



Sutter Gould  
Medical Foundation

A Sutter Health Affiliate

*With You. For Life.*

# yourhealth

Summer 2009

Bringing Wellness and Health News to Northern California

Community Based, Not For Profit



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## Your Health from Sutter Gould

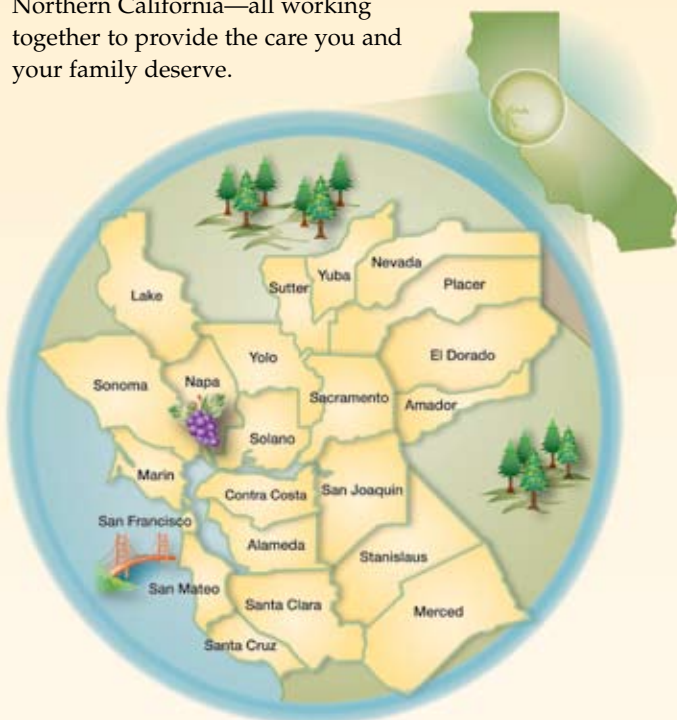
Sutter Gould Medical Foundation is part of a health care family comprised of some of the most respected doctors, hospitals and other health professionals in Northern California. Providing care in more than 100 communities, our not-for-profit Sutter Health network is a regional leader in cardiac care, cancer treatment, orthopedics and obstetrics and a pioneer in advanced patient-safety technology. Our experts partner with one another and our patients to provide convenient, service-oriented, quality care. We're committed to bringing the very best to our patients.

Would you like to be added to the *Your Health* mailing list? If so, please e-mail your name and address to [SGMFPublicRelations@sutterhealth.org](mailto:SGMFPublicRelations@sutterhealth.org).

Please note that while the information in *Your Health* is gathered from a wide range of medical experts, it may not apply to your particular situation. If you have specific questions about your health, contact your personal physician. Nothing contained in this publication is intended to be for medical diagnosis or treatment.

### Your Sutter Health Network

Sutter Health includes some of the most respected doctors, hospitals and other health care providers in Northern California—all working together to provide the care you and your family deserve.



### SUMMER 09

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# Test Your Cancer Knowledge

## Misinformation about cancer often circulates

in e-mails that falsely claim a link between cancer and familiar products. According to one university study, many consumers now believe that “almost everything causes cancer.” As a result, they may feel helpless and less willing to take proven steps to reduce their risk.

Could you be misinformed about what triggers cancer? Test your knowledge here.

## Spot the Cancer Hoax

Put a check mark next to the items that have been scientifically proven to cause cancer.

- Underarm antiperspirants and deodorants
- Artificial sweeteners
- Fluoridated water
- Serious injury
- Smoking or using smokeless tobacco
- A lifestyle without regular exercise
- A high-sugar, low-fiber diet
- Suntanning or repeated sun exposure without skin protection

The reality is that only the last four items have been documented to cause cancer in humans.

## An Ounce of Cancer Prevention

Are you doing all you can to prevent cancer? Listed below are important steps you can take to protect yourself from this serious disease. Check the statements that are true for you now—and take note of those you intend to follow to lower your risk in the future.

