



Memorial Hospital  
 Los Banos  
 A Sutter Health Affiliate  
 With You. For Life.

# your health

Spring 2009      Bringing Wellness and Health News to Northern California

Community Based, Not For Profit



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## Your Health from MHLB

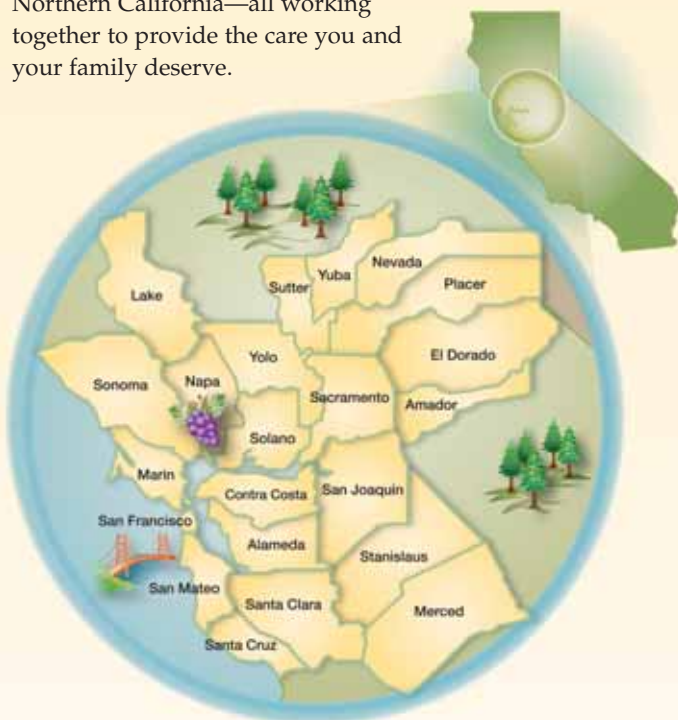
Memorial Hospital Los Banos is part of a family of not-for-profit hospitals, physician organizations and other health care service providers that share resources and expertise to advance health care quality and access. Providing care in more than 100 communities throughout Northern California, the Sutter Health network is a regional leader in cardiac care, cancer treatment, orthopedics, obstetrics and newborn intensive care and is a pioneer in advanced patient safety technology. *Your Health* is designed to help you and your family make informed decisions about your health care.

If you have questions or comments regarding the *Your Health* newsletter or you would like to receive additional copies, call Diane Hambley at **209-826-0591, ext. 293**.

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.



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# Hats Off

## to Our Environmental Services Staff

**They don't provide direct patient care**, but some might call our Environmental Services staff the unsung heroes of Memorial Hospital Los Banos (MHLB). They make sure that the entire hospital and its outlying buildings are spotless—24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's no easy task when hundreds of employees, patients and visitors are going in and out of the hospital all day long.

### Key Players in Patient Safety

"Our Environmental Services staff forms the backbone of the hospital. They make sure our facility is clean and presentable at all times," says Ed Robles, facilities manager and safety officer. "They also play a key role in patient safety. All the wonderful medical technology in the world would be worthless in a dirty, germ-laden environment."

### Hard Work Pays Off

Anna Denham, lead housekeeper, could have retired years ago but chooses to stay on because she loves her job. For the past 26 years, she has arrived at work at the crack of dawn to



**From left to right: Noemi Mojica, Wenselada Pena and Hermelinda Alvarez (seated); facilities manager Ed Robles, Minerva Torres, Maria Silveira, Maria Sequeira, Anna Denham, Maria Castro, Edmond Skaggs, Consuelo Maldonado, Arabella Delgadillo and Alicia Fernandez (standing); Kathy Bourbon is not pictured.**

make sure all 48 patient rooms are clean, supplies are stocked, and patients are happy.

"Patients are often amazed at the cleanliness of our rooms and the efficiency and thoroughness of our staff. They are a wonderful crew and very on top of things," says Denham. "The best part of my job is being able to talk with patients and hear their stories. Many don't have any family or friends who visit them, which can be very lonely. Even though we have a lot to do, we take the time to sit with patients as often as possible."

