



Western Health Advantage

SUMMER 2018

# ADVANTAGE

Your resource for health and wellness

## WORKOUTS FOR MIND AND BODY

Healthy activities for  
the whole person

NUTRITION: TEACH YOUR CHILD THE ABCS

SCHOOL SAFETY: WHAT EVERY FAMILY SHOULD KNOW

FITNESS: EXERCISE HIGHS AND LOWS

advantage > you



### Preventing Skin Cancer



Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, with one in five Americans developing it. Fortunately, it's also one of the easiest cancers to prevent. Here are some tips for protecting yourself.

- Shield your skin from the sun's harmful UV rays by seeking shade, wearing protective clothing and using a sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 30 or higher. Reapply sunscreen at least every couple of hours.
- It's especially important to protect children from the sun. Skin cancer results—in part—from cumulative sun exposure throughout your life. On average, people get 80 percent of their lifetime sun exposure during their youth.
- Tanning beds and sun lamps are not safe because they are sources of artificial UV radiation that may cause skin cancer.
- The side windows of cars don't block UVA rays (the front windshield does), so while driving, wear sunscreen on your arms and face.

It's natural to want to get outdoors during the summer, but you should also take these skin protection measures.

**Donald B. Hufford, M.D.**

Chief Medical Officer, Western Health Advantage

## TIDBITS

### Tips for Smart Snacking

Over the past four decades, more Americans have drifted away from a strict three-meal eating schedule in favor of snacking. While it's important to stay nourished, even on a busy day, eating on the go can lead to excess calories. To keep up your energy levels while still watching your waistline, try the following guidelines:

- Be mindful. Sometimes, we snack just to have something to do. Make sure you are actually hungry before indulging in a bite—and consider substituting food with water or an herbal tea to fulfill that urge.
- Mix and match. Combine sweeter snacks—like oranges or apples—with a protein element, such as peanut butter or string cheese. You'll feel full longer and will be less likely to suffer a sugar crash.
- Serve it up. Instead of snacking from a box or bag, portion out what you are going to eat beforehand so you ensure you don't consume too much. Remember, this is a snack, not a meal.
- Maximize nutrients. Snack healthily by eating foods high in protein, vitamins and minerals. Some good go-tos are nuts; whole-grain, low-salt pretzels; and high-fiber cereals.
- Plan ahead. Carry a small, portable snack with you so if hunger pangs strike, you won't be tempted to grab some junk food.

Sources: *Food & Nutrition Magazine*, *Harvard Health Publishing*, *Scholastic*

**Western  
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#### ADVANTAGE MAGAZINE

Chief Medical Officer•Don Hufford, M.D. Manager, Health Promotion & Disease Management•Laura Montell, R.N.  
Chief Marketing and Brand Officer•Rick Heron Content Developer•Phil Boerner Contributors•Karen Bennett, Mark Gilroy,  
Alicia Lowe, Elena Medrano Produced by

2349 Gateway Oaks Drive  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
916.563.2250  
westernhealth.com

twitter.com/westernhealth, facebook.com/westernhealth, blog: mywha.org/blog  
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## 3 Questions

Lisa Angst of WHA Member Services answers your WHA-related questions



### What services are covered outside of the WHA service area?

WHA covers you for urgent care and emergency care services wherever you are in the world. Please note that emergency room visits are not covered for nonemergent situations. If you are outside of the service area and obtain care from a nonparticipating provider, WHA will reimburse

the provider for covered medical services received for emergency situations, less the applicable copayment and/or deductible. Please remember to contact your primary care physician (PCP) when you are back in the service area for any follow-up treatment that may be needed.

If an urgent care situation arises while you are in WHA's service area, call your PCP at any time of the day, including evenings and weekends, or call WHA's Nurse Advice Line at 877.793.3655. Please keep in mind that all follow-up care from emergency and urgent care situations must be performed by your PCP.

### What if I paid out of pocket for emergency situations outside of WHA's service area?

Whether your emergency services are provided by participating or non-participating providers, WHA covers them, and your only liability is the applicable copayment and/or deductible. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 180 days of the date that services were rendered, with proof of payment. You can submit your request for reimbursement by logging in to your MyWHA account and clicking on "Request Reimbursement" in the MyTOOLS box or contacting Member Services at 888.563.2250.

### How can I ensure my WHA account is up to date?

To make sure you upgrade your MyWHA account on westernhealth.com, click on "Start Here Login" then "Upgrade MyWHA Account" for the newest personal access version!



