

# NEWS

## Health Net




- 2 Shots: Keep kids safe
- 4 Diabetes and your eyes
- 5 Cholesterol: Healthy levels

## GET READY FOR A NEW SEASON

Healthy snacks for kids (and adults will enjoy them too!) – look on page 3 for details!

**F**all is almost here! You can probably feel that change in the air, and you're ready for something different. In this issue we have the latest information on breast health, diabetes and cholesterol. And if you have children, we've included tips on how to help them eat for better health and news on the importance of vaccines, so you can help get them ready for a new school year. Make this your season for better health.

### Health Net website tip

 View the home page of the Health Net website ([www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com)) and the moving bar on the lower part of the screen. This is where you'll find current news on things such as Health Net plans and services, health care reform, and health alerts. It's always changing, so take a look!

# VACCINES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS



BIRTH	AGE (MONTHS)									AGE (YEARS)	
	1	2	4	6	12	15	18	19-23	2-3	4-6	
HepB	HepB			HepB							
		RV	RV	RV							
		DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP*	DTap				DTaP	
		Hib	Hib	Hib	Hib						
		PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV				PPSV		
		IPV	IPV	IPV						IPV	
				Flu (yearly)							
					MMR		MMR*		MMR		
					Var		Var*		Var		
					HepA (2 doses)				HepA series		
									MCV		

Vaccines can protect your child from disease. Do your best to make sure your child gets the vaccines he or she needs. Your child's doctor can help too.

Vaccines are usually given as a shot. Sometimes they are given by mouth or by a nose spray.

The chart shows what vaccines children need. It also helps you know when your child should have a vaccine.

Talk about this chart with your child's doctor. You can also ask the doctor any questions you have.

## VACCINES CHILDREN NEED

**DTaP/Tdap** = diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis

**Flu** = influenza

**HepA** = hepatitis A

**HepB** = hepatitis B

**Hib** = *Haemophilus influenzae* type b

**HPV** = human papillomavirus

**IPV** = inactivated poliovirus

**MCV** = meningococcal

**MMR** = measles, mumps, rubella

**PCV/PPSV** = pneumococcal

**RV** = rotavirus

**Var** = varicella (chickenpox)

Recommended age range to get vaccines

Age range for certain high-risk groups to get vaccines

Age range for catch-up or missed vaccines

\*In some cases

AGE (YEARS)		
7-10	11-12	13-18
	Tdap	Tdap
HPV*	HPV (3 doses)	HPV series
MCV	MCV	MCV
Flu (yearly)		
PPSV		
HepA series		
HepB series		
IPV series		
MMR series		
Var series		

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

This does not imply specific benefit coverage. Please check your plan benefit details for coverage, limitations and exclusions.

## How shots keep kids safe

Are vaccines safe for your kids? You may have seen or heard stories that make you wonder. The truth is, getting vaccines is safer than skipping them. Here are the facts:

**Vaccines save lives.** They help protect kids from diseases that

could make them seriously ill, such as polio and meningitis.

**They don't cause autism or SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).**

You may hear rumors saying they do. But studies show that this isn't true.

**Side effects are rare.** Kids may have mild pain or a low fever after getting shots. But these usually go away in a few days. Serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, are very rare.

# A HEALTHY LUNCH CAN HELP YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL



## Healthy snacks for kids

To help your child get the most out of the school day, it's important to pack a healthy, well-balanced school lunch.

A good school lunch can help your child focus and help him or her learn better. It can also give your child the extra energy that he or she needs to do after-school sports and activities.

### A healthy lunch

When packing a school lunch, it's best to pick healthy meals that are easy to eat.

It's also a good idea to let your child help plan and prepare his or her lunches. Kids are more likely to eat lunch if they are involved in making it.

### A balanced school lunch should include:

- Whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, crackers or tortillas.

- Protein, such as lean turkey or roast beef, peanut butter, or hard-boiled eggs.
- Low-fat dairy products, such as yogurt, cheese and milk.
- Fruits, such as bananas, apples, or canned peaches and pears.
- Vegetables, such as baby carrots or celery sticks.

### Lunchbox safety

While it's important for your child to eat a healthy lunch, you should also make sure the foods you send to school are safe to eat.

### To be sure your child's lunch is safe:

- Pack foods that won't spoil, such as granola bars, carrot and celery sticks, whole fruit, or peanut butter.
- If you do pack foods that could spoil, store them in the fridge until your child leaves for school. It's also a good idea to include an ice pack in your child's lunchbox.

Toss out the junk food and the sweets. The next time your child asks for a snack, offer a healthy one. You might:

- Spread peanut butter on apple slices.
- Toast a whole-grain waffle. Then top it with low-fat yogurt and peach slices.
- Pair animal crackers with low-fat pudding.
- Make a mini-sandwich. Spread tuna or egg salad on a dinner roll.
- Make snack kabobs. Put cubes of low-fat cheese and grapes on pretzel sticks.
- Whip up a smoothie. Blend low-fat milk, frozen strawberries and a banana.

Source: American Dietetic Association

- Use an insulated lunchbox or cold drink container.
- Wash your child's lunchbox every day.

