

# California Area Indian Health Service PATIENT NEWSLETTER

*Raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of  
American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.*



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## Director's Message:

### Keep Your Kids Drug-Free This Summer

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June and July are popular months for initial drug use among kids ages 12-17, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This is because kids generally have more unsupervised time during the summer than they do during the school year.

As a result, it is especially important for you to start talking to your kids now and making plans for the summer.

- Talk to them about your expectations for them to stay drug free. Studies have shown that youth are more likely to avoid drugs if they know that drug use will upset their family and other adult role models. Teens that are more knowledgeable about the risks of drugs are also less likely to use them.
- Reinforce ground rules for the summer. Let your child know of the consequences if they are caught using drugs.
- Stay involved with your child. Consider asking your child to check in with you daily. Know what they are doing and with whom they are spending time.
- Make sure there is a responsible adult present at any parties or other gatherings they wish to attend.
- Keep alcohol and other drugs away from your kids. Many youth who abuse drugs obtain them from their own home. Be aware that prescription drugs can also be abused, so keep track of what is in your medicine cabinet.
- Help your child stay busy this summer. Encourage them to get a summer job, increase their number of chores, enroll them in summer camps or courses, or help them to volunteer. You can even ask them to cook your family dinner a few nights a week.
- Plan for more family time. Kids that spend more time with their family are less likely to use drugs or participate in other risky behaviors.
- Set a good example! Your kids are watching what you do, so don't use illicit drugs around your kids and drink in moderation, if at all.





## Protect Your Baby by Getting Your Whooping Cough Vaccine While Pregnant

by Susan Ducore, BSN, MSN, RN

Whooping Cough, also known as Pertussis, is a serious, highly contagious disease.

- Whooping Cough/Pertussis starts like the common cold with a runny nose or congestion, sneezing, and possibly a mild cough or fever
- Approximately 2 weeks after the symptoms start, severe coughing begins
- It can be spread by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others
- It is most severe for babies, with more than 50% of them needing to be hospitalized
- Whooping Cough/Pertussis can lead to pneumonia (lung disease) and other serious complications, and in rare cases can lead to death

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends that pregnant women receive vaccination against Whooping Cough/Pertussis during the third trimester of each pregnancy. The vaccine is called the **Tdap**, and protects against **Tetanus**, **Diphtheria**, and **Pertussis** (Whooping Cough). The recommended time to get the shot is between the 27th and 36th week of pregnancy, preferably during the earlier part of this time period.

The amount of antibodies against the disease in your body decreases over time. When you get the vaccine during one pregnancy, your antibody levels will not stay high enough to provide enough protection for future pregnancies. It is important for you to get a Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy so that each of your babies gets the greatest number of protective antibodies from you and the best protection possible against this disease.

When you get the Tdap vaccine during pregnancy, your baby will have short-term protection from the virus as soon as he or she is born. This early protection is important because your baby will not get their first Tdap of their own until they are 2 months old. The first few months of life are when your baby is at greatest risk for

catching Whooping Cough and having severe, potentially life-threatening complications from the infection.

To continue protecting your baby, make sure they get their first Tdap when they are 2 months old.

Getting the whooping cough vaccine while pregnant is best, but if you have never had a Tdap vaccine and do not get vaccinated during pregnancy, be sure to get the vaccine immediately after you give birth, before leaving the hospital or birthing center.

It will take about 2 weeks before your body develops protection (antibodies) in response to the vaccine. Once you have protection from the vaccine, you are less likely to give Whooping Cough to your newborn while caring for him or her. However, your baby will still be at risk for catching the disease from others.



For additional protection, ask your health care provider about whether all your family members are up-to-date on your adult, adolescent and childhood immunizations. Make sure that infants and young children in your family are fully vaccinated, getting their recommended shots on time at the right ages. Vaccination is important especially for families with newborns.

Also, if you have any of the signs or symptoms of Whooping Cough, seek medical attention immediately and follow the prescribed treatment.

For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pregnant/index.html>



## Safety tips for Summer Heat

by Carolyn Garcia, REHS, MSPH

Summer heat waves can be life threatening. According to US News and World Report, the heat wave that struck California in June claimed the lives of two elderly people in San Jose.

This is likely not the last heat wave we will see this summer. It is very important to know how to prevent heat-related illness when the temperature rises. Preventive measures are especially important for people with chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and poor circulation, and for the elderly. Anyone who is running a fever or who has a sunburn also needs to take special precautions. All of these conditions increase a person's risk for a heat related illness.