### JOIN WHA'S TEAM AT THE BREATHE BIKE TREK

Western Health Advantage supports Breathe California and its mission to ensure that the state maintains healthy air quality. The Breathe Bike Trek takes place Sept. 7–9 in Petaluma. You can join our team for three days of cycling, camping and fun! There is a registration fee, and participants must raise at least \$550. It's a great time for a great cause and our team looks forward to it every year. Enjoy delicious catered meals, unbelievable routes, entertainment and more! If you can't join WHA's team but would like to support the cause, you can make a donation at [mywha.org/biketrek](http://mywha.org/biketrek). Email us at [community@westernhealth.com](mailto:community@westernhealth.com) with questions on how to be a part of WHA's team.

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### NorthBay Healthcare Earns Recognition

NorthBay Healthcare's hospitals in Vacaville and Fairfield have earned the coveted Magnet® Recognition. The Magnet Recognition Program is operated by the American Nurses Credentialing Center and allows nurses to recognize excellence in other nurses. It is considered the highest recognition for nursing excellence. From safety and comfort to healing and innovations, you'll find state-of-the-art care at WHA's partner NorthBay Healthcare.

### STAYING ACTIVE IN EXTREME HEAT

Keeping your exercise routine going during vacation can be tough, but when your journeys take you to regions with extreme heat or high humidity, environmental factors can up the difficulty level even more. Your body's normal cooling systems may fail in such conditions—especially if you are sweating profusely and not drinking enough fluids—and increase your core temperature. To avoid heat-related illness, make sure to hydrate before, during and after exercise. Consider reducing the intensity of your workout, at least for a few days until you acclimate. Try to exercise in the early morning or evening, especially if the heat stress index is over 90 degrees. Wear light or loose-fitting clothing to allow for greater heat dissipation, and always apply sunscreen.

#### HELP ON THE GO

For Western Health Advantage members in need of medical attention while far from home, help is readily available through Assist America. As part of your health plan, you have 24/7 access to urgent and emergency care services all over the world. Visit [mywha.org/travel](http://mywha.org/travel) to learn more.

Sources: American Council on Exercise, Mayo Clinic

## Expert Advice for Smart Workouts

Tips for exercising safely in high altitudes from Olena K. Lineberry, M.D., pulmonary critical care medicine specialist

Summer travel can take you to elevations well above sea level, and it may be challenging for those unused to high altitudes to acclimate to the reduced oxygen in the atmosphere. It can also complicate your exercise efforts. Dr. Lineberry of Mercy Medical Group offers guidance on working out in high places.

#### How can high elevations impact your health?

High-altitude disorder—or altitude sickness—is a stressor for the entire body; symptoms include nausea, poor sleep, a change in mental state such as confusion or change in gait. Less oxygen in the air may increase shortness of breath, wheezing and coughing. If you start having those symptoms, move to a lower altitude as quickly as possible.

#### How can people prepare ahead of time for a high-altitude trip?

The most important thing you can do is educate yourself about altitude sickness and know the symptoms to watch out for. It's always wise to see your physician to get your vitals checked and inform him or her that you will be traveling to a high-altitude area. If you can, stay in a lower elevation (below 7,000 feet) for a day to get your body to acclimate.

#### What should people keep in mind when exercising at high elevations?

You need to rest for the first day after you arrive and avoid exertion. Pay attention to your breathing patterns. If you don't experience any symptoms, gradually intensify your activity level. Staying hydrated is the No. 1 priority, so drink plenty of water—you need to increase your normal intake at higher altitudes—and avoid alcohol. Apply sunscreen, and wear sunglasses and protective clothing because the sun is much stronger at higher elevations. Make sure you have a companion who can monitor you—and help you safely descend to lower elevations if you exhibit symptoms of altitude sickness.



## Get a Healthy Start to the Academic Year With Your Child's Back-to-School Checkup

From the desk of Donald B. Hufford, M.D., chief medical officer

With the end of summer vacation comes the start of a new school year. This can be a hectic time, as families shop for classroom supplies and new clothes. But it's important to add one more item to your to-do list: Schedule an appointment with your child's pediatrician.

An annual physical exam is key to your child's health care, and back-to-school season is an ideal time. The doctor will give your child a checkup to detect any emerging health issues, usually checking his or her blood pressure and testing for conditions such as diabetes. Your provider can also make sure that your child is up to date on vaccinations, one of the most important measures to take for illness prevention.