- I do not smoke or use smokeless tobacco.
- I use tobacco, but I am actively seeking help to quit.
- I exercise about 30 minutes every day—vigorously enough to raise my heart rate.
- I keep my weight within a recommended healthy range.
- My daily diet includes plenty of these natural disease fighters: vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- I avoid or only occasionally eat sugary foods, highly processed grains (such as white bread and white rice), red meat and processed meats (such as bacon and salami).
- I protect my skin from harmful sun rays by wearing sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- I get regular medical checkups and screenings.

Knowing the truth about cancer will help you protect yourself from developing the disease.

## Log on to Learn More

Visit [www.suttergould.org](http://www.suttergould.org). Our health database provides a reliable Internet source to research a variety of medical conditions, including asthma, cancer, diabetes, and more.





# Take Care, Take Charge at MyLifeStages.org

What if you had 24-hour access to medical experts for health questions and concerns—right from your desktop? You do.

**MyLifestages.org**—Sutter Health’s new interactive and free Web site especially for women—instantly connects you with local experts in women’s health, allergies, heart care, cancer treatment, bone health, diabetes management, nutrition and much more. Log on to **mylifestages.org** to find the latest health news and information, read blogs from Sutter Health medical experts, learn about nearby Sutter Health programs and classes, or join discussion forums.

**MyLifestages.org** is your one-stop health-solutions resource from the community health care system you trust: Sutter Health. Visit **mylifestages.org** today to create your own free personalized account.

## Stop Allergy Suffering

“I’m fine—it’s just allergies,” you say, as you sneeze and reach for another tissue. You may think that allergies are just something to accept and endure, as best you can. Yet without proper treatment, allergy symptoms can disrupt your life.

“Self-treating allergies is a hit-and-miss proposition,” says allergist Steve Rubinstein, M.D., with Sutter Health–affiliated Palo Alto Medical Foundation. “If allergies are mild, nonprescription remedies may be enough. But if symptoms are chronic or debilitating, work with your doctor.”

Physicians able to assess and treat allergy symptoms include pediatricians, family medicine doctors, internists, allergists and pulmonologists. Allergists have specialized training in preventing and treating allergies. A doctor can help you identify and avoid triggers and recommend the right medicines to safely relieve symptoms with minimal side effects. Some prescription medicines or allergy injection therapy can prevent symptoms altogether.



See a doctor if the following statements apply to you.

- My allergies (or allergy medicines) cause tiredness, affect my concentration, disrupt my sleep or limit my daily activities.
- I have missed work or school due to allergies.
- My allergies have led to sinus or ear infections or asthma.

### Read Our Expert’s Blog on Allergies

Visit **mylifestages.org** for more insights into seasonal allergies and how to minimize their impact, provided by Steve Rubinstein, M.D. Log on to the Web site, select “Expert Blogs” and then “All About Allergies.”



### Team Up for True Allergy Relief!

Don’t suffer through another allergy season. You can find a Sutter Health–affiliated physician who will work with you to ease allergy symptoms. Visit **thedoctorforyou.com**.



# Everyone Has a Story ... Our Story Is You

## *Summertime ... and the Breathin' Is Easy*

*With help from Sutter Health, three brothers corral their asthma*

**For the three young Denier brothers**, who live on a ranch in the Sacramento County community of Galt, it's the simple things that matter the most.

"I like to ride horses," says Ryan.

"I like to work on tractors," adds Chance.

"I like to run around our alfalfa fields," says Brandon.

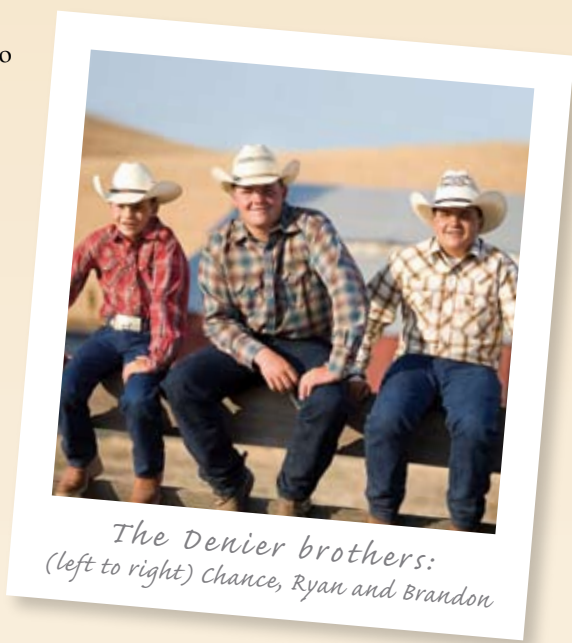
Enjoying the fresh air and outdoor activities of their ranch home is something these kids don't take for granted. All three can remember a time when their most difficult daily chore was simply breathing in and out.