### Team Effort

Our physicians and nurses also rave about the great job of our Environmental Services staff. "By keeping the hospital clean, the Environmental Services staff plays a crucial role in patient care and satisfaction," says Barbara Gettings, R.N., director of patient care. "Without their valuable contribution, the rest of us wouldn't be able to do our jobs caring for patients. Delivering high-quality patient care is a team effort at MHLB."



# Women and Heart Disease

## The Hidden Truth

*Did you know that more women die of heart disease than breast cancer?*



**Nearly 500,000 women in this country die of heart disease** every year. That's more than all types of cancer combined, making heart disease the number one killer of women in the U.S. "Heart disease is usually thought of as a man's disease. In reality, more women than men die of heart disease," says cardiologist Diane Sobkowicz, M.D., director of the Women's Heart Program at the Sutter Heart and Vascular Institute. "The symptoms of heart disease in women are different from those in men and are often overlooked or attributed to something else. As a result, women are less likely to be diagnosed and treated early."

### Common Symptoms in Women

"Women typically don't experience unbearable chest pain. It's more of a smoldering discomfort in the chest or pain in the upper back, arms, jaws or throat. The most common symptoms in women are shortness of breath and tiring easily doing simple activities," explains Dr. Sobkowicz.

Knowing what symptoms to look for could save your life. "If you find it difficult to do things you could do a few months ago or if you experience any of these symptoms, especially those that get worse with activity, see a doctor right away," says Dr. Sobkowicz.

### Regular Screenings Are Vital

Many women don't experience any signs of heart disease, adds Dr. Sobkowicz, which is why it is important to know your risk factors and be screened for heart disease. Common screening tools include blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol checks. These risk factors can increase greatly after menopause and should be checked regularly. Depending on your medical history and symptoms, your doctor may order an EKG (electrocardiogram), a treadmill test or other diagnostic exams.

"Women need to be as diligent about getting screened for heart disease as they are for breast and cervical cancer," says Dr. Sobkowicz. "The good news is that women can reduce their risk for heart disease by taking control of their health and following a healthy lifestyle. It's never too late to start protecting your heart."

## Know These Risk Factors

- A family history of heart disease
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes (especially in women)
- Obesity
- Lack of exercise
- Stress and depression
- Rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and other autoimmune diseases

**Where Do You Stand?** To find out, click on the interactive tool "Are You At Risk for a Heart Attack?" at [www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth](http://www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth).



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



*“This Is My story ... and I’m stickin’ to It!”*

*Sutter hospice patient Doris Jones lives out her final wishes*

**“Sug” (short for “sugar”)** is the endearment 85-year-old Doris Jones uses often when speaking to family and friends. That includes the caregivers with Sutter North Hospice, where Jones is a patient. The affection is mutual.

Jones, who lives with her husband, Donnie, in Wheatland, sought hospice services last fall after being diagnosed with advanced brain cancer. Although chemotherapy was an option, Jones decided against it, choosing instead to live her final days to the fullest, surrounded by her family. “I didn’t want to lose the quality of my life. I wanted to know what’s happening to me, and I didn’t want to be stuck in bed,” she explains.

Jones mentioned to her hospice team that her two wishes in life were to ride a zip line and be on TV—and soon a plan was hatched. Through philanthropic efforts, Sutter North Hospice helped make Jones’ dream a reality. Last October at Wolf Mountain Camp in Grass Valley, Jones buckled on a safety harness and then bravely stepped off a tall platform to glide smoothly down to earth. A local TV news station aired a special segment on Jones’ zip line adventure, and it can also be seen on the Sutter Health YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/sutterhealth](http://www.youtube.com/sutterhealth).

Among the spectators were Jones’ hospice caregivers. “Our team pulled together and made this happen for Doris,” says Joan Journey, Sutter North Hospice’s clinical manager. “Just seeing the joy in her face and the tears in her family’s eyes—this is why we do what we do.”

“Sutter North Hospice has been so great,” says Jones’ husband, Donnie. “There’s nothing that Doris has needed that they haven’t tried to supply—and if it wasn’t available, they found a way to make it available.”