California law now requires all schoolchildren be immunized (talk to your doctor about the immunization

schedule). Students entering kindergarten must receive these vaccinations:

- Diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT)—five doses (or shots) between 2 months and 6 years of age
- Polio—four doses between 2 months and 6 years of age
- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)—two doses between 12 months and 6 years of age
- Hepatitis B—three doses between birth and 18 months of age
- Varicella (chickenpox)—one dose between 12 months and 6 years of age

Students entering seventh grade need to show that they have had the following vaccinations:

- Tetanus, reduced diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap)—one dose given on or after the seventh birthday

- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)—two doses given on or after the first birthday

To make sure all your bases are covered, contact your county's health department for local information.

Your child's checkup also offers an opportunity to talk to the pediatrician about healthy living, including proper nutrition, exercise and sleep. If your son or daughter is an athlete, the doctor can discuss beneficial exercise programs and address any overuse injuries. If you have a teenager, the doctor can talk to him or her about issues like drinking, smoking, drugs or depression.

Whatever your child's age, schedule a checkup today to help ensure that he or she starts the school year feeling healthy—whether hitting the books or the basketball court.



# Live & Learn

During summer's lazy days, it can be all too easy to let that lethargy spread to other aspects of life. Read on for some inspiring ways to activate your family's brains and bodies before starting the hustle of the new school year.





# EXCELLENT ED-VENTURES

Encourage your children to rediscover the joy of learning by taking family outings focused on art, history, science or sustainability. Many of these activities are free or offer discounts for young children.

## HANDS-ON SCIENCE

### The Marine Mammal Center (Marin Headlands)

Take a guided tour and get the inside story on the center's work rescuing and caring for marine mammals. Watch seals and sea lions from the observation deck and witness scientists in action in the veterinary research hospital. On Marine Science Sunday (second and fourth Sundays of the month), take in an interactive presentation, such as:

- Marine Mammal Superheroes (July 22)
- Under the Bridge: Marine Mammals of SF Bay (Aug. 12 and 26)
- Top Predators: Orcas and Great White Sharks (Sept. 9 and 23)
- Sea Otter Spectacular (Sept. 16)

The center provides convenient access to Rodeo Lagoon and Rodeo Beach, where you can watch for marine life while taking a stroll.

For more info and to book a tour, visit [marinemammalcenter.org](http://marinemammalcenter.org) or call 415.289.7325.

### CuriOdyssey at Coyote Point (San Mateo)

Connect with the natural world at this engaging science and wildlife center. Exhibits include Backyard Science, which involves experimenting with scientific phenomena that can be found outdoors, and The Nature of Patterns, which points to patterns all around us in music, leaves and even the coats of CuriOdyssey's resident wildlife. Those animals—including river otters, raccoons and raptors—can be seen up close via Animals in Action and feeding presentations. Allow time for a walk, bike ride or playground session at Coyote Point Recreation Area.

For more info, visit [curiodyssey.org](http://curiodyssey.org) or call 650.342.7755. Note: A \$6 Coyote Point Recreation Area entrance fee applies.

## MAKING HISTORY

### Gold Bug Park and Mine (Placerville)

As you descend more than 300 feet into the 1888 Gold Bug Mine (open daily),



keep your eye out for drill holes where miners placed dynamite. Then visit the neighboring stamp mill, where you can learn the how-tos—and hazards—of gold extraction. Additional activities include observing a blacksmith in action, trying your luck at gem panning, and discovering flora and fauna along the three-quarter-mile Deer Hollow Trail. On Sept. 1, take a special tour of the rarely open-to-the-public Priest Mine, which was hand dug in 1848 and shows off thousands of pick marks.

For more info, visit [goldbugpark.org](http://goldbugpark.org) or call 530.642.5207.

### Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park (Richmond)

The "We Can Do It" spirit is alive in Richmond, site of the war effort's most productive shipyards. The Visitor Education Center presents a wealth of exhibits, Junior Ranger activities, and films and artifacts related to Home Front efforts; it also hosts a group of real-life "Rosies" who share



their stories on most Fridays. Take a 1-mile walk along the San Francisco Bay Trail to the Rosie the Riveter Memorial or a short drive to the last remaining ship built in the Kaiser Shipyards—the 1944 SS Red Oak Victory—which is open for tours on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. On Aug. 11, enjoy entertainment, a costume contest, Lindy Hop dance lessons and more at the annual Homefront Festival.