Since they were babies, the Denier boys have suffered from asthma, a chronic respiratory condition that can flare up with exposure to dust, pollen, wind and animal dander. Of course, the young ranchers face these environmental elements every day, which meant frequent and sometimes frightening attacks of coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. That was their story ... until they came to Sutter Gould Medical Foundation for evaluation and treatment.

There, the physicians examined each boy, reviewed their medical histories and tailored an asthma management plan to each one's individual needs. Two of the boys have been coping with asthma since they were babies, after symptoms first appeared following a respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infection. All three brothers needed to learn how to identify their particular asthma triggers so they could take measures to avoid them. In addition, they each needed reliable medication that would help prevent asthma flare-ups, as well as provide quick relief when breathing problems arose.

Today, the boys (and their parents) have learned to successfully manage asthma episodes and are back to doing what they love—enjoying the great outdoors.

"We're the Denier brothers, and that's our story!"



*The Denier brothers:  
(left to right) Chance, Ryan and Brandon*




*"Getting the Denier boys back to a normal, healthy life—that was my goal. I am proud to have been a part of helping their story end happily."*

—Pediatrician Karen Buchler, M.D., of Sutter Gould Medical Foundation, one of the Sutter physicians who has cared for the Denier family

### **Tell Us Your Story!**

If you would like to share your Sutter Health experience, visit [www.sutterhealth.org/stories](http://www.sutterhealth.org/stories). If your story is selected, we will contact you to discuss how we can help tell your story in print or online, with complete respect for your privacy.





## Vacation Time Shrinking? Think Quality,

**Vacations offer a chance** for families to spend time together away from everyday routines and hassles. Getting away can boost your spirits and seems to be good for your health, too—especially if you're regularly under a lot of stress.

Unfortunately, for many of us, vacation time is shrinking amidst work and economic pressures.

### **Children Need to Get Away, Too**

Often, if parents don't get a break, kids don't either. With busy activity schedules and mounting school pressure, time off is becoming just as important for children as it is for adults.

If you're among those who don't have a big getaway planned this summer, think about taking at least an extra day or two off. Research shows that even short vacations can help us recuperate from the strain of daily life.

### **Take Time for a Minivacation**

How much time you spend may not be as important as the fact that you're together as a family doing something you all enjoy. Getting away for even a day can be a memorable and relaxing experience.

Make a plan by first remembering what you liked about your childhood family vacations. You may recall being somewhere other than home and doing something you didn't ordinarily do. Make that the goal of a minivacation, too. Here are some starter ideas:

- Go camping overnight at a park or campground.
- Travel to a pick-your-own farm for berry picking.
- Take in an outdoor play or concert and make a day of it with a picnic.
- Visit local museums, zoos or historic sites.

# Not Quantity

## Setting Sail for the First Time?

Today's cruises offer a lot more than buffets and shuffleboard bouts. You can find a ship filled with couples, singles or others interested in the same activities as you. Whatever your interests, you're likely to find a sailing vessel that suits you.

### What Are You Looking For?

Choosing an itinerary is a good place to start. If you want to spend some time on land, try a coastal cruise that stops at a few different ports during your

vacation. On land, you can take in some tours around the towns. On the other hand, if you want to relax on board, you can choose an itinerary with more time at sea. The ships themselves offer plenty to do. For instance, there's swimming, dancing and scores of social activities.