Here are some tips to avoid heat-related illness this summer:

- **Drink Plenty of Fluids.** While sweating cools your body, it also removes needed salts and minerals. When it is hot, drink more water, juice, and sport drinks. Avoid drinks containing caffeine and alcohol as these beverages have a mild diuretic effect and can increase the risk of dehydration.
- **Stay Cool Indoors.** The best way to stay cool during a heat wave is to stay in an air-conditioned space. If you do not have air conditioning in your home, go to a shopping mall or other public building for a few hours during the hottest part of the day. Fans, cool showers, and baths are also a good way to cool down. Open the windows in your home during the evening and night hours when the air is cool, then shut them tightly and draw the shades before the sun rises to keep cooler air inside during the day.
- **Wear Light Clothing & Sunscreen.** During a heat wave, wear lightweight, light-colored, loose fitting clothing. Wear a wide brimmed hat to keep cool and avoid a sunburn. Also remember to wear plenty of sunscreen whenever outdoors. Make sure to reapply sunscreen every 2 hours.
- **Avoid Peak Sunlight Hours.** Plan your outdoor activities carefully. If you must be outdoors in direct sun, avoid scheduling your activities during peak sunlight hours (between 10 AM and 4 PM). While outdoors, rest often in a shady area. Never leave children or pets in a parked vehicle.

- **Pace Yourself.** If you are not used to working or exercising in hot weather, start slowly and pick up the pace gradually. It may take up to 7 days to acclimatize your body to working or exercising in hot weather. Make sure to take frequent, regularly scheduled breaks. If outdoor activity makes you feel lightheaded, faint, weak, or confused, or if it causes your heart to pound or leaves you gasping for breath, stop what you're doing immediately and get into a cool, shady area and rest.
- **Use the Buddy System.** During a heat wave, make sure to check in on your friends and family. If you know someone who is elderly or has a health condition, check on them twice a day during a heat wave. Watch out for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke in yourself, your friends and your family.
- **Know the symptoms of Heat-Related Illness.** *Heat exhaustion* occurs when the body has lost too much water and salt through sweat. Typical symptoms of heat exhaustion include heavy sweating, cramps, headache, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, and fainting. Seek medical attention if the symptoms of heat exhaustion are severe or if the victim has heart problems or high blood pressure. If not treated, heat exhaustion can turn into heat stroke. *Heat stroke* is a life threatening condition and medical attention must be sought immediately. Symptoms of heat stroke include red, hot and dry skin combined with a very high body temperature. Other symptoms include dizziness, nausea, confusion, strange behavior, rapid pulse, headache and unconsciousness. Always seek medical attention when there are signs of heat stroke.

Have a safe  
healthy

and  
summer!



# Good Nutrition Supports Substance Abuse Recovery

by Beverly Calderon, MS, RDN, CDE

Long-term substance abuse often causes significant nutritional deficiencies and related health problems. People who have become addicted to stimulants, for example, often do not feel hungry, because stimulants can suppress appetite and alter the body's metabolism. As a result, they don't get enough calories or nutrients. Other addictive substances intensify appetite, leading to weight gain and increased risk of diabetes and other health conditions. Changes in brain chemistry due to substance abuse can also contribute to nutritional deficiencies and lead to health problems.

As a result, good nutrition is a key, if often overlooked, part of the recovery process from substance abuse. Proper nutrition helps restore physical and mental health, and has been shown to improve patients' ability to sustain their recovery. By contrast, poor nutrition during the recovery phase can lead to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and low energy, all of which can cause a patient to relapse.

Balanced, healthy meals support healing by correcting nutritional, vitamin, and mineral deficiencies, decreasing inflammation, and helping to improve other medical conditions that patients may have developed. Good nutrition can also help recovering patients achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

While it may be difficult to implement healthy eating patterns during the initial phase of recovery, it should be a goal as soon as the patient is able to adopt new habits. Understanding how food impacts both physical and mental health can help patients take charge of their eating as part of their recovery, and reset unhealthy patterns that develop during addiction.

Good nutrition can:

- Heal and nourish the body
- Improve mood and reduce stress
- Reduce cravings for drugs and alcohol
- Improve other medical conditions
- Become the foundation of a healthful lifestyle based on self-care

Individualized nutrition counseling and comprehensive nutrition education programs should ideally be overseen by a registered dietitian or nutritionist as part of the recovery process. But all patients who are recovering



from substance abuse should be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits.

If you or a loved one is in recovery from substance abuse:

- Plan meals around complex carbohydrates like vegetables, grains, and beans, which provide longer-lasting energy, versus simple carbohydrates like bread, pasta, and sweets, which provide short bursts of energy followed by a "crash"
- Eliminate or reduce caffeine, which can cause mild dehydration and suppress appetite, which can lead to poor eating patterns (e.g. skipping meals, and then overeating later in the day)
- Dehydration during recovery is common, so be sure to drink enough water with and in between meals to stay hydrated
- Avoid sugary foods. Recovering from addictive substances can cause cravings for sweets. Satisfy the urge for sweets with whole fruits, which also contain fiber
- Avoid processed and fast foods because they lack key nutrients and typically have excess amounts of saturated fats and/or sugars
- Get adequate amounts of lean protein, such as chicken and fish, and high fiber foods that make you



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