*“Doris decided that she was going to have lots of fun and wasn’t going to focus on her disease and aggressive treatments. She and her family are incredible role models for how to live.”*

—the Sutter North hospice team,  
(pictured with Jones from left to right)  
Jamie Klein, Joan Journey and Daniel Raudy

*\*Doris Jones passed away in January 2009.*



*Doris Jones  
(1923–2009\*)*

## Tell Us Your Story!

If you would like to share your Sutter network 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.





## MHLB Family Birth Center

# Expect the **Very Best**

**Beautifully decorated birthing suites**, adjustable beds with lumbar support and gourmet meals are just a few of the delights awaiting new moms at our Family Birth Center. Each private suite has its own bathroom with a walk-in shower, a sleeper sofa for an overnight guest and high-tech fetal monitors to keep tabs on mother and baby throughout the labor and delivery process.

“The labor and delivery unit has really changed compared to six or seven years ago,” says Jennifer Nunes, R.N., obstetrics (OB) nurse manager. “We’ve remodeled the entire unit and added a lot of special touches to give women and their families the very best in privacy, comfort and support.”

### Expert, Personalized Care

As part of a full-service hospital, our Family Birth Center is equipped to handle most types of deliveries, including Caesarean sections performed in the hospital’s operating room. We even have a helicopter pad for emergency transports of premature and seriously ill babies to hospitals with a neonatal intensive care unit.

“Our OB physicians and nurses are some of the best in their field and deliver more than 800 babies a year,” says Lawrence Lenz, M.D., chief of perinatal services. “We have many of the technological advances of a big city hospital, but we’re still small enough to offer very personalized, attentive care—something you don’t find at many larger hospitals.”

### Help for New Parents

Memorial Hospital Los Banos offers a wealth of resources for expectant parents before and after the delivery of their new baby, including:

- Childbirth education classes (available in English and Spanish)
- Labor and delivery tours
- Breast-feeding support (via telephone and in person)
- Car safety classes and checks
- Sibling class (to prepare children ages 3 through 7 for the arrival of your new baby)

For dates and more information, refer to the list of community education programs on page 14 of this issue.

# Best When You're Expecting!

## Putting Families First

Personalized care also means family-centered care. "Patients and their families are at the center of everything we do," explains Nunes. "We go out of our way to accommodate their needs and make this a truly memorable experience, be it convenient and flexible visiting hours or allowing multiple people in the delivery room."

Even meals are a special treat with our delicious room service menu and a celebratory dinner for two in the hospital.

## Once You Give Birth

After delivery, our nurses spend time showing women how to breast-feed and take care of their baby. They also call new moms at home to see if they have questions or need any help. "It feels great when I run into people in the grocery store and they rave about the wonderful care they received at our hospital," says Nunes. "Working here makes me feel like I make a difference in people's lives."

## Learn More with a Virtual Tour

For more information or to take a virtual tour of our Family Birth Center, visit [www.memoriallosbanos.org](http://www.memoriallosbanos.org) and click on "Services." You can also save time by preregistering your delivery online at our Web site.

## Another Reason to Choose Local

When it comes time to have your baby, you're going to want a doctor and hospital close to home. Our board certified obstetricians are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, along with anesthesiologists and pediatricians.

Our physicians are affiliated with the Sutter Gould Medical Foundation network, which accepts most health plans, including PPO, HMO and everything in between. For more information, visit [www.memoriallosbanos.org](http://www.memoriallosbanos.org) and click on "Find a Doctor."



The Obstetrics Department at Memorial Hospital Los Banos

Clinical support nurse Kristie Hoskins (left) and OB manager Jennifer Nunes (right)



## Type 1 Diabetes:

# No Cure Yet, but Plenty

*“Research is advancing very quickly, and we believe that we are closer than ever to finding a cure. In the meantime, many tools are available that help make day-to-day control easier.” –G. Prakasam, M.D.*

**Four years ago, at age 10,** Maddy Peppers-Johnson (pictured left and on the cover) found herself in the pediatrician’s office getting her finger poked for a blood sample. She had no idea that the needle she cringed at would soon become a constant companion—and that the outcome of the test would change her life forever.

