



# Indian Health Service/California Area Office Patient Newsletter

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



### Ride Safe This Summer

Summer has finally arrived and many of you will increase your outdoor activities, summer recreation, and driving time on the roads. If you will be using a motor vehicle as transportation, be sure to wear your seatbelt and secure children in proper child safety seats.

Injuries are the leading cause of death among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) ages 1-44 in California. Injuries accounted for 2,457 deaths and 12,130 hospitalizations of AI/AN in California, from 1999-2006. Injuries are categorized into unintentional injuries and intentional injuries. Unintentional injuries include motor vehicle crashes, drowning, fires, burns, falls, and poisoning. Intentional injuries include homicides, suicides, assaults, child abuse, and domestic violence.

The leading causes of death from injury among AI/AN in the California area are from motor vehicle crashes. From 1991-2006, there were a total of 1,833 motor vehicle injuries involving AI/AN reported to the California Department of Public Health. California law requires drivers and passengers to use a safety restraint system while riding in a motor vehicle. Before you start the car, buckle any children into an appropriate child safety seat. Fasten your own safety belt, and remind any other passengers to **Buckle Up!** Remember, a correctly fitted seat belt has the lap belt snugly across the upper thighs and below the hips, with the shoulder belt snugly against the chest and securely on the shoulder.

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## A Parent's Responsibility: The Decision to Immunize By Susan Ducore, RN, MSN

One of the most important decisions a parent can make is choosing to immunize their child. Immunizations are shown to be the best method available for preventing vaccine-preventable disease. If you have questions, the nurse or medical provider at your primary care clinic can provide you with immunization information.

Any delays in immunizing places a child at risk for vaccine-preventable disease. Consider the consequence of not immunizing. Before vaccines were made available in the United States, parents in this country could expect that every year:

- Polio would paralyze 10,000 children
- Rubella (German measles) would cause birth defects and mental retardation in as many as 20,000 newborns

- Measles infected about 4 million children and killed 3,000
- Diphtheria was one of the most common causes of death in school-aged children
- *Haemophilus influenza* type b (Hib) caused meningitis in 15,000 children, leaving many with permanent brain damage
- Pertussis (whooping cough) killed thousands of infants

Today, vaccines are available to prevent such diseases that historically caused overwhelming debilitation and loss of life in both children and adults. As a parent or guardian, you can make a difference! Choose to give the "gift" of immunizations in order to offer protection against vaccine-preventable diseases that have serious

consequences for your children, family, and members of your community. Vaccines were developed to protect people from dangerous and often fatal diseases and are evidenced to be safe and effective.

For professional medical advice related to immunization practices pertaining to you or others under your care, please talk with your medical provider or other qualified healthcare professional.

For additional information, visit:

### American Indian/Alaska Native Vaccination

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/ai-an.htm>

## Eat Healthy • Be Active Community Workshops By Beverly Calderon, RD, CDE

Good nutrition and a healthy diet are important for your future, as well as that of your family and your culture. Poor nutrition and poor diet cause and exacerbate many of the chronic conditions faced by Native people. Take the first step to a healthier life by making the choice to believe that good nutrition and a healthy diet is important to your life.

The federal dietary guidelines provide reliable advice on healthy food choices. These guidelines are developed to support healthy diets, which can reduce the risk of major chronic disease such as heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and some cancers. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* provides nutrition information and advice for people age 2 and older. They serve as the basis for federal food and nutrition education programs.

Every meal, every day, give yourself the gift of taking time to shape up your plate. Make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits.

Six one-hour workshops, based on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* and *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* are now

available at <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/workshops/>. Each workshop includes a lesson plan, learning objectives, talking points, hands-on activities, and handouts. The workshops are designed for community educators, health promoters, dietitians/nutritionists, cooperative extension agents, and others to teach adults in a wide variety of community settings.



## Sports Should Include a Mouthguard By Steve Riggio, DDS

A properly fitted mouthguard is an integral piece of sports equipment. They are not just for children and teenagers; injuries can and do occur at all ages. Mouthguards help to prevent injuries to the teeth, tongue, lips, and jaw. They are recommended for contact sports such as football, basketball, and hockey, but also for non-contact sports such as baseball and skateboarding.

- How often the mouthguard will be used
- Whether the sport is recreational or part of a competitive league
- If there is any special dental treatment on the teeth such as crowns, bridges, or braces
- The age of the sports player
- If the sports player has baby teeth or is waiting for permanent teeth to erupt

Consulting a dentist can help you select the type of mouthguard that is best suited to your specific need.

Follow these care instructions for your mouthguard:

- Clean it regularly with toothpaste and a toothbrush
- Rinse it before and after each use with water or mouthwash
- Store it in a proper container that allows air to circulate and avoid storing it at high temperatures or in direct sunlight
- Check for damage to the mouthguard, which may affect the fit and could cause irritation of the gums

No matter what type of mouthguard you are using, bring it with you to your regular dental appointment so your dentist can make sure it fits properly.



Custom Mouthguard

There are inexpensive mouthguards that can be purchased in sporting goods stores and drug stores. Some of these mouthguards come in ready-made sizes, while others are made of material that can be heated for a more personalized fit. These inexpensive mouthguards are not as durable as the custom mouthguards available from your dentist.