For more information, visit [nps.gov/rovi](https://nps.gov/rovi) or [rosietheriveter.org](https://rosietheriveter.org) or call 510.232.5050.

## A CHANGE OF ART

### Santa Rosa Civic Artwalk

Between Santa Rosa Avenue and Third Street, the Prince Memorial Greenway for pedestrians and cyclists shows off approximately 20 of the Artwalk's 59 public artworks and provides easy access to family-friendly attractions, including:

- Prince Gateway Park. Admire *Guardian of the Creek*, a mosaic fish sculpture created by youth artists through Artstart, and cool off at the splash pad.
- Luther Burbank Home & Gardens. The renowned horticulturist's gardens (free and open to the public) feature many unusual plant varieties and a fitting Artwalk stop—a lotus blossom sundial sculpture.
- Juilliard Park. On Sunday evenings through Aug. 5, enjoy the free summer concert series, Live at Juilliard, from 5–7 p.m. The park has four Artwalk stops, including the colorful *Mandala Mural*.

For more details and to download an

Artwalk map, visit [srcity.org/arts](https://srcity.org/arts). Maps can also be downloaded via QR code at a kiosk in Courthouse Square.

### Crocker Art Museum (Sacramento)

Here, kids learn, play and grow while interacting with art. In the ocean-themed Tot Land—designed for ages 5 and under—children climb into a wooden boat and choose their own adventure. Along the Story Trail, kids ages 4 to 6 explore the galleries and practice talking about art. During the summer, Wee Wednesday—typically for the 3-to-5 set—invites children up to age 12 to join in the creation of special art projects. Fourth Fridays (July 27 and Aug. 24) feature musical entertainment, gallery exploration and games, and surprises.

For more info, visit [crockerart.org/kids](https://crockerart.org/kids) or call 916.808.7000.

## GOING GREEN

### Roseville Utility Exploration Center

Have a blast learning about sustainability at the interactive exhibit hall and special family events, including:

- Big Trucks Summer—Tuesdays in July, 9:30–11 a.m. Children can sit behind the wheel of a utility truck, watch demos, and join in games and activities.
- Curby's Waste-a-Palooza—Sat., Aug. 25, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Gain waste reduction skills through fun activities such as the Sewer Swim, FOG (fats, oils, grease) Buster Relay and a trash-talking quiz show.

For more details, call 916.746.1550 or visit [roseville.ca.us/explore](https://roseville.ca.us/explore).

### Community Gardens

Many gardens offer volunteer opportunities for families. Among the regional options are:

- Garden for the Environment (located in San Francisco): [gardenfortheenvironment.org](https://gardenfortheenvironment.org), 415.558.8246
- Sacramento community gardens: [cityofsacramento.org](https://cityofsacramento.org), 916.808.4943
- Lafayette Community Garden: [lafayettecommunitygarden.org](https://lafayettecommunitygarden.org)
- Local Ecology and Agriculture Fremont (LEAF): [fremontleaf.org](https://fremontleaf.org)





## BUILD YOUR BRAIN

You exercise to keep your body healthy, but your mind needs training too

Studies have shown that people who consistently exercise their mind through brain-building games demonstrate improvement in brain processing speed, memory and executive functions, as well as a decreased chance of developing cognitive decline or dementia.

The best kinds of mental exercises mix different cognitive functions. Look for games that demand both speed and accuracy, which have been shown to aid in building new neuropsychological pathways

in your brain. For options, check out apps such as CogniFit, BrainHQ and Lumosity.

For more classic brain training, try sudoku or a crossword puzzle (up the ante by doing them in pen or timing yourself). Don't just stick to one type of game; variety is the spice of life and good for brain health as well.

Sources: *Best Health Magazine*, *Medical News Today*, *Neuropsychology Review*, *PLOS One*



## EXERCISING THE WHOLE PERSON

To boost both physical and mental health, try dancing, tai chi or yoga

Many types of exercise provide mind-body benefits. Consider the following advantages of activities involving movement and concentration.

Dancing can improve heart health, balance, gait and mood, while stimulating the brain. Recent studies found that choreographed dancing appeared to benefit the brain more than other forms of exercise, possibly because it involves sensory and motor function, cognitive skills and social interaction. Dancing may also help improve quality of life for patients with Parkinson's disease.