The test revealed that Peppers-Johnson’s blood sugar level was dangerously high—in fact, five times greater than normal. Yet the fourth-grader from Solano County had always been a healthy kid with a nutritious diet. That factor, combined with many other telltale symptoms—extreme tiredness, constant thirst, frequent urination and weight loss—confirmed the pediatrician’s suspicions: Peppers-Johnson had type 1 diabetes.

### **A Difficult, Lifelong Disease**

Once known as juvenile diabetes, type 1 diabetes randomly strikes 15,000 children and teens nationwide every year. The disease cannot be prevented or outgrown—and there is no way to predict who will get it next. About 90 percent of those diagnosed have no other family members with the disease.

Though the exact trigger of type 1 diabetes remains a mystery, doctors know that it is an autoimmune disease. It develops when the body’s immune system mistakenly attacks the pancreas,



# of Hope



killing the cells that produce insulin, a vital hormone that converts food into energy. Insulin is necessary for survival. People with type 1 diabetes must take multiple insulin injections daily—or receive infusions of insulin through a pump. They also must check their blood sugar level many times a day by pricking a finger and testing a drop of blood.

“Hearing the diagnosis was devastating,” says Mary Peppers, Maddy’s mother. “As a parent, you try so hard to protect your child from harm—but this was a case where a life-threatening disease was here to stay. I had to accept that and help Maddy accept it, too, so that we could move forward with strength.” A referral to Sutter Medical Foundation pediatric endocrinologist G. Prakasam, M.D., started them on that journey.

## A New Attitude

“I tell all my patients they must not let diabetes stop them from enjoying their childhood and doing everything that other kids do,” says Dr. Prakasam. “Managing diabetes takes extra work and extra planning, but this disease does not need to hold you back.” He adds, “Research is advancing very quickly, and we believe that we are closer than ever to finding a cure. In the meantime, many tools are

available that help make day-to-day control easier.”

Those who live with type 1 diabetes face many challenges. “Having to test your blood and give yourself insulin every time you eat is the hardest part,” says Peppers-Johnson, now age 14. “Especially when you’re in a restaurant or at school—you just don’t want to have to deal with it. You want to be like everybody else.”

But keeping blood sugar levels in the healthy range is critical. If levels drop too low or rise too high, the body reacts with symptoms that can include shakiness, dizziness, blurry vision, vomiting and loss of consciousness. Over time, the disease can lead to serious complications, such as heart attack, kidney failure, nerve damage and blindness.

Still, there is hope among families who are living with this disease. Attending a camp especially for children with type 1 diabetes and joining the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk for a Cure has helped Peppers-Johnson see that she is not alone in her daily regimen. “I want to tell kids like me that there are a lot of us who are going through the same thing. Don’t give up, and don’t ignore your diabetes. It’s important to stay healthy. Take one day at a time, and it does get easier.”

## Kids Can Get Type 2 Diabetes, Too

Of the nearly 19,000 young people diagnosed every year with diabetes, the vast majority have type 1 diabetes. But as the number of overweight preteens and teenagers is multiplying, so is the number of cases of school-age kids diagnosed with a different and preventable form of diabetes: type 2 diabetes.

**Overweight kids are at risk.** Doctors used to see type 2 diabetes only in overweight adults older than age 40. Now it affects 3,700 kids annually who are overweight or obese and get little exercise. The condition is more common in kids who are African-American, Hispanic, American Indian or Asian/Pacific Islander and in kids who have a family member with type 2 diabetes.

**Take steps toward prevention.** “If you can keep your child from becoming obese, you will take a major step toward preventing disease—not just type 2 diabetes, but also high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease,” says Brigitte Randle, M.D., Sutter Health–affiliated pediatrician with Solano Regional Medical Group in Vacaville. “You don’t have to single out your child,” she adds. “Prevention strategies will help your entire family be healthier.”

If your child is overweight, it’s wise to take action. By encouraging healthy eating and more exercise, you can help lower the chance of your child developing type 2 diabetes.

**Help Your Child Eat Healthier** To make it easier for your child—and your whole family—to eat a healthy diet, visit our “Healthy Eating for Children” tips online at: [www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth](http://www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth).