### Finding a Deal

Some cruise lines offer special discounts through member organizations for older adults. AARP offers cruise discounts to

members, which you can learn about at [www.aarp.org/aarp\\_benefits/offer\\_travel/cruises](http://www.aarp.org/aarp_benefits/offer_travel/cruises). A few ships also offer exclusive gifts, parties, cruise credits and dining options for you and your peers. You'll want to look into these benefits when exploring your options.

You also may want to ask the cruise line what options you have if you or a loved one becomes sick or you need to postpone your trip for any reason. With proper planning, there will be smooth sailing ahead.

## Seven Ways to De-Stress Your Next Family Vacation

"Vacation stress" may sound like a contradiction in terms. But any kind of change—even a fun one—can be a source of some stress. Add children to the mix, and you could have a recipe for more work than relaxation. But some preplanning can help keep everyone smiling. Try these tips.

1. Involve older children in decisions about where to go and what to do on vacation.
2. Let kids be kids. Plan at least one child-oriented activity a day, such as a visit to the zoo.
3. Don't feel pressured to spend a lot of money. A recent article in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* found that family togetherness, not spending money, predicted a happier holiday.
4. Plan fewer activities than you think you have time for. Rushing to reach a destination or catch a plane can add unwelcome stress to your family vacation.
5. Schedule time for stress-busting naps and exercise along the way.
6. Bring a "fun bag" stuffed with favorite snacks, books, games and other items your kids enjoy.
7. Accept that some arguments are a natural part of family life. To keep anger to a minimum, let your children win on minor issues that aren't worth fighting over.



# YOUR FAMILY: Love 'Em and Lead 'Em

**You and your family share living space,** meals, chores, hugs and a single wish: that you enjoy a long and healthy life together. There is a way to help turn this wish into reality. Add exercise to your family's daily routine.

"Daily physical activity is a simple way to help prevent disease, reduce stress, improve sleep, build self-esteem and control weight—for every member of your family," says family physician Derek Johnson, D.O., with Sutter Delta Medical Group. "Parents are in an ideal position to lead by example, promoting exercise as an essential, fun way to care for yourself physically and mentally," he adds. When you encourage an active lifestyle, you plant the seeds of a healthy life habit and reap the rewards—greater energy, fun and family closeness.

## **Exercise Enhances Health, Relationships**

For Angel Torres, a 26-year-old emergency room technician for Sutter Delta Medical Center in Antioch, personal fitness became a priority shortly after he became a father. When his wife, Karryn, became pregnant, Angel gained weight along with her. But after their daughter Emma was born, his extra pounds lingered, which kept him from fully enjoying time with his family.

"I wanted to be a role model for my daughter, but I didn't have the energy to fully participate in her care," Torres explains. "It was time for me to make a change." He took charge, joining Sutter Delta's Biggest Loser Competition, a 12-week program that included weekly weigh-ins and nutritional counseling and tips from Sutter Health Partners' wellness coaches.

Through the program, Torres learned how to make healthier food choices. But when he added exercise to his routine, his transformation gathered speed. Torres began bicycling the 20-mile round-trip between his Pittsburg home and Antioch workplace. As his strength and endurance increased, he added soccer to his workout.

Now, 35 pounds lighter, Torres treasures family time, especially active games with Emma, now almost 2 years old. Recently, he taught her how to kick a soccer ball. Their father-daughter activity time has even eased her transition to becoming a big sister, when baby brother Angel Jr. recently joined the family.



Sutter Delta Medical Center employee Angel Torres and his daughter Emma (shown here and on the cover).

# to FITNESS

“My children will grow up seeing that fitness is a way of life,” he says. “Anything that will keep us close and healthy through the years is worth doing.”

## Take the Lead: Get Your Family Moving

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week. Children should get at least 60 minutes a day. But remember, you don't have to do the exercise all at once. Gradually increase your family's activity level. Here are some tips to get you moving:

- **Focus on fun.** To create an active lifestyle with family appeal, focus on fun. Shoot hoops with your kids. Go skating. Play tag or have a jump rope contest. Turn on music and dance around the house. Take vacations that include hiking, skiing or swimming.
- **Get motivated.** Setting a goal and charting your progress keeps exercise interesting. Sign up the family for a charity walk. Then train together for race day. Or buy inexpensive pedometers and challenge family members to take 10,000 steps every day. Studies show that people who wear a pedometer take more steps than those who don't.
- **Limit screen time.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting screen time in front of a computer, video game or television to no more than two hours every day for older children. Kids younger than age 2 don't need any screen time. Skip TV after dinner and take a family walk or bike ride instead.
- **Sneak it in.** Look for ways to work more physical activity into everyday tasks. Enlist your kids' help with active household chores like vacuuming, gardening or washing the car. Walk your children to a friend's house instead of driving them.
- **Sign up.** Check your area for age-appropriate sports your children may be interested in. Get involved by helping your kids practice the sport—or consider coaching the team.

### Stay Energized for Workouts.

Too tired to exercise? Boost energy for yourself and your family by following our simple, healthy tips at

[www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth](http://www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth).



## Play It Safe

As physical activity becomes a regular part of family life, don't let your efforts get sidelined by injury. Matt Ryan, certified athletic trainer and the sports medicine program manager for Sutter Health-affiliated Palo Alto Medical Foundation, offers these injury prevention tips:

- Before working out, warm up for a few minutes and then stretch. “Never stretch a cold muscle,” he advises. Stretch again after exercising to promote flexibility and help avoid injury.
- If your family isn't used to exercising, begin slowly. Walking, hiking and biking are great ways to start.
- Wear safety helmets while bicycling, skating or riding scooters. According to California state law, kids younger than age 18 must wear a helmet when doing these activities.
- Drink water throughout the day. A hydrated body functions better.
- Avoid overtraining. If your kids play organized sports, give them a few months off during the year. Playing the same sport year-round can increase injury risk.

“Remember, kids are kids. They shouldn't be doing adult workouts,” says Ryan. “Focus on activities that get the heart rate up but are fun, too.”

# One Less Worry for Parents Child Vaccines Are Safe

**You know that babies and children** need special protection from disease. Yet some groups have questioned whether childhood vaccines actually cause health problems.

Are children's immunizations safe? Yes, says a recent court ruling—a finding backed up by a number of solid scientific studies. What's more, Sutter health experts want parents to know that protecting their children's health begins with regular vaccines.

## Vaccinations Studied, Found Safe

Rumors abound about a possible link between the childhood vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) and autism—a developmental disability that impairs communication skills and social abilities. After a thorough investigation, however, a U.S. federal court has denied any connection between autism and vaccinations.

"Not only is there no link between immunizations and autism, but the chance of vaccines causing other harmful reactions is very small," says Brigitte Randle, M.D., pediatrician with Solano Regional Medical Group, part of the Sutter Health family. Yet fear has led some parents to skip their children's shots. About 25 percent of U.S. toddlers are not properly immunized.

## Immunization Still Important

In years past, children in the U.S. were paralyzed by polio, suffered mental retardation from rubella and died of diphtheria. "As recently as 10 years ago, many children died or suffered brain damage from bacterial meningitis," says Yvonne Brouard, M.D., MPH, pediatrician with Sutter Gould Medical Foundation. "Most parents don't realize that before vaccines came along, about one-third of children died from diseases we rarely see anymore," says Harry Wander, M.D., chief of pediatrics at Sutter North Medical Group.

These diseases are now rare in our country, but some do still occur in the U.S. Many are common overseas. If immunization levels drop here, outbreaks of disease are possible.

Don't leave your children in harm's way. Follow the immunization schedule recommended by your pediatrician.

"Parents want to do the right thing for their children," says Wander. "And they can—by immunizing them."

## Protect Your Children Today!

Are your kids up to date on their vaccines? See the recommended vaccination schedule by visiting us at [www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth](http://www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth).

# Help and Hope for Chronic Pain

If you experience chronic pain, take heart. There are options to reduce your suffering and improve the quality of your life.

Chronic pain is discomfort that lingers for weeks, months or longer. It may be from an injury or an illness, or its cause may be unknown. Some people with chronic pain develop emotional or physical problems that affect their relationships, job and daily activities. Even so, relief is available.

"The first step is to get involved," says H. Vernetta Johnson, M.D., anesthesiologist and director of Sutter Lakeside Hospital's Pain Clinic. "You have a right to pain relief and need to be an active part of your recovery."