For added safety, throw in a moist towelette or hand sanitizer to encourage handwashing before eating.

Source: American Dietetic Association

**Even mild diseases can be dangerous.** It may seem like some illnesses that vaccines prevent aren't very serious, such as chickenpox. But they can make children very sick. Before there was a chickenpox vaccine, about 100 children in the U.S. died from the illness each year.

**We still need them.** Diseases such as polio and diphtheria are rare. But they could become common again if kids don't get shots.

**It's worth a few tears.** You might feel bad because shots cause your child pain. But remember,

shots help kids stay safe. Distract kids while they get their shots, and comfort and play with them after the shots are over.

See your provider if you have any questions or concerns about shots for your children.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Food and Drug Administration



# OPEN ENROLLMENT TIME IS HERE

**F**all means health plan Open Enrollment time for many people. If you're one of them, Health Net urges you to evaluate all your health plan options carefully.

Health care reform continues to play a big role in health care. More changes are expected, and Health Net is staying on top of them as they happen. It's even more important for you to take stock of your health plan and remember that Health Net has plans to fit your budget and life.

Plus, when you choose Health Net, you get the added support of

Decision Power Health & Wellness. This program allows you to go online for health information, support and programs such as weight management and smoking cessation. You can also talk to a Health Coach one-on-one for additional help.



Visit [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com), log in as a member, and go to *Decision Power Health & Wellness*, or call the Customer Service number on the back of your Health Net ID card for more information. For speech and hearing-impaired assistance, call TTY/TDD at **1-800-276-3821**.

## Diabetes and your eyes

If you have diabetes, you are more likely to have eye problems. The good news is that you can take steps to protect yourself.

**What problems could I have?** The most common diabetes eye problem is called diabetic retinopathy.

This disease damages the part of your eye called the retina. Blood vessels in your retina may swell and leak fluid. New blood vessels may also grow on the surface of the retina.

**Who can it happen to?** Anyone who has type 1 or type 2 diabetes can get diabetic retinopathy. That's because too much glucose in your blood can damage your blood vessels. The longer you have diabetes the more likely it is you will get some form of retinopathy.

**What are the symptoms?** Often, there are no symptoms at first. Later on, some people have blurred vision or see floating spots. Their vision can continue to get worse. And some people even go blind.

**What can I do about it?** Take these steps now to stay ahead of diabetic retinopathy:

- Keep your blood sugar levels as close to normal as possible.
- Control your blood pressure and cholesterol.
- See an eye doctor at least once a year for a complete exam.

It is very important to see an eye doctor regularly – even if your vision seems OK. The doctor can catch retinopathy early so that the damage it causes can be slowed down or stopped.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health



September is National  
Cholesterol Education Month

## CHOLESTEROL COUNTS IN HEART HEALTH – LEARN ABOUT YOUR LEVELS

So what are your  
cholesterol numbers?

If you're drawing a blank right now, it could mean you're overdue for the routine blood test that helps give a heads-up on your risk for heart problems or a stroke.

Cholesterol is a fatty substance that helps our bodies function properly. The liver makes the cholesterol we need, but we can get more from what we eat.

The two main types of cholesterol are:

- Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or bad cholesterol. Excess amounts can build up in the walls of arteries, narrowing the passageways and reducing blood flow to the heart and brain. This is called atherosclerosis – or hardening of the arteries – and it increases your risk for heart disease, a heart attack or a stroke.
- High-density lipoprotein (HDL), or good cholesterol. It helps clear excess cholesterol from blood vessels.

Keeping cholesterol levels in a healthy range helps reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease. But you won't know if your numbers need improving unless you have them

checked. A simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile reveals your total cholesterol count as well as levels of LDL and HDL cholesterol and another type of fat called triglycerides. Most adults should be tested at least every five years, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Your doctor can explain what your numbers mean along with what your cholesterol goals should be. If you need to improve your numbers, talk to your doctor about what you can do. Lifestyle changes such as these can help:

- Adopt a healthy diet low in saturated fats, trans fat and cholesterol and high in fiber, fruits and veggies.
- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days.
- Lose weight, if needed.

Some people also need medicines to help lower cholesterol. But even if you take medications, lifestyle changes are important.

Take the first step. Ask your doctor about having your cholesterol checked, and learn your numbers.



### Assess your health online!

Take the Health Risk Questionnaire at [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com) (or your employer-sponsored health assessment). It takes just a few minutes and will provide recommendations and resources based on your unique health profile.

# OCTOBER: A GOOD TIME TO CONSIDER BREAST HEALTH

As of yet, there is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, the second-leading cause of cancer deaths among women in this country. Even so, there are clear steps women can take to reduce their risk. And October, which is nationally recognized as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, is the ideal time to take them.

One key safeguard is for women to maintain a healthy weight, especially in midlife and later. After menopause, most of the hormone estrogen in a woman's body comes from fat cells. Estrogen can spur the growth of many breast tumors, and being overweight or obese can raise breast cancer risk. Women may be especially vulnerable to breast cancer if extra pounds settle on their waist rather than their hips and thighs.