Doing tai chi may be considered low-impact exercise, but it packs a high



number of health benefits, including increased strength, balance and flexibility, and reduced stress, anxiety and depression. This ancient martial

art requires continuous motion, as you transition slowly from one posture to the next.

Like tai chi, yoga is an ancient practice involving gentle motion, controlled breathing and deep focus and offers many of the same physical and mental health payoffs. In addition, studies have found that yoga practitioners have greater body awareness, positive body image and tend to be more mindful eaters.

Sources: *Berkeley Wellness*, *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *Harvard Health*, *Mayo Clinic*

# Teaching the ABCs of Good Nutrition

Smart tactics and tools to help your children learn to love eating well



When talking to your kids about a healthy diet, taking a creative approach can make a big difference. Try these kid-friendly strategies to inspire good eating habits—and help prevent the onset of conditions such as childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes:

- › **MAKE FOOD FUN.** Find activity sheets, games, videos about healthy snacking and resources on the five food groups—fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy—as well as other nutrition basics at [ChooseMyPlate.gov/kids](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov/kids).
- › **LOOK AT THE LABELS.** Offer pointers on how to read nutrition facts labels and choose foods that are high in vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber, and low in sodium, added sugars, saturated fat and trans fat. Food companies are in the process of adopting a redesigned label, which should make it easier to determine serving sizes, calories per serving and how much sugar has been added to the product. (See "Sweet Talk" for more on detecting added sugars.)
- › **TRICK OUT YOUR FRIDGE.** Decorate the door with colorful,



easy-to-read reminders of healthy choices, such as:

- Kid's Healthy Eating Plate ([hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource](http://hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource), click on "Kid's Healthy Eating Plate")
- U R What U Eat guide, which categorizes choices as Go, Slow and Whoa ([wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov), click on "Choosing Foods for Your Family")
- "What's that you're drinking?" chart from the American Heart Association ([heart.org/kids](http://heart.org/kids), click on "Activities for Kids")
- Nutrition Tip Sheets from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics ([eatright.org/nnm](http://eatright.org/nnm), click on "Tip Sheets & Handouts")

➤ **WELCOME KIDS INTO THE KITCHEN.** Involving children in meal preparation is a great way to teach healthy habits and food safety—as long as they are supervised and assigned age-appropriate tasks. Kids can use measuring cups and spoons to learn about proper portion sizes, as well as fractions and other math concepts. Gadgets like cookie cutters and ice cream scoopers can make foods such as fruits, sandwiches and brown rice more enticing. For age-based cooking tips, visit [eatright.org](http://eatright.org) (search for "Teaching kids to cook").

➤ **PLAY WITH HOUSEHOLD ITEMS.** Have your child picture a baseball to measure a serving of dry cereal, a golf ball to measure a serving of raisins, a deck of cards to measure a serving of lean beef or poultry, and

a pingpong ball to measure a serving of peanut butter. For more ideas, visit [eatright.org/for-kids](http://eatright.org/for-kids).

## ➤ EXPLORE THE GROCERY STORE.

Show your child that the store's perimeter typically offers the freshest foods. Within the aisles, healthy items include dried or canned beans, frozen produce, 100 percent whole grains (bread, brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal), and unsalted nuts. When choosing processed foods like crackers, look for varieties with four or fewer ingredients.

➤ **LET YOUR GARDEN GROW.** Experts say kids are more likely to try produce that they've had a hand in growing. Plant a variety of fruits, veggies and herbs in your own backyard or volunteer in a community garden (see page 8 for some local options). Toddlers can tend to a virtual garden with the American Heart Association app Harry's Healthy Garden, which also provides simple recipes.

## ➤ CHECK OUT A FARMERS MARKET.

Encourage your child to pick out a new fruit or veggie to share at home. As with gardening, visiting farmers markets provides an opportunity to learn about the origin of food.

## ➤ TALK WITH YOUR PEDIATRICIAN.

Ask if your child should be on a special diet or limit carbohydrates. Your pediatrician may also offer nutrition tips and provide a referral to a registered dietitian if appropriate.

Remember, eating well and being physically active are some of the most important things your child can do to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes.

*Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Heart Association, Cleveland Clinic, FDA, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, National Institutes of Health, USDA*

## SWEET TALK

Until added sugar appears on all nutrition facts labels, detecting sneaky sweeteners may require a little extra work.