# Plastic Bottles: Are They Harmful to Your Health?

**You try your best to choose healthy foods and drinks**—but what if the bottles and cans they come in are toxic? Scientists are raising this question because of a chemical called bisphenol A (BPA), found in polycarbonate (hard, clear plastic) containers and the linings of soda and food cans. Some researchers believe that harmful levels of BPA may be tainting our food and drinks—and that may cause serious health problems.

Since the 1950s, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has declared BPA safe for food containers. But the agency failed to review health evidence from animal studies that show serious health effects. A panel of government scientists recently called for BPA to be reevaluated, and the FDA has agreed. Until we know all the facts about this chemical, it's wise for consumers to take steps to protect themselves. Here are some answers to common questions about BPA.

## **Is BPA in every plastic container?**

No. BPA is only in polycarbonate plastic, which is found in hard, clear baby bottles; toddler sippy cups; reusable water bottles; and large, multigallon plastic jugs used for water dispensers. Canned food and soft-drink containers are also often lined with a thin film of material containing BPA. Meanwhile, studies show that BPA has been found in the urine of more than 90 percent of adults and children tested.



## Container Caution

**When heating or reheating foods in the microwave, make sure the container you use is labeled *microwave safe*. Do not reuse margarine tubs, take-out containers or whipped-topping bowls to reheat foods. These may warp or melt, which releases harmful chemicals into your food.**

## **What harm can BPA cause?**

Laboratory studies of animals suggest BPA may cause developmental problems in the brain and hormonal systems of infants and children. In human studies, new research shows that adults with a high level of BPA are about three times more likely than those with a low level to have heart disease, diabetes or liver problems.

## **How can I protect my family from BPA?**

If you have a baby or toddler, use BPA-free baby bottles and sippy cups. Or choose glass bottles or stainless steel cups. Some manufacturers are marketing BPA-free versions of refillable plastic bottles. To help identify polycarbonate bottles, turn the container upside down and look for the number inside the “chasing arrows” symbol. Avoid bottles labeled 7, which is the category that includes polycarbonate plastic.

## **How do I avoid BPA in canned goods?**

This is more challenging. You can buy more fresh foods, frozen foods or items packaged in glass containers. When available, choose soups and other foods in cardboard cartons.

# Take Steps to Stop the Superbug

The news articles may seem like the plot of a scary movie: A new strain of hard-to-kill bacteria is spreading across the nation, triggering outbreaks of dangerous infections.

The bacteria is methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), a powerful antibiotic-resistant form of staph germs. How dangerous of a threat is MRSA? Here are the facts and what you should know to protect yourself.

## A Different Kind of Germ

Ordinary staph germs often live on the skin or inside the nose of healthy people. If they cause an infection, it is easily treated with antibiotics. But MRSA is no ordinary germ, and if it enters the body and triggers infection, there is cause for concern.

“MRSA is known as a superbug because it is resistant to the antibiotics that used to work against staph,” says Infection Control Coordinator Rebecca Heffner, R.N., PHN, CIC, with Sutter Health–affiliated Memorial Medical Center in Modesto. “A MRSA infection typically starts on the skin or in soft tissues, entering the body through a cut or scrape. To treat it requires newer, stronger antibiotics, and sometimes these must be administered intravenously,” she explains. Although most MRSA infections are mild, some cases can progress into serious conditions such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection.

## How People Are Exposed to MRSA

Prevention programs such as those in the Sutter Health system are helping to control a strain of MRSA common in hospitals and other health care facilities (called hospital-acquired MRSA). But the superbug has also found its way into the community. Wherever people are in crowded settings, have close skin-to-skin contact or share personal items—such as sports equipment, towels or razors—staph bacteria, including MRSA, can often be found. This includes schools, locker rooms, military barracks, dorm rooms, gyms and day care centers.

A MRSA infection may look like a pus-filled pimple, cut, boil or spider bite. (MRSA is not caused by spider bites.) The surrounding area is usually red, swollen, painful and warm to the touch. See your doctor promptly for any wound like this. It needs to be expertly treated so that it doesn't get worse. Do not attempt to drain the infection yourself, as it may spread.

