

Indian Health Service/California Area Office Patient Newsletter



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Autism Awareness

Autism is a developmental disability that usually appears within the first three years of life. People with autism have difficulty communicating and interacting with others. Those with autism may have delayed language and may have inflexible, repetitive behavior.

There is no known specific cause of autism, but the number of individuals diagnosed with autism has been increasing over the past several years. In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that the prevalence of autism is 1 in 88 births in the United States, and in boys, the prevalence is higher at 1 in 54 births.

Area Director's Message Ms. Margo Kerrigan, MPH

There is no cure for autism, but early diagnosis and intervention can lead to significantly improved outcomes. During your baby's well child visits, your doctor will likely do developmental screening and ask specific questions about your baby's progress. There are five behaviors that may signal a need for further medical evaluation (a child not meeting any of these developmental goals does NOT mean your child has autism, but just indicates further testing may be needed):

- Child does not babble or coo by 12 months
- Child does not hand gesture (point, wave, grasp) by 12 months
- Child does not say single words by 16 months
- Child does not say two-word phrases by 24 months
- Child has any loss of language and/or social skills at any age

(Continued on page 3)

Unintentional Poisoning By Lisa Nakagawa, MPH

A poison is any substance that is harmful to your body if too much is eaten, inhaled, injected, or absorbed through the skin. Poisons can include medicine, household chemicals, carbon monoxide from gas appliances, and pesticides.

Tips for preventing poisonings:

- Only take prescription medications that are prescribed to you by a healthcare professional
- Never take larger or more frequent doses of medication than recommended by a medical professional pharmacist or the directions
- Store pesticides and household chemical products in a locked cabinet away from children and pets
- When using household chemicals, make sure to read the label thoroughly and follow the directions exactly
- Never transfer pesticides and other household chemical products to containers that may be mistaken for food or drink

- Never store pesticides and chemicals with food items
- Have a working carbon monoxide detector in your home

The California Poison Control System provides immediate, free and expert treatment advice and referral over the telephone in case of exposure to poisonous or toxic substances. Pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and poison information specialists provide answers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Language interpreters are always available.

For more information, visit:

EPA Poison Prevention Checklist http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/Publications/roombyroom-checklist.pdf

California Poison Control http://www.calpoison.org/home.html

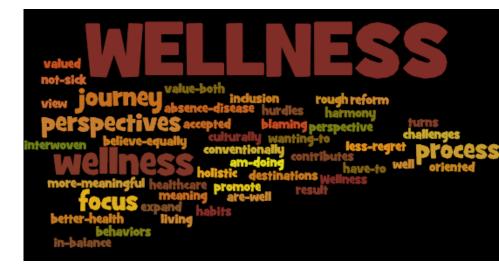


Wellness and Perspective By Beverly Calderon, RD, CDE

The word *wellness* does not have a universally accepted meaning. Regardless, it is the focus of conversations, books, articles, television shows, and is also included in healthcare reform. Conventionally, the wellness perspective centers on the absence of disease; if you're not sick, you are well. Culturally, the wellness perspective includes harmony, inclusion, and a more holistic view; if you're living in balance, you are well. The focus is the desired result, not necessarily how much the process contributed to the result. If only one of these perspectives is right, must the other

be wrong? It all depends on those defining wellness. We can expand the meaning of wellness if these two perspectives are interwoven. We then equally value and believe both perspectives.

The view of wellnessoriented habits and behaviors promoting better health will shift from an "I have to or else" viewpoint to an "I'm wanting to and am doing" viewpoint. We can apply this to diet, exercise, tobacco essation, stress reduction, preventive medical care, isease self-management, and more. Our wellness urney may still involve rough terrain, hurdles, nexpected turns, challenges, and different estinations than originally envisioned. But, our urney can be more meaningful and valued with less gret and blaming. Now, in all of this, what stands ut? What are your immediate reactions? What might e the meaning of these perspectives? How might this onnect to what you are wanting for yourself, your ommunity, and your healthcare organization?



What is a Patient-Centered Medical Home? By Helen Maldonado, PA-C

You may start to hear or have heard the phrase "patient-centered medical home" being used to describe your Indian healthcare clinic. This may sound strange since your doctor's office is not your home. Here is a brief description of a "patient-centered medical home" and what it could mean to you.

A "medical home" focuses on the relationship between the patient, his/her family, and the people that work at the healthcare clinic. "Patient-centered" means that the patient and the patient's family are included in the decisions being made regarding the patient's treatment plan. For example, if you have a chronic condition such as diabetes and your blood sugar is out of control, your doctor may tell you that you need to eat less, exercise more, and take more medication. In this instance, you may get some very nice instructions on how to use the medicine, but you are not included in the decision-making process.

How would it feel if your doctor asked you instead, "What is most important to you when dealing with diabetes?" and, "How much time and energy do you have to work on this chronic condition?" Your personal wishes may be to live longer, feel better, or

live unbothered by complications. He/she would then work closely with you to address your personal goal. An entire medical team would be available for your questions or challenges and victories. You would be the captain of your medical team and your doctor would be the coach. This approach to patient care has proven to be more effective for patients and doctors, but it takes a lot of work to transform healthcare clinics to this type of healthcare.

When asked what changes in your clinic you would like to see, keep these things in mind and speak freely to your healthcare providers; they really want to know. You may want shorter waiting times, improved customer service, more time with your doctor, or quicker access to a healthcare provider. If they are not asking these types of questions yet, you can still speak up in a respectful way.