These additional steps may help women reduce their risk for breast cancer, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS):

- Avoid alcohol. Drinking is clearly tied to a heightened risk of developing breast cancer. In fact, your risk increases the more you drink.
- Be active. A growing body of research indicates that exercise lowers breast cancer risk. Aim for 45 to 60 minutes of exercise at least five days a week.
- Carefully weigh the pros and cons of hormone therapy. Hormone therapy that uses both estrogen and progesterone can increase breast cancer risk in as few as two years of use. The use of estrogen alone after menopause seems to raise risk after 10 or more years of use. If a woman and her doctor agree that hormone therapy is necessary to ease bothersome menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, it is best to take the lowest effective dose for the shortest possible time.



Since breast cancer can develop even with these precautions, the ACS advises women to have yearly mammograms starting at age 40 and continuing for as long as they are in good health.

Regular mammograms (breast X-rays) can detect cancer in its early stages and give women a head start on potentially lifesaving treatment. If you have a heightened risk of breast cancer – for example, if you have very dense breasts – ask your doctor if you need additional screening tests, such as an MRI scan.



## BREASTFEEDING YOUR BABY

**B**abies were born to breastfeed. But breastfeeding can also be hard. If you're pregnant, you may be wondering what you should do.

### Good for babies and moms

Breastmilk is the perfect food for your baby. It has all of the nutrients your baby needs. Breastfeeding also:

- Helps your baby grow and fight off sickness.

- Makes your baby less likely to have ear infections, asthma, allergies, and weight problems later in life.
- Reduces your baby's chance of sudden infant death syndrome.

Breastfeeding is good for you too. It can:

- Help you lose pregnancy weight.
- Protect you from certain diseases.
- Create a special bond with your baby.
- Save you money.

### Help is available

Learning how to breastfeed will take time. At first, you may feel frustrated. Try to take it one day at a time. And if you need help, just ask.

Your doctor can connect you with a lactation counselor. Lactation counselors usually work at a health center, clinic or hospital. They have special training and can teach you how to breastfeed. They can offer support too.

You can also learn more about breastfeeding now – before your baby is born. That way, you will feel more confident when the time comes. You can find more information and tips at [www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding).

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## The basics of breast self-exams

Finding and treating breast cancer early can be lifesaving. Along with mammograms and clinical breast exams, it's also a good idea to do breast self-exams.

These exams help you learn what is normal for your breasts. That way, if changes occur you'll notice them quickly.

### How to examine your breasts

If you decide to do breast self-exams, you should do one once a month. Choose a time a few

days after your period ends.

You'll want to both look at and feel your breasts. Start in front of a mirror. Look for any:

- Redness, dimpling or puckering of skin.
- Discharge from the nipples.
- Changes in breast size or shape.

Then with your fingers flat and together, slowly move your fingers around your breast feeling for lumps. You can use a circle, line or wedge pattern to make sure

you cover the entire breast.

If you feel anything that seems out of the ordinary, call your doctor.

### Find more breast health info online!

Learn more about breast cancer prevention and treatment. Visit [www.healthnet.com](http://www.healthnet.com), log in as a member, go to *Decision Power Health & Wellness* > *Research Conditions* and type "breast cancer" in the search box.

Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; National Cancer Institute

# We're here for you

If you have questions,  
please call the  
Customer Contact  
Center at the phone  
number listed on your  
ID card.

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## Tuna salad wrap

### Ingredients

- 1 can (6.5 ounces) water-packed white tuna, drained
- 1 small carrot, shredded
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery
- ¼ cup finely chopped green pepper
- ½ tablespoon dried chives or chervil
- 2–4 tablespoons nonfat mayonnaise
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 eight-inch flour tortillas
- 4 tablespoons nonfat cream cheese
- 4 well-dried leaves of leafy green lettuce, slightly smaller than a tortilla
- ½ cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- 4 sprigs fresh mint, cilantro or flat-leaf parsley

### Directions

- In small bowl, combine tuna, carrot, celery, green pepper, chives and enough mayonnaise to make a moist (but not wet) salad. Add salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.
- On each tortilla, spread a thin layer of cream cheese (about 1 tablespoon) across the center

two-thirds of tortilla's surface, leaving a 2-inch margin along edges. Center 1 lettuce leaf on top of each tortilla. Press leaf into cream cheese. Spread a quarter of the tuna salad firmly over each lettuce leaf, leaving a 2-inch margin at top and bottom of each tortilla. Sprinkle a quarter of the cheese over each tortilla, and top with a sprig of fresh mint or other fresh herb.

- Fold the bottom of the tortilla up to cover the top of the filling. Fold in the two sides a quarter-inch. Roll tortilla up, holding side folds in. Roll wraps tightly and as firmly as possible to ensure packets stay closed. Tightly seal each in plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve or pack. Wraps made without wet ingredients can keep for 24 hours or more without getting soggy.

### Nutrition information

Makes 4 wraps. Amount per serving: 238 calories, 6g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 24g carbohydrates, 20g protein, 2g dietary fiber, 534mg sodium

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

You have access to Decision Power through your current enrollment with any of the following Health Net companies: Health Net of California, Inc.; Health Net Life Insurance Company.

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