

# health matters

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## The Truth About the "Baby Blues"

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~ Carter, 6 months, was born at ECRMC.

– Read more on page 2.

health matters  
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El Centro  
Regional Medical Center  
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## 10 Tips to a Healthy Pregnancy



Rachel is the proud mother of Caleb, who was born at El Centro Regional Medical Center.

### PLAN YOUR PREGNANCY

You shouldn't get pregnant at a tumultuous time in your life. Plan for the expense, plan for the care, plan for the emotions.

### CHOOSE AN OBSTETRICIAN

Choosing your healthcare provider early means that you'll have months to build a good relationship in preparation for the birth. Also, finding the right person can take time, so you'll want to get started right away. For help in finding an obstetrician refer to your general physician, or log onto the hospital website at [www.ecrmc.org](http://www.ecrmc.org).

### GET EARLY PRENATAL CARE

Good prenatal care is essential to your baby's health. Dr. Elias N. Moukarzel, an obstetrician on the hospital medical staff, recommends an early start on pre-natal care that includes taking folic acid supplements at least three months prior to getting pregnant to reduce the incidence of malformation of the brain, spine and heart.

For pregnant women Dr. Moukarzel advises vitamin use, especially those containing iron and calcium, and an ultra-sound examination during the second trimester. He also advises a genetic screening early in the pregnancy as well as a cervical screening, and screenings for vaginal infection, and diabetes.

### WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

Eating for two you'll need to up your intake of protein and calories (for energy), as well as certain vitamins and minerals such

as folic acid and iron. And you'll want to steer clear of undercooked eggs and meat, unpasteurized milk and juice, raw seafood, and soft cheeses to avoid ingesting bacteria that could harm your baby. Rely on foods from the five healthy food groups: grain products, vegetables, fruits, protein foods, and milk products. To get the nutrients you and your baby need, choose to eat these foods every day.

Dr. Marisel Chibas, another obstetrician on the medical staff, also stresses the importance of calcium in the diet during pregnancy. Many mothers, she said, must supplement their regular diets to get enough calcium during pregnancy.

She also warns against too much seafood in the diet, recommending that fish be eaten no more than twice a week to protect against the ingestion of too much mercury. Of all seafood, salmon and tuna are probably the safest, she indicated. Dr. Chibas also stressed the need for early care and the importance of follow-up visits to the obstetrician.

### TAKE PRENATAL VITAMINS

Most prenatal supplements contain more folic acid, iron, and calcium than you'll find in a standard multivitamin. Pregnant women need more of these nutrients than the average woman, especially folic acid, which greatly reduces a baby's risk of developing neural tube birth defects such as spina bifida.

See Healthy Pregnancy, page 2

## Letter from the CEO



Now that Summer is here, things are heating up. So are the events about to take place at ECRMC. In July we will finally complete our new building project, with the opening of our beautiful new Lobby, featuring high ceilings, a water fountain at the entry, and most important of all, easy quick access to most of the hospital's services and units.

It's been a long construction period, with all the inconveniences. However, we will now finally be able to realize the marvelous benefit of the building project and the new centralized access to the hospital in and out-patient services provided by our new Central Lobby and Entrance located directly off Imperial Boulevard.

This new area will encompass immediate access to the hospital and its various services, with an all new individually private registration and admissions area. The entrance will lend quick and easy access to the ancillary services areas (Lab, Radiology, Surgery, Outpatient Services), with the new patient tower immediately to the right of the new Entrance and the Women's, Pediatrics and other inpatient units to the left. The prior long walks will be shortened significantly!

With our new building also comes our continued commitment to the community to provide Excellence in Healthcare Services to the Valley. Our continued development of additional services and Quality Improvement Programs are moving quickly to give the community high quality healthcare services in a friendly and courteous environment.

Our Emergency Services have continued to move forward in their program for excellence and have been recently recognized for their high quality, compassionate service and given the designation of Trauma Level by the State and local agencies.

We are committed to providing the Imperial Valley with Excellence in Healthcare Services.

I hope you have an enjoyable and safe summer season.

Sincerely,  
David R. Green, CEO

## HUGS Installed

El Centro Regional Medical Center is about to install a new state-of-the-art security system to further insure against the possibility of an infant abduction from its nursery.

The Instantel Hugs Infant Protection system, obtained from Advantage Medical Inc., of Yucaipa, Calif., is a computer driven, advanced system with electronic tags to constantly track infants. The system also monitors the entire Maternal-Child Department with security cameras, video cameras and electronic alarms should an attempt be made to breach an exit.

Hospital trustees approved purchase of the system at its regular May meeting upon the recommendation of Virgie Galindo, chief nursing officer. Galindo placed the cost of the new equipment at \$85,459.

Advantage Medical Inc. advisers will train selected nurses in the covered areas in the use of the equipment. Those nurses will be responsible for extending that training to all members of the staff in the covered areas. The hospital security staff also will be trained on how to identify alarms.

Joannie Jose, nurse director of the Maternal-Child Department, said the Hugs Infant Protection system should be installed and in operation in about a month.



Proud new parents of an infant born at ECRMC.

She said an infant at birth is given a leg tag, which is recorded in the computer. The computer then maintains a check on the location of that infant at all times. The mothers have matching tags to further insure against misidentifying infants.

Jose said that should the computer pick up an irregularity in the tracking system, all doors are automatically locked, cameras and video recorders are switched on.

The Hugs Infant Protection System utilizes state of the art technology and offers an upgraded level of protection for infants in the Maternal and Child Department.

# Our Family Serving Yours

## The Truth About the “Baby Blues”

Postpartum depression is more than a temporary feeling of sadness or lack of energy—it is a medical condition that develops some time in the first 3 months after childbirth. It seems to be triggered by the normal hormonal changes that occur after pregnancy.



### “Oh no, not you too?”

You probably have postpartum depression if you’ve had 5 or more of the following symptoms (at least one of which is #1 or #2) for most of each day over the past 2 weeks:

1. *Depressed mood—tearfulness, hopelessness, and feeling empty inside, possibly with severe anxiety*
2. *A significant loss of pleasure in either all or almost all of your daily activities*
3. *Appetite and weight change—usually a drop in your appetite and weight, but sometimes the opposite*
4. *Sleep problems—usually insomnia, even when your baby is sleeping*
5. *Noticeable changes in how you walk and talk—usually restlessness, but sometimes sluggishness*
6. *Extreme fatigue or loss of energy*
7. *Feeling worthless or having inappropriate guilt*
8. *Difficulty concentrating and making decisions*
9. *Thinking a lot about death or suicide*

Depression is a medical condition that requires treatment, not a sign of weakness. Be honest with yourself and those who care about you. Tell them about your struggle. You, your health professional, and your friends and family can team up to treat your postpartum depression symptoms.

- *Talk to your health professional about your postpartum depression symptoms and decide on what type of treatment is right for you. (You may also have your thyroid function checked, to make sure a thyroid problem isn’t causing your symptoms.)*
- *Schedule outings and visits with friends and family, and ask them to call you regularly. Isolation feeds depression, especially when combined with the stresses of caring for a newborn.*
- *Eat a balanced diet. Avoid alcohol and caffeine. If you have little appetite, eat small snacks throughout the day.*
- *Get regular daily exercise, such as outdoor stroller walks. Exercise helps improve mood.*
- *Ask for help with food preparation and other daily tasks. Family and friends are often happy to help a mother with newborn demands.*
- *Don’t overdo it, and get as much rest and sleep as possible. Fatigue can increase depression.*

Source: WebMD (<http://www.webmd.com>)

## Accreditations Growing