To avoid a MRSA infection, follow these tips from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases:

- Wash hands frequently. Soap and water is best, but hand sanitizers are a good second choice.
- Protect cuts by covering them with a clean, dry bandage.
- Do not share personal items such as clothes, helmets, towels or washcloths. Avoid contact with used bandages.
- Wash sheets, towels and clothes with detergent, using hot water and bleach, if possible. Dry clothes in a hot dryer.
- Use antibiotics only when your doctor recommends them. Take all your medicine. Improper use has led to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, including MRSA.



### Sutter Health Is Looking Out for You

Each hospital within the Sutter Health system has an infection control preventionist who oversees programs that include educating personnel in preventing all types of infections in patients, including MRSA. To learn how you can prevent skin infections, visit [www.preventinfection.org](http://www.preventinfection.org).

# Planning for 2009



*"Our goal is enhancing the patient experience."*

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Last year marked a turning point for Memorial Hospital Los Banos. The hospital returned to profitability after three years of losses totaling approximately \$10 million. Many factors contributed to the turnaround, but ultimately credit goes to our entire staff—doctors, nurses, clinical, support and administrative personnel. The team pulled together and achieved notable successes in patient satisfaction and quality measures. The challenge in 2009 will be to build on that 2008 foundation.

## **Upgrading Services**

First, we are aiming to attain designation as a Critical Access Hospital. This will secure enhanced reimbursement for our Medicare services and should enable the hospital to stay profitable. The strategy requires us to reconfigure our physical environment, and we will comply by moving primarily to private patient rooms in our Obstetrics and Medical/Surgical units. We are also using the reconfiguration mandate to address some space constraints that hamper our ambulatory surgery operations. Our hope is that both the private rooms and the new ambulatory surgery arrangement will enhance our patients' experiences in each area.

We are paying attention to another major service area—our Emergency Department. There are several initiatives, either under way or imminent, that are focusing on the flow of patients through the department. Once again, our goal is enhancing the patient experience.

The opening of a Sutter Gould Medical Office in Los Banos last October and the development of its community provider network, an independent provider association, is an important milestone for our community and our hospital. Local residents now have the means to get their health care services (both inpatient and outpatient) delivered at MHLB. The hospital needs your patronage!

## **Introducing New Technology**

Finally, for a good part of 2009, the entire hospital will be preparing to implement an electronic health record. This major leap forward in information technology has been hailed in the national press as a prerequisite for quality and efficient health care. It will become the cornerstone of our health care delivery system here in Los Banos! Among other things, it offers doctors seamless access to all their patients' medical information and should promote greater continuity of care.

Obviously, 2009 promises to be transformational. We hope the changes envisioned will benefit you and your loved ones and inspire confidence in your hospital. This is our goal.

Best wishes for your good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Liszewski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard Liszewski, FACHE  
Administrator

# Air-Quality Alert!

## Know Your Colors

**Blessed with an abundance of beautiful** parks and wildlife refuges, Los Banos is almost perfect for people who enjoy the great outdoors. But before you head out for your next adventure, you might want to check the air-quality flag flying in front of Memorial Hospital Los Banos (MHLB). The color will tell you how safe it is to breathe the air outside that day.

### Protecting Your Health

The color-coded flag is part of a campaign launched by the Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition to alert the community to local air-quality conditions. MHLB joined the campaign last September and flies the flag every day.

“Our community suffers from an unusually high number of people with asthma and other respiratory problems. They need to be aware of when the air quality is too poor for them to be outside,” says Sharon Stevens, CRT, RCP, department manager for respiratory and physical therapy. “The flag is a tool they can use to help protect their health, which is our ultimate goal as a hospital.”

### When and Why Is There Need for Concern?

Nestled in a valley and surrounded by highways, farms and construction zones, Los Banos residents are exposed to every airborne irritant imaginable, according to Stevens. Smog, car exhaust, pollen, dust, mold and other allergens can trigger asthma attacks and other respiratory emergencies in sensitive individuals. On the red-flag (worst) days, even people without health problems are advised to limit time outdoors.

“Fortunately, we don’t get too many red days,” says Stevens. “On the other hand, we get a lot of yellow and orange days. Hopefully the counties’ quality-improvement initiatives will result in more and more green days. In the meantime, we need to take whatever precautions we can.”

## Flag Color Codes

When you check the air-quality flag flying in front of Memorial Hospital Los Banos, here is what its color is telling you.

