



# California Area Indian Health Service

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## Area Director's Message Ms. Margo Kerrigan, MPH



### Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant under age one. Most infants who die of SIDS do so during sleep, and do not appear to suffer or struggle. About 2300 babies die of SIDS in the United States each year. Unfortunately, American Indian and Alaska Native infants are about three times more likely to die of SIDS than non-Indian infants.

The cause of SIDS is unknown, although there are theories that it is caused by problems with sleep arousal or an inability to sense a build-up of carbon dioxide in the blood. Many researchers believe that SIDS is not a single condition caused by one medical problem, but rather a syndrome with multiple causes.

The most significant risk factor for SIDS appears to be stomach sleeping. Numerous studies have found a higher incidence of SIDS among babies placed on their stomachs to sleep than among those sleeping on their backs or sides. In 1992, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that all healthy infants younger than one year of age be put to sleep on their backs. Since the Academy's recommendation, the rate of SIDS has dropped by over 50%.



The American Academy of Pediatrics and other advisory groups recommend the following steps to prevent SIDS:

- 1. Always put a baby to sleep on its back, not on its stomach or side.** Allowing the baby to roll around on his or her tummy while awake can prevent a flat spot from forming on the back of the head. Once babies can roll over consistently, usually around 4 to 7 months, parents can let babies pick a sleep position on their own.
- 2. Put babies to sleep in a crib.** The Academy advises against allowing an infant to sleep in a bed with other children or adults, or on other surfaces, like a sofa. While infants can be brought into a parent's bed for nursing or comforting, parents should return them to their cribs or bassinets when they're ready to sleep.
- 3. Let young babies sleep in cribs in the same room as parents.** Studies show that infants are safest when their beds are close to their mothers.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Tips to Eat Less During the Holiday Season By Dawn M. Phillips, RN, CDE/Behavioral Health Consultant

The holiday season is just around the corner, and it is estimated that Americans gain 1-10 pounds from Halloween through New Year's Day. Listed below are tools to avoid weight gain during this time of year.

- Write out your goals and post them in numerous places, such as your work cubicle, bathroom mirror, and refrigerator
- Drink 8 ounces of water before each meal
- Partner with a co-worker and commit to walking five days each week after lunch for at least 10 minutes
- Commit to eating one serving of green vegetables and one serving of fruit daily, especially at work
- Make your lunch at least one day each week instead of going out five days during the week
- Keep comfortable shoes handy—leave them in your car or in your work cubicle
- Make sure you sleep for 7-9 hours at night

*I will not gain weight during this time of year.*

The holiday season can be difficult for many individuals, especially those who are prone to put on a few extra pounds. One realistic and attainable goal is to maintain your current weight during this holiday season.

## Converting from ICD-9 to ICD-10 By Marilyn Freeman, RHIA/California Area Clinical Applications Coordinator

Every possible medical diagnosis that a human being may have is coded into a numbered classification and designation. That code is standard to the medical professional in the United States and many other parts of the world. As electronic health records are implemented across the country, these codes will affect our care more and more.

The United States currently uses the ICD-9-CM coding system, which has several problems including:

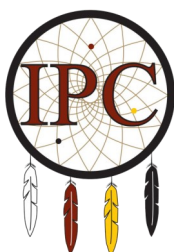
- Lack of available numbers to assign for codes as medical science continues to make new discoveries

- Inability to adequately describe the disease condition
- Decreasing effectiveness for monitoring use of resources or measuring outcomes

Nearly every country in the world already uses ICD-10. The United States will implement ICD-10 on October 1, 2013. Computer science, combined with new, more detailed codes of ICD-10-CM, will allow for better analysis of disease patterns and treatment outcomes that can advance medical care. These same codes will streamline claims submission process, since these details will make the initial claim much easier for payers to understand.