Scanning ingredient lists is an easy way to determine if a product contains added sugar—as long as you know what to look for. Introduce your kids to common sugar synonyms, which include cane sugar, evaporated cane juice, high-fructose corn syrup, raw sugar, molasses, dextrose, sucrose, crystal solids, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup and brown rice syrup.

While you may be aware that food items—such as soda, some fruit drinks and cereals, and flavored yogurt—contain added sugar, remember to also check for sweeteners in whole-grain cereals, instant oatmeal, frozen foods, granola and protein bars, pasta sauce, ketchup and other condiments, and even baby food.

# ADDRESSING THE OPIOID CRISIS

Revised prescribing guidelines and treatment plans for pain sufferers work to counter drug abuse

Over the past 20 years, the prescription of opioid pain medications has skyrocketed, leading to an epidemic of abuse and overdose deaths. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, medical providers wrote nearly a quarter of a billion opioid prescriptions in 2013. In 2014, nearly 2 million Americans either abused or were dependent on prescription opioid pain relievers.

To alleviate this crisis, health care providers—and health plans like Western Health Advantage—are working to not only help patients

who suffer daily from chronic pain but also do a better job of managing risks associated with pain medications.

For years, doctors operated on the principle that relieving pain was the primary goal, that opioid pain medications posed little risk of addiction when used as directed and that increasing the dosage was the best way to reduce persistent chronic pain over the long term. Now physicians know the risk of addiction is high and that a higher dosage often has diminishing returns in reducing a patient's pain, while also increasing the patient's tolerance, dependence and risk of addiction.

That's why the surgeon general released new opioid prescribing guidelines in 2016 that recommended a thorough evaluation of patients—including looking at the level of their pain and how that pain is affecting their lives and exploring whether nonopioid alternatives would provide relief.

For patients who do need opioid pain medications, the recommendation is for physicians to start with low doses and limited supplies pending doctor-approved refills, counsel patients about addiction risks, and set criteria for evaluating treatment effectiveness. When patients have chronic pain that requires high doses of opioids, treatment should be coordinated through pain management specialists.

Primary care physicians also need to learn how to recognize signs of dependence and addiction so they can create a timeline for tapering patients off the drugs, including offering access to medication-assisted treatment with drugs like buprenorphine and methadone or connecting patients with appropriate treatment services.





# Talking With Your Children About School Safety

The beginning of the school year should be filled with excitement and the anticipation of learning new things. Not too long ago, the biggest things students had to worry about were teachers and homework; now, kids and parents also have to worry about school safety—everything from bullying and physical attacks to gun violence.

So how should parents talk with their children about violence in school? Shareh Ghani, M.D., vice president and medical director for Magellan Healthcare, recommends including the subject in a broader talk about safety. “We talk to our children about wearing helmets and not trusting strangers,” says Dr. Ghani. “It is important to talk about school violence, not necessarily as a standout, but blend it into conversations around safety topics. The goal is to make kids aware of risks in an age-appropriate manner.”

Dr. Ghani suggests using concise language that is suitable for your child’s developmental age. If there is an act of school violence, elsewhere or closer to home, monitor your child’s exposure to social and news media. With teenagers, try to strike a balance between giving facts and triggering fear with too much adult-oriented information. Watch for alterations in behavior that might indicate anxiety, such as nightmares; aggression; anger; changes in grades,

sleep patterns or personal hygiene; and withdrawal from social life.

The most important thing you can do? Make sure your child understands you are always available to talk.

“Children need to know that they can come to you with any concerns,” says Dr. Ghani.

If your child is apprehensive about attending school, encourage him or her to express those fears verbally or—in the case of younger kids—through play or art. Consider a modified school day for more severe anxiety, though avoiding school altogether is detrimental to both educational and mental health. “The longer the child is away from school, the scarier it will be to return,” says Dr. Ghani.



You can also discuss age-appropriate safety and communication plans with your child. Most schools have emergency procedures in place; check with the administration or the school website for details.

Discussing school violence and preparedness is not easy, and, unfortunately, there is no simple solution. “We have to have ongoing conversations about safety at school,” says Dr. Ghani. “We still don’t know all the right answers.”