- **Green.** The air quality is good and considered healthy. Outdoor activities are encouraged for all.
- **Yellow.** The air quality is unhealthy only for extremely sensitive individuals, and outdoor exercise is discouraged only for those people.
- **Orange.** The air quality is unhealthy for sensitive people, and they should limit outdoor activities.
- **Red.** The air quality is unhealthy for everyone. Sensitive individuals in particular should avoid outdoor activities.

The color of the flag is based on the Air Quality Index that was created by the U.S. EPA and is used by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to forecast local air quality. To learn more, visit [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov).



# Upcoming Community Education and Support Groups

## How to Register

To enroll in upcoming classes, call **209-826-0591, ext. 270**, unless otherwise noted. For more information about the many classes available at Memorial Hospital Los Banos, visit our calendar of events at [www.memoriallosbanos.org/events](http://www.memoriallosbanos.org/events).

### Childbirth and New Parents

#### Breast-Feeding Support

- ▶ Learn the basics of breast-feeding in a free support class or one-on-one consultation. The class is open to all new mothers; you do not have to deliver at Memorial Hospital Los Banos to receive free breast-feeding support.

#### Boot Camp for Dads

- ▶ This class for new and expectant fathers is taught by experienced dads who can offer helpful insight on the challenges of parenting. Please call for the current class schedule.

#### Car Seat Safety

- ▶ Learn how to protect your child in the car. This class is held one Saturday a month, from 10 a.m. to noon in English and from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in Spanish. Parents, grandparents and day care providers are eligible to attend. The \$20 fee includes a car seat or booster seat.

#### Car Seat Safety Checks

- ▶ Every Friday afternoon, we offer free checks to ensure that your car seat is safe and installed properly.

#### Childbirth Education

- ▶ Expectant parents can get tools and knowledge to make the transition from pregnancy to parenthood. Classes are held on Wednesdays, from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

#### Spanish Childbirth Education

- ▶ This one-day class, taught in Spanish, discusses the birthing process. Topics include such things as basic breathing and relaxation techniques.

#### Stork Tour

- ▶ Labor and Delivery Department tours are available every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

### Teen Childbirth Education

- ▶ This free eight-week program teaches young parents-to-be about responsible parenting. Classes are Thursdays, from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

### Personal Support Classes

#### Adult Diabetes Support Group

- ▶ This free support group for adults meets every third Wednesday. For more information, call **209-826-0591, ext. 356**.

#### Cancer Support Group

- ▶ Receive encouragement from others who understand what it is like to live with cancer. Hear guest speakers on new treatments, nutrition and more. The facilitated group meets on the second Wednesday of every month, from 6 to 8 p.m., in the hospital board room. Adults with cancer and their loved ones and caregivers are welcome. Call **209-826-0591, ext. 365**, for more information.

### Classes for Children and Teens

#### Safe Sitter Babysitting Class

- ▶ This class teaches safe and fun babysitting techniques, along with first aid and CPR. Adolescents must be at least age 11 to attend. The fee is \$25. The six-week class is held on Wednesdays, from 4 to 6 p.m.

### CPR and Other Programs

#### BLS Health Care Provider Certification

- ▶ Health care professionals can learn the basics of CPR. Certification classes are held on the second Friday of every month, from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Renewal classes are held on the fourth Friday of every month, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. The fee is \$25.

#### Heartsaver CPR

- ▶ Learn basic CPR techniques. This class is offered six times a year on a Saturday. The fee is \$25.

#### Heartsaver Pediatric First Aid

- ▶ Learn first aid and CPR skills for children. This class is offered six times a year on a Saturday. The fee is \$25.

## Free Freedom from Smoking® Class

This seven-week class, developed by the American Lung Association, covers how to quit smoking, smoking triggers, relapse prevention, stress management and more. **No charge!** The next session begins March 4. Preregistration is required. Call **209-826-0591, ext. 270**.

# Find the Support You Need to Manage Diabetes

**If you're one of the 18 million Americans** diagnosed with diabetes, you face some life-altering challenges. Living with diabetes requires numerous adjustments—such as changing your eating habits, losing weight and monitoring your blood sugar daily.