## Improving Patient Care By California Area Improvement Support Team

The IHS started the Improving Patient Care program to improve quality of patient care by promoting the "medical home" where the patient is the center of all decisions. Principles of the patient-centered "medical home" are:



- A medical team guides care together
- The team works closely with the patient and family
- The patient has ready access to care
- The team "knows" its patients
- Patients and doctors are partners in making treatment decisions
- The patients can communicate with the team when needed
- Patients and their caregivers are assisted with managing their own health
- The team creates trust and respect



For more information, visit: <http://www.pcpcc.net/consumers-and-patients>

## Let's Get Physical...with Let's Move! In Indian Country, Just Move It, and PALA+

By Beverly Calderon, RD, CDE/California Area Health Promotion Disease Prevention Consultant

Healthy eating is an important key to weight management, as well as managing and preventing chronic disease. Another important piece of managing your personal health is being as active as you can be. Get active and eat better, and you'll feel better too.

As little as 150 minutes of physical activity a week, equal in intensity to brisk walking, has significant health benefits for adults. Sixty minutes a day is the recommended minimum amount of regular activity for kids. Focusing on eating healthy foods and being as active as you can be is what Let's Move! In Indian Country is about. Two easy ways you can be a part of the Let's Move! In Indian Country are to participate in your local *Just Move It* events and go on-line to sign up for the PALA+ (Presidential Active Lifestyle Award).

Your local tribal and urban stories that are posted on [www.justmoveit.org](http://www.justmoveit.org) show what works at the local level and the success of communities sponsoring and participating in physical activity events. Just Move It! In Indian Country is all about getting one million American Indians and Alaska

Natives to exercise. Just Move It now has 52,499 participants with 370 partners.

The new PALA+ challenge at [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org) allows you to track your physical activity and improve your eating habits. PALA+ participants must choose one nutrition goal per week from eight healthy eating options, and build upon each over a six-week period. By the end of the program, participants will be more physically active and have learned how to incorporate six healthy eating habits into their everyday lives. After completing the program, participants will receive a free, downloadable certificate and can also order a certificate signed by the President.

For information on the benefits of being fit, eating well, and getting motivated, visit: <http://www.presidentschallenge.org>.

To view the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, visit: <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/>

## Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) (continued from page 1)

**4. Avoid soft bedding materials.** Babies should be placed on a firm, tight-fitting crib mattress with no comforter. Use a light sheet to cover the baby. Do not use pillows, comforters, or quilts, and do not place stuffed toys in the crib.

**5. Make sure the room temperature is not too hot.** It should be comfortable for a lightly-clothed adult. Some research suggests that a baby who gets too warm could go into a deeper sleep, making it more difficult to awaken.

**6. Offer the baby a pacifier when going to sleep.** Pacifier use is associated with a lower risk of SIDS. The pacifier might allow the airway to open more, or prevent the baby from falling into a deep sleep. If the baby is breastfeeding, it is best to wait until 1 month before offering a pacifier, so that it doesn't interfere with breastfeeding. Do not force a baby to use a pacifier.

**7. Do not use breathing monitors or products marketed as ways to reduce SIDS.** In the past, home breathing monitors were recommended for families with a history of SIDS, but they have been shown not to have an effect.

**8. Do not smoke, drink, or use drugs while pregnant and do not expose your baby to secondhand smoke.** Infants of mothers who smoked during pregnancy are three times more likely to die of SIDS than those whose mothers were smoke-free. Exposure to secondhand smoke after birth doubles a baby's risk of SIDS. The greater the exposure to tobacco smoke, the greater the risk of SIDS.

**9. Breastfeed your baby, if possible.** Researchers think that breast milk may help protect babies from infections that increase the risk of SIDS. Studies show that breastfed babies have a lower SIDS rate than formula-fed babies do.

**10. Never give honey to a child less than 1 year old.** Honey may cause infant botulism, which may be associated with SIDS.

**11. Avoid exposing the infant to**

## How do I avoid getting sick from the "Flu"? By Susan Ducore, RN, MSN/California Area Nurse Consultant

### What is Influenza ("Flu")?

Influenza is a highly infectious viral illness.  
5-20% of the population get the flu  
More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related complications  
About 36,000 people die from flu-related causes

### What are the symptoms of the "flu"?

The symptoms for flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, and chills. If you have one of the following health conditions and you develop flu-like symptoms, seek medical care immediately:

- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Heart Disease
- Kidney Disease



Most healthy people recover from the "flu" without problems, but the following persons are known to be at higher risk for developing complications from the flu:

- Persons age 65 and older
- Children younger than two years old
- People of any age who have chronic medical conditions

### What can you do to avoid getting the "flu"?

Ask your healthcare provider about getting a seasonal flu vaccination now! The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends seasonal "flu" vaccinations each year for all persons six months of age and older.