## Treatment Options

These strategies can help you get relief from chronic pain.

- Find a health care provider who understands chronic pain, has experience treating pain similar to yours and is willing to listen and help you find a solution.
- Work with your health care provider to determine a pain-management plan. It helps to keep a "pain diary" to record where you hurt, how bad the pain is, how often it occurs and what makes it better or worse.
- Take care of your mental health. Focus on positive aspects of your life and try to do things you enjoy. If you think you may be depressed, tell your health care provider. "A positive attitude is an important tool," explains Dr. Johnson. "By thinking positively, you can feel more in control."
- Explore your options. Most treatment plans involve a combination of medication, therapy and lifestyle changes.

Treatments may include:

- Over-the-counter medications, such as ibuprofen and naproxen, that relieve pain and reduce inflammation
- Steroidal drugs, such as cortisol and prednisone, for inflammatory conditions such as chronic arthritis
- Opioid pain medications, such as OxyContin
- Pain-numbing drugs that are injected around nerve roots or into muscles or joints
- Lifestyle changes, such as losing weight or exercising

- Complementary therapies, such as acupuncture, massage and meditation

## Take a Proactive Approach

"Don't wait for your chronic pain to go away on its own," says Dr. Johnson. "Work with your health care provider to find effective relief."

### Pain Relief Is a Click Away

For more tips and information on how to cope with and reduce chronic pain, go to

[www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth](http://www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth).



# Upcoming Events and Classes

As a feature of our not-for-profit foundation, Sutter Gould Medical Foundation (SGMF) is delighted to offer health education classes led by our expert dietitians and nurses, completely free of charge. View the complete list of available classes and register online at [www.suttergould.org/learning](http://www.suttergould.org/learning), or call **209-548-7860** for more information.

## Diabetes and You (Type 2)

These four classes are designed to help you understand and manage type 2 diabetes, whether you have been recently diagnosed or need a refresher. A family member is encouraged to attend with you.

- ▶ Tuesdays, 1 to 3 p.m. (July 7, 14, 21, 28; August 4, 11, 18, 25; Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22)  
Thursdays, 6 to 8 p.m. (July 2, 9, 16, 23; August 6, 13, 20, 27; Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24)

## Intensive Carbohydrate Counting Plus

These three classes, required for pump initiation, offer advanced carbohydrate counting for patients on intensive insulin management. Newly diagnosed patients with diabetes should call for an appointment. A family member is encouraged to attend with you.

- ▶ Thursdays, 3 to 5 p.m. (Begins the second Thursday of each month)

## Insulin Pump Information

For potential insulin pump users. No fee.

- ▶ First Thursday of each month, 3 to 4 p.m.

## Heart Smart

These two classes are designed to help you lower your blood cholesterol and triglycerides. Learn about fat, food-label reading, eating out and more. A family member is encouraged to attend with you.

- ▶ Tuesday, 6 to 8 p.m., and Monday, 9 to 11 a.m. (Always the first two weeks of the month. Call for details.)

## Freedom from Smoking®

This eight-session program includes stress management, assertive communication and exercise skills. No fee.

- ▶ Call 209-548-7860 for dates.

## Healthy Basics (Weight Management for Adults and Teens)

Achieve a healthy weight to delay diabetes, heart disease or hypertension. Learn the basics of behavior changes to improve your eating and exercise habits to achieve better health.

- ▶ First Tuesday of each month, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

## Web Health 101

This session will equip you with the necessary skills to do your own medical research. Topics include Web browsing, search engines, recommended Web sites and Web site evaluation. No fee.

- ▶ Wednesday, 10 to 11 a.m. (July 1, August 5, September 2)

## More Help Keeping Healthy

In addition to programs and classes, SGMF offers a free medical library for all residents. The Maino Community Health Library will be happy to help you find the information you need. You can call them at **209-523-0732** or e-mail [MainoLibrary@sutterhealth.org](mailto:MainoLibrary@sutterhealth.org).