The most effective mouthguard is comfortable, does not interfere with speech, is durable, and is easy to

clean. In most cases, the mouthguard covers the upper teeth, but in some cases both upper and lower teeth should be covered. Factors that are important in the selection of a mouthguard include:

- The type of sport being played

## Ride Safe This Summer (continued from page 1)

When choosing the right seat for your child, the best and safest car seat is the one that fits your child, fits in your vehicle, and is easy to adjust so you can do it correctly every time. Make sure to always follow your car seat manufacturer's instructions and your vehicle owner's manual for installation of child safety seats. When choosing a child safety seat, size is based on your child's age, height, and weight.

For more information, visit:

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

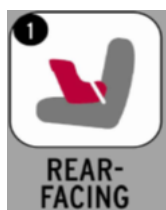
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS>

**State of California**

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosa/Pages/CarSeatBasics.aspx>

To find a car seat inspection station near you, visit:

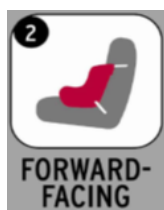
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/cps/cpsfitting/index.cfm>



### Step 1: Rear-Facing Seats

**Newborn to at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds**

- Infant child safety seat used rear-facing only
- Convertible child safety seat can be used rear facing and forward facing



### Step 2: Forward Facing Seats

**Children at least 1 year of age and over 20 pounds**

- Convertible child safety seat can be used forward and rear facing



### Step 3: Booster Seats

**Children over 40 pounds**

- Combination seat uses lap shoulder belt and internal harness removed
- High-back booster seat must be used when a vehicle has no head restraint
- Backless booster seat - can be used when a vehicle has a head restraint



### Step 4: Seat Belts

**Children 8 years of age or older or until they are at least 4 feet 9 inches**

- Seat belts are designed to fit adults, not children
- All children under 13 should ride in the back seat

## Your Personal Health Record By Marilyn Freeman, RHIA

Have you ever wished you could improve the quality of your healthcare? A personal health record (PHR) is a great place to start. Wondering what it is? A personal health record is a tool used by a patient to collect, track and share past and current information about their own health. A personal health record may save the cost and inconvenience of repeating routine medical tests. It can also help to protect you by giving healthcare providers more insight into your personal health story. As a patient, you are ultimately responsible for making decisions about your health. A personal health record can help.

Medical records and your personal health record are not the same thing. Medical records contain information about your health compiled and maintained by your healthcare providers. A personal health record is information about your health that **you** compile and maintain. The difference is in

how you use your personal health record to improve the quality of your healthcare.

One advocate, Dave deBronkart, survived stage IV cancer with the help of information he found on an on-line network for cancer patients. He now blogs as "e-Patient Dave" and encourages patients to use information from electronic health records and personal health records to participate in their own health care. Dave feels that, "patients are the most underutilized resource in all of health care."

This is a good time for you to engage in your own healthcare. Consider beginning a personal health record. You can learn more about personal health records at <http://www.healthit.gov/patients-families>.

Get started with a free PHR guide at [http://www.myphr.com/StartaPHR/quick\\_guide.aspx](http://www.myphr.com/StartaPHR/quick_guide.aspx).

## Prevent Skin Cancer: Making Sense of Sunscreen By Christine Brennan, MPH



There are many brands of over-the-counter (OTC) sunscreen lotions and sprays on the market and it is difficult to determine which sunscreen will provide the best protection to keep your skin from getting burned and preventing premature aging and skin cancer. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently announced new requirements for OTC sunscreen products that will help people determine which sunscreens are the best for themselves and their families.

There are two types of ultraviolet radiation produced by the sun which contribute to skin damage - A and B. Ultraviolet A (UVA) rays contribute to skin cancer and early aging. Ultraviolet B (UVB) rays primarily cause sunburn. The new FDA rules require that

sunscreens must provide equal UVA and UVB protection to be able to be labeled a "broad spectrum" sunscreen. The new FDA rule also requires that a sunscreen must have a minimum SPF value of 15 to claim that it can reduce the risk of skin cancer and early aging, and sunscreens can no longer claim to be waterproof or sweat proof. Instead, they can only claim to be water resistant, and they must state for how long the product is resistant to water (40 or 80 minutes).

These new rules will help consumers determine which sunscreens will provide the best protection against skin cancer and early aging. To help provide the best protection against sunburn and skin cancer, follow these steps:

- Use broad spectrum sunscreens with SPF values of 15 or higher
- Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours, more often if you are sweating or getting in and out of water
- Limit time in the sun during the hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Wear clothing to cover exposed skin

For more information on the new FDA sunscreen labeling requirements, visit:

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/UnderstandingOver-the-CounterMedicines/ucm258468.htm>

## Electronic Health Records By Steve Viramontes, PHN

Electronic health records are intended to help your doctor electronically manage all aspects of your healthcare. This allows your doctor to access your information when he/she needs it instead of depending on the availability of a paper chart. Your Indian healthcare program's staff are implementing electronic health records in the clinic so you may notice changes in the way you receive your care, such as:

Your doctor may provide you with a copy of your recent health summary for you to take home if you wish

Your doctor may be entering your patient information into a computer during your clinic visit

Your doctor or healthcare team may receive reminders and notifications about your healthcare needs electronically so they can better serve you. Some examples would include:

- An alert regarding your allergies
- An alert that your annual eye exam is due
- A notification to follow-up with you regarding outside healthcare that your doctor ordered

Your doctor or nurse may be ordering medications and labs directly on the computer in the patient examination room