In addition to getting vaccinated, the following habits can help stop the spread of germs:

- Stay home when you are sick
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

For more information, visit:  
<http://www.FLU.gov>

## Poison Prevention By Lisa Nakagawa, MPH/California Area Injury Prevention Specialist

Unintentional poisonings are a large public health burden in the United States. Each day, approximately 80 people lose their lives as a result of unintentional poisonings, and another 1,900 are treated in emergency departments (CDC).

A poison is any substance, including medications that are harmful to your body if too much is eaten, inhaled, injected, or absorbed through the skin (CDC). The following tips are considered best practices for prevention of unintentional poisonings.

- Put the poison center phone number in your cell phone and near home phones
- Wear protective clothing (gloves, long sleeves, long pants, socks, and shoes) if you spray pesticides or other chemicals
- Keep medicine and household products in their original containers and keep them separated from food items
- Lock up household products and medicines so kids can't see them or reach them



- Always read the label and follow the directions when taking medicines; some cannot be taken safely when taking other medicines or drinking alcohol
- Never call medicine "candy"; poisons may look like a food or a drink

If you think somebody has been poisoned, anyone can call the Poison Center immediately at **1-800-222-1222**. The Poison Center gives advice over the phone by trained doctors, nurses, pharmacists and experts. Poison Centers are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. They can help you in more than 150 languages or if you are hearing impaired.

For more information, visit:  
American Association of Poison Control Centers  
<http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/default.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/safecild/poisoning/index.html>

## What is "Meaningful Use"? By Marilyn Freeman, RHIA/California Area Meaningful Use Coordinator

To encourage "*meaningful use*" of electronic health records (EHR's), the Federal government will give bonus payments to doctors and hospitals that meaningfully use EHRs to improve the quality of care, reduce medical errors, and improve efficiency.

To qualify for these incentives, doctors and hospitals are taking certain steps to make sure that their use of EHRs will benefit you. These include actions that will:

- Give you quicker access to your health information
- Help to protect your medical privacy
- Give you a summary of each visit

- Help to prevent from drug errors
- Make your health information available to share with other doctors, according to your preferences, in order to coordinate your care



EHR's can improve the quality of patient care, but not by themselves. Buying an exercise machine won't burn off fat by itself. Likewise, the benefits of putting an EHR in a doctor's office or hospital depend on how it's used.

For more information, visit:  
<http://www.healthit.gov/patients-families>

## Myths and Facts About Diabetes By Helen Maldonado, PA-C, CDE/California Area Diabetes Consultant

There are many myths about diabetes that make it difficult for people to believe that diabetes is a serious and potentially deadly disease. These myths can create a picture of diabetes that is not accurate and full of stereotypes and stigma.

### **Myth: Diabetes is not that serious of a disease.**

**Fact:** Diabetes causes more deaths a year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. Two out of three people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke.

### **Myth: If you are overweight or obese, you will eventually develop type 2 diabetes.**

**Fact:** Being overweight is a risk factor for developing this disease, but other risk factors such as family history, ethnicity, and age also play a role.

### **Myth: You can catch diabetes from someone else.**

**Fact:** No. Although we don't know exactly why some people develop diabetes, we know diabetes is not contagious. It can't be caught like a cold or flu.

### **Myth: If you have type 2 diabetes and your doctor says you need to start using insulin, it means you're failing to take care of your diabetes properly.**

**Fact:** For most people, type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease. When first diagnosed, many people with type 2 diabetes can keep their blood glucose at a healthy level with oral medications. But over time, the body gradually produces less and less of its own insulin, and eventually oral medications may not be enough to keep blood glucose levels normal. Using insulin to get blood glucose levels to a healthy level is a good thing, not a bad thing.