## New Radiologists Join Sutter Gould

The following caregivers recently joined Gould Medical Group, increasing our primary care and specialty network in the Central Valley. Please join us in welcoming them to the group and to Sutter Gould Medical Foundation.



**Susan Gootnick, M.D.**

**James Summers, M.D.**

**Marta Minnerop, M.D. (not pictured)**

600 Coffee Road, Modesto, CA

# New Pediatric and Adolescent Care Center Now Open

**You might not expect** to see giraffes and zebras on the walls of a medical office, but that's exactly what you'll find at the Sutter Gould Medical Foundation's (SGMF) newly renovated Pediatric and Adolescent Care Center, located at 1144 Coffee Road in Modesto. The center opened for patient care on March 30, giving Gould's Modesto-based pediatricians a stand-alone site to see Stanislaus County children.

Gould's internal medicine, nephrology and mental health providers, who were previously located at the newly renovated building, have now moved to the new 600 Coffee Road clinic.

## Focus on Children and Teens

"The Pediatric and Adolescent Care Center concept is a perfect fit for our providers," said James Conforti, CEO for SGMF. "We are able to give our pediatricians a facility totally geared toward caring for their patients. It's all part of our continued commitment to provide convenient, quality care to our community."

The Care Center has been redesigned to include a new child-friendly lobby with a safari motif. The ceiling is adorned with parachutes and cargo planes, as well as enhanced lighting for reading books and magazines. A new well-baby room will be available so that mothers and infants can have a separate space.

The outside has been improved as well, with new parking just steps from the entrance and enhanced landscaping. "Everything is designed with the patient and family in mind, and we can't wait to begin seeing our patients there," says Alberto Cajigas, MD, head of the Modesto pediatrics group.

## New Technology

The care center is equipped with the latest health technology. Sutter Gould's electronic health record system allows Gould physicians to access a patient's medical record instantly. They can also review lab results, prior physician visits and prescription histories. PACS, a filmless picture archiving and communications system, allows Gould radiologists to share digital images and diagnoses instead of shipping X-ray film between locations.

## Commitment to Northern California Health Care

The Pediatric and Adolescent Care Center is one part of Sutter Gould's commitment to improve, replace or build new care centers in the Central Valley. In Modesto, for example, Sutter Gould has completely moved into the replacement clinic at their 600 Coffee Road site, after 54 years in the original building. A Surgery Center and an additional medical office building will soon open at the Stockton Medical Plaza site on Hammer Lane. Sutter Gould Medical Foundation has care centers in Stockton, Lodi, and Tracy in San Joaquin County, as well as Modesto and many communities throughout Stanislaus County.

## Make an Appointment for Your Child

To schedule appointments with the pediatricians in their new location, call **209-524-0370**.





# Obese Kids Face Adult Health Problems

**By now you know about the growing problem of childhood obesity.** According to the American Heart Association (AHA), nearly one out of every three children and adolescents is overweight or obese. In addition to causing increased rates of type 2 diabetes, this epidemic is having dire health effects among our nation's children—problems that once affected only adults.

## The Problems of Obesity

Doctors have long known that obesity puts people at risk for multiple health problems. But it was commonly thought that those problems affected only adults. This is no longer the case, as more and more doctors are seeing the following conditions in their young obese patients:

**High blood pressure.** In a study of 5,000 children, 5 percent had high blood pressure—and the strongest risk factor for this condition was obesity. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can cause heart disease and stroke.

**High cholesterol.** Ten percent of kids ages 2 to 19 have total blood cholesterol levels higher than 200 mg/dl, the upper limit of the recommended range. High cholesterol increases heart attack risk.

**The metabolic syndrome.** This is a group of risk factors that increase the chances for several serious conditions, including heart disease, diabetes and stroke. Researchers found that as many as 50 percent of severely obese adolescents have the metabolic syndrome.

**Plaque buildup.** According to the AHA, plaque buildup in the neck arteries of obese children is similar to levels found in middle-aged adults. Plaque is a substance that forms along the walls of arteries, increasing the risk for heart attack and stroke.

In addition to these potentially life-threatening problems, obese children may face a greater risk of developing anxiety and depression by the time they reach middle school. They also may be more likely to get migraine headaches.

