on the Alliance website at **www.thealliance.health/prescriptions**. You can also request a copy by calling Member Services at **800-700-3874** (TTY: Dial **711**), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. You may also call Member Services if you have questions about a medication.

Getting an appointment:

How long should you have to wait?

As a member of the Alliance, it is your right to have timely access to network providers, but sometimes it is not possible for a doctor to see you right away. Some appointments might take longer to schedule than others.

We work with the doctors and clinics in our network to make sure you can get care when you need it.

Health plans in California have to meet certain standards for access to care. The regulations to put this law into place are called the Timely Access to Non-emergency Health Care Services standards.

The chart below lists the standards for different types of appointments. The waiting times for an appointment may be longer if the provider feels that it will not harm your health. If they feel a longer wait time would not be harmful to your health, they must note it in your medical record.

Appointment type	You should be able to get an appointment within:
Urgent care appointments that do not require pre-approval (prior authorization)	48 hours

Urgent care appointments that do require pre-approval (prior authorization)	96 hours
Non-urgent (routine) primary care appointments	10 business days
Non-urgent (routine) specialist care appointments	15 business days
Non-urgent (routine) mental health provider (non-doctor) care appointments	10 business days
Non-urgent (routine) appointments for ancillary (supporting) services for the diagnosis or treatment of injury, illness or another health condition	15 business days
Other wait time standards	You should be able to get connected within:
Member services telephone wait times during normal business hours	10 minutes

Telephone wait times for Nurse Advice Line	30 minutes (connected to nurse)
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If you feel you are not getting care when you need it, call Member Services at **800-700-3874** (TTY: **800-735-2929** or **711**).

Wellness for all

Keep your health on track with preventive care visits!

Don't wait until you are sick to see the doctor! It's important to regularly see your doctor to check your health. This is called preventive care. Preventive care visits will keep you on track with your health and can help detect any health issues early.

Preventive care visits also give you the chance to get to know your doctor. Your doctor will help you manage your care and stay healthy! These visits also help your doctor get familiar with you, your health history and health needs.

Getting to know your doctor can help you feel more comfortable asking questions, voicing your concerns and making informed choices about your health care.

What happens at a preventive care visit?

Your doctor will give you services based on your current health status and needs. These may include:

- Health education and counseling.
- Tests and screenings.
- Treatments.
- Vaccines and prescriptions.

How often do I need a preventive care visit?

It's good to have a check-up with the doctor once a year. Your doctor will let you know if you need to come in more often.

How do I make a preventive care appointment?

Schedule an appointment by calling your primary care doctor, also called your PCP. Your PCP's name, address and phone number are listed on the front of your Alliance Member ID card.

If you have not chosen your PCP yet, you can learn what steps to take on our website at

www.thealliance.health/findadoctor. Or you can call Member Services for help.

How can I get ready for a visit with my doctor?

The tips below will help you feel prepared and confident for your doctor visit:

- Think of any health care concerns or questions you want to ask your doctor.
- Bring a list of all the medications you are taking.
- If you do not have transportation to your appointment, the Alliance can help. Call Member Services at **800-700-3874** (TTY: Dial **800-735-2929** or **711**).

Update your Medi-Cal!

Have you moved? Did you have Medi-Cal coverage during the pandemic? If so, you will need to update the Medi-Cal office in your county with any changes to your information. Here is what you need to know:

Your county may check to see if you can renew your Medi-Cal coverage. Don't wait for your county to contact you. **If there have been any changes to your circumstances or contact information, your local office in Merced, Monterey or Santa Cruz County needs to know.** You can report changes to the county by phone, mail, online or in person.

Report any of the following changes:

- Changes to your income.
- Disability status.
- Phone number.

- Mailing address.
- If someone in your household becomes pregnant.
- If someone moves into your home.
- Anything else that may affect your Medi-Cal eligibility.

Here is the office to contact for each county. Make sure your county has your current information:

Merced County Department of Human Services

Phone: **855-421-6770**

Monterey County Department of Social Services

Phone: **877-410-8823**

Santa Cruz County Human Services Department

Phone: **888-421-8080**

You can also update your contact information online at **www.CoveredCA.com** or **www.BenefitsCal.com**.

For more information, visit

www.thealliance.health/updatesmedical.

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