The good news is that you can live a long, healthy and full life by learning how to manage your diabetes. Armed with accurate knowledge and the proper tools, you can also prevent, minimize or delay many of the complications associated with diabetes.

## Get the Facts

“Education is key to managing diabetes,” says Patient Education Coordinator Marlene Corbin, R.N., who facilitates the Diabetes Support Group at Memorial Hospital Los Banos (MHLB).

The group meets once a month to discuss nutrition, medication, glucose monitoring and new diabetes treatments. Guest speakers also lecture on important topics, such as vision, dental and podiatry care, as well as the emotional toll of diabetes.

“We cover just about everything you need to know about diabetes. Participants also get a chance to share their experiences and feelings,” says Corbin.

## You Are Not Alone

Manny and his wife have been coming to the group for several months now. Both enjoy hearing from the experts and others who understand what they are going through.

“Doctors don't always have the time to go into detailed explanations like Marlene and the speakers in the group do,” says Manny, who has type 2 diabetes. “We've learned a lot from being in the group, including the fact that we're not alone. Many other people are in the same boat.”

## How to Join

The Diabetes Support Group meets on the third Wednesday of every month, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., in the Education Center at Memorial Hospital Los Banos. Meetings are confidential and free of charge. For more information, please call 209-826-0591, ext. 270. Loved ones and friends are also welcome.



## Who Develops Diabetes?

One out of four Americans with diabetes does not know they have it. Symptoms develop slowly and may include the following:

- Blurry vision
- Frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Increased thirst
- Increased tiredness
- Unusual weight loss

People who are African-American, Hispanic, Native American or Asian-American are at greater risk for diabetes. Your risk of developing diabetes also increases if you are overweight, inactive or older than age 45, as well as if you have high blood pressure; a history of gestational diabetes or delivering a baby weighing more than 9 pounds; or a parent, brother or sister with diabetes. For more information, talk with your doctor.

### Women Take Center Stage at [MyLifeStages.org](http://MyLifeStages.org)

You deserve prompt, reliable answers for your health and wellness questions. You'll find them at Sutter Health's new, free Web site just for women: [www.mylifestages.org](http://www.mylifestages.org). Log on and register for customized information, advice, solutions and links to Sutter Health doctors, hospitals and programs in your area. Visit us today!

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## Memorial Hospital Los Banos Convenient Care Close to Home

**Memorial Hospital Los Banos** isn't the small rural hospital it used to be. Today, we're a full-service, modern facility offering a comprehensive range of inpatient and outpatient services, including 24-hour emergency care, round-the-clock labor and delivery services, and a Rural Health Clinic serving more than 1,200 patients a month.

### Advanced Services

We've also added new physicians and specialties, remodeled our facilities, and invested in advanced technology to provide you and your family with the expert care you need close to home. We've equipped our intensive care unit with a high-tech electronic surveillance system and expanded our Radiology Department to include high-tech digital equipment for more accurate diagnoses.

### Meeting Your Needs

Our highly skilled surgical teams perform a wide range of procedures in modern, fully equipped operating suites. Thanks to advances in medicine, many of these procedures can be performed in our same-day surgery unit without an overnight hospital stay. It's all part of our mission to provide high-quality care and meet the health care needs of our community.

### Available Services at MHLB

#### Inpatient Surgery

- Appendectomies
- Caesarean section deliveries
- Colon surgery
- Gallbladder surgery
- Hysterectomies
- Marshall-Marchetti-Krantz procedure for the treatment of bladder-control problems
- Mastectomies
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Total knee and hip replacements

#### Same-Day Surgery

- Adult and pediatric surgery
- Dental, oral maxillofacial surgery
- Ear, nose and throat surgery
- General surgery
- Gastrointestinal services, including colonoscopy and endoscopy
- Gynecological surgery
- Laparoscopic surgery
- Orthopedic surgery
- Urological surgery

#### Radiology

- Bone-density testing
- Digital fluoroscopies
- Digital X-rays
- LightSpeed digital computed tomography scanner
- High-tech Picture Archival Communications System for storing and sharing digital images electronically
- Mammographies
- Mobile magnetic resonance imaging
- Ultrasounds