## DEPRESSION WARNING SIGNS

- Behavior changes such as increased anger, withdrawal, sadness, staying in one’s room, not socializing with friends, irritability
- Loss of interest or pleasure in previously enjoyed activities
- Change in sleeping patterns
- Lack of energy
- Failing grades
- Poor personal hygiene
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal behavior such as cutting, saying he or she doesn’t want to live, or suicide attempts

Seek professional help if your child exhibits extreme changes or suicidal behavior. WHA members, find a mental health professional with Magellan Healthcare at [magellanassist.com](http://magellanassist.com) or call 800.424.1778.

# AVOIDING THE SCHOOL DAZE

Kelly Brothers on the value of interaction in education



**D**o you ever wonder about the future of education? Would high school be better if we identified the country's best teachers, installed cameras in their classrooms and had them lecture to thousands of students who watched on laptops from their homes? Probably not. Real learning happens during

interactions with others. The subject matter is often less important than learning to navigate the social context.

Last year, I spoke to my son's freshman class and focused on a single theme, "Put Down Your Phone"—hoping to make the point that technology can isolate or connect, depending on the setting. "Put down your phone and sit with someone you don't know at lunch. Put down your phone and engage with the person

whose locker is next to yours." True education begins the minute we put down our phones (and other social crutches) and interact with the people around us.

Tech isolation is a problem for all of us. You see it in waiting rooms, elevators, any public situation. People bury their heads in their phones, not out of need, but out of a desire to avoid human interaction with someone they don't know. Remember the first time you met your best friend or your spouse? Now add a phone into that picture. Would you still have met, or would one of you have been distracted?

Phones, laptops and iPads are on many students' back-to-school lists. But ultimately the best tools are a nice smile, a kind word and an ability to stick out your hand and say, "I'm Kelly. Nice to meet you."

## ACCESSING LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES

**W**estern Health Advantage is committed to improving the health and well-being of our community by expanding access to health care while delivering the highest level of customer services with integrity, accuracy and sincerity. In keeping with this commitment, WHA provides a variety of language assistance services to our members—free of charge.

For Spanish, you may speak to a certified bilingual WHA Member Services representative. For other languages, WHA contracts with a vendor that provides interpretation services. Should you have a need for an interpreter on the phone or face to face, call 916.563.2250 or 888.563.2250.

For the hearing-impaired, TDD/TTY service is available M-F, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in either English or Spanish.

The phone number is 888.877.5378.

In addition to interpretation services, WHA also offers the following:

- American Sign Language
- Alternate formats for the blind or visually impaired
- Document translation

To better serve you, it is helpful if you let us know your preferred spoken and written language. Log in to your WHA account and choose "Language Preference" under the MyTools menu. You'll be brought to a Language Preferences survey where you can submit your preference. Your information will be kept confidential and be used only for official and legitimate health plan purposes.





## Granola Bars

Make your own granola bars at home for a tasty and healthy treat that is good on the go.

24 servings

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup carrot (grated)  
1 cup honey  
1 cup peanut butter  
3½ cups rolled oats  
½ cup raisins  
½ cup coconut

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Peel and grate the carrots. Put the honey and peanut butter in a large saucepan. Cook on low heat until they melt. Remove the pan from the heat. Turn off the burner. Add oats, raisins, carrots and coconut to the saucepan. Stir well, and let it cool until you can safely touch it with your hands. Put the mix in the baking pan, pressing firmly into the bottom of the pan. Bake for 25 minutes. Cut into 24 bars.

### NUTRITION INFORMATION (per bar)

Calories: 160	Sodium: 5 mg
Total fat: 6 g	Dietary fiber: 2 g
Saturated fat: 2 g	Protein: 4 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg	

Source: Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program





2349 Gateway Oaks Drive  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95833

916.563.2250  
888.563.2250  
westernhealth.com

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Healthy For Good™

## join our Heart Walk team

Western Health Advantage is proud to be a local sponsor of the American Heart Association and its **2018 HEART & STROKE WALK**. WHA encourages our members [plus family and friends] to join together to have fun, get inspired and support the fight against heart disease and stroke.

Choose from these two walks:

### STATE CAPITOL WALK

**Thursday, September 27**

Meet at South Steps of Capitol Building

11:15 a.m. Opening Ceremonies

11:30 a.m. Walk Begins

### COMMUNITY WALK AT WILLIAM LAND PARK

**Saturday, September 29**

Meet at Corner of Freeport and Sutterville

8:30 a.m. Opening Ceremonies

9:00 a.m. Walk Begins



Western Health Advantage

join our team at [mywha.org/heartwalk](http://mywha.org/heartwalk)