This is an exciting time for all of us. When done correctly, a Patient-Centered Medical Home is truly the best place to receive healthcare services, with high quality standards, low rates of errors, and increased reliability. Keep your ears and eyes open and participate actively to create your own local patient-centered medical home.

Autism Awareness (continued from page 1)

Other signs parents can look for in children are:

- Lack of or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or mannerisms
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous play or make-believe play
- Constant fixation on parts of objects

Any concerns should be shared with your child's doctor so appropriate medical evaluations can be done. If your child is diagnosed with autism, your child may qualify for local early intervention services from the state of California.

For more information, visit:

Autism Society: http://www.autism-society.org/

Autism Speaks: http://www.autismspeaks.org/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html/







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Sunglasses and Ultraviolet (UV) Protection By Wendy Blocker, MSN

Well-made sunglasses do more than make you look like a movie star. They can protect your eyes from many dangers, including the sun's harmful rays. The American Optometric Association says you should always wear sunglasses during the daylight hours because:

- UV radiation from the sun can damage not only the skin of your eyelid, but also the cornea, lens, and
 other internal parts of the eye. UV exposure also contributes to the growth of certain types of cataracts
- They protect against "blue light" from the solar spectrum, which could increase your risk for macular degeneration. Blue-blocking lenses, which are generally tinted amber, can make distant objects easier to see, especially in low light. Blue-blocking plastic lenses may also make it difficult to discriminate the hues in traffic lights. Not all blue-blocking lenses offer adequate UV protection.
- They lead to improved and more comfortable vision from not having to squint
- They can make it easier to adapt to darkness. Prolonged exposure to bright light can make it more difficult for your eyes to adjust to driving at night

When you're choosing sunglasses, look for UV-protection details on product labels. Choose sunglasses that block 99-100% of both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Skip sunglasses that are labeled "cosmetic" and those that don't offer details on UV protection. Opt for larger lenses rather than smaller lenses.

Standard prescription eyeglasses can be treated with a material that provides UV protection while retaining a clear, non-tinted appearance. Some contact lenses also offer UV protection, but because contact lenses don't cover the enter eye, it's still important to wear sunglasses for UV protection when you are outdoors during daylight hours.





Upcoming Events

May 20-23, 2013 Annual Medical Providers' Best Practices Conference in Sacramento, California

- No registration fee!
- All community members welcome!

Recognizing the Signs of Alzheimer's Disease By Christine Brennan, MPH

Alzheimer's Disease is one of the most common forms of dementia and causes problems with memory, thinking, and behavior. Symptoms of Alzheimer's usually emerge slowly and worsen over time. The specific cause of Alzheimer's Disease is not known, but research has shown that two abnormal structures are highly suspected of playing a part in the disease process. The two abnormal structures are known as "plaques" and "tangles". "Plaques" are deposits of a protein called beta-amyloid which builds up in the spaces between nerve cells in the brain. "Tangles" are twisted fibers of a protein

Alzheimer's Disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States and the number of cases of Alzheimer's is expected to increase over the next several

called tau which builds up inside

cells in the brain. Age and family

history of Alzheimer's also play a

role in a person's risk of

developing the disease.

years. In 2013, an estimated 5.2 million Americans have Alzheimer's and by 2025, the number of Alzheimer's cases is expected to reach 7.1 million.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's Disease, but there are treatments that can slow the progression of the disease and lessen some of the symptoms. The treatments include medications to slow the progression of memory loss and medications for behavioral and sleep changes. There are also many clinical trials underway in which you may qualify to participate.

There are 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's. If you notice one or more of these warning signs in yourself or in a loved one, make an appointment with a doctor for a medical evaluation:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems

- Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, work, or at leisure
- Confusion with time and/or place
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood or personality

For more information, visit:

Alzheimer's Association: http://www.alz.org/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

http://www.cdc.gov/aging/aginginfo/alzheimers.htm

The Practice of "Cocooning" to Protect Babies By Susan Ducore, RN, BSN, MSN, PHN

"Cocooning" is a strategy recommended for protecting babies from exposure and catching diseases from the people who are in close contact with them. It involves vaccinating those in close contact with babies in order to protect them from infectious diseases. Unvaccinated parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, child-care providers, babysitters, and healthcare providers are susceptible to vaccine preventable disease and can transmit these diseases to babies and young children under their care. Appropriate vaccination by age will help to ensure that those who are too young or immune-system compromised will be protected.

Babies less than 6 months old are too young to have received all the doses of vaccine that are needed to protect them from whooping cough (pertussis), flu (influenza), and other dangerous diseases. Babies younger than 6 months old are more likely to develop certain infectious diseases than older children.

The following are recommended practices related to "cocooning":

- All children should be vaccinated on schedule with DTaP (the childhood whooping cough vaccine)
- All children should get all the DTaP vaccine doses in a series—not just the first dose
- All teenagers and adults need a one-time dose of Tdap vaccine (the teen and adult whooping cough vaccine)
- Pregnant women should receive a Tdap vaccination in each pregnancy, preferably during the 3rd trimester. This will protect the pregnant woman as well as her baby
- Everyone age 6 months and older needs to receive a flu vaccine every year

If you have questions or need additional information, please talk with your medical doctor or nursing professional. The following websites offer valuable immunization information for both patients and health care professionals:

- Video: Surround Your Baby with Protection http://cocooning.preventpertussis.org

 From the Texas Department of State Health Services
- Vaccine Education Materials for Parents

http://www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/order -educational-materials From the Vaccine Education Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Vaccine Information Website
 http://www.yaccineinformation.org

http://www.vaccineinformation.org
From the Immunization Action Coalition

Immunization Action Coalition http://www.vaccineinformation.org