## Help Your Child Be a Kid

These trends are clear evidence that kids need to manage their weight. Ask your pediatrician if your child's weight is in a healthy range. If not, these tips can help:

- Serve healthy foods and control portion size.
- Enjoy regular family meals.
- Encourage physical activity.
- Limit time spent in front of the TV or computer.
- Set a good example by eating well and being active.

## Healthy Basics for Teens and Adults

Sutter Gould Medical Foundation offers regular classes that help you manage weight. Join us to learn more about behavioral changes that may impact your long-term health. Call **209-548-7860** for more information.

# Protect Your Child's Ears This Summer

**Splish, splash—ouch?** If your child spends time in the water during the summer, he or she is at risk for a painful ear infection called swimmer's ear.

Swimmer's ear occurs when moisture in the ear breeds bacteria. The ear canal becomes red, swollen, itchy and scaly, and may ooze greenish or yellow fluid. Swimmer's ear is an outer-ear infection. It's different from a middle-ear infection, which occurs when tubes in the ear become blocked following a cold, allergies or other cause.

## Try These Tips

Here are some tips that can help you keep swimmer's ear at bay:

- Earwax is the ear's natural defense against germs. Tell your child not to remove it with cotton swabs, fingers, or other objects. When these small items are inserted into the ear, they can also cause wounds that are easily infected. If your child has itchy ears or thinks earwax is affecting his or her hearing, talk with a doctor.
- Don't let your child swim in polluted water. Whenever your child swims, he or she should wear a tight swim cap or wet suit hood.
- Dry ears thoroughly after swimming, bathing or showering. Use a towel and have your child turn his or her head from side to side, pulling the earlobe in different directions to release water.
- To prevent bacteria from growing in moist ears, dose them with a drop of a solution made of one part alcohol to one part white vinegar. Or ask your pharmacist for over-the-counter alcohol-based eardrops. Consider using them at swim meets, on scuba diving trips or whenever your child is in the water for a long time.
- Although rare, bites from ticks may also lead to outer-ear infections. Take precautions in the woods. Apply repellent with DEET, avoiding the hands, eyes and mouth, and using only sparingly around the ears. Check your child's ears carefully for ticks when returning indoors.

## Visit the Doctor

Take extra care if your child has diabetes, eczema, or another autoimmune or skin disease, which increase his or her risk for outer-ear infections. If your child has symptoms of swimmer's ear, take him or her to the doctor. Antibiotic eardrops usually clear the infection.



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# Healthy Summer Grilling

**When summer heats up**, the last thing you want to do is turn on the oven or slave over the stove. That's right—it's time to fire up the good old barbecue. For a safe, healthy and delicious summer, keep the following tips for grilling in mind.

- To kill bacteria when cooking meat, use a meat thermometer. Grill poultry until it's 170 degrees, beef to 160 degrees and pork to 160 degrees. Avoid charring meats, which may pose health risks. Removing visible fat before throwing meat on the grill helps prevent charring.
- Choose chicken breasts instead of legs or thighs. Remove the skin before eating.
- Replace the beef in your burgers with ground chicken or turkey. Mix in diced onions for flavor.
- Use a rack to let fat drip away from the meat.
- Try grilled fish, especially salmon or herring. These contain heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.
- Beef and pork can fit into a healthy diet. Pick loin and round cuts of pork and choice or select grades of beef to reduce unhealthy fat.

## Beyond Burgers

Summer also means fresh, flavorful produce. Consider these tasty ideas:

- Make vegetable kabobs with tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and onions.
- Cook eggplant, corn, peppers, onions, and other firm vegetables right on the grill. Baste, season with herbs, and cook 10 to 15 minutes until tender and brown.
- Make foil packets with sliced zucchini, carrots, and tomatoes. Add water and seasoning. Wrap and grill until tender—about six to eight minutes.

## Leave Room for Dessert

Don't turn off the gas or snuff out the coals when it's time for dessert. Heat from the grill caramelizes sugar in fruits such as nectarines and plums, making delicious summer treats. Try spearing sliced pineapples, bananas, and peaches on skewers and grill until the fruit is hot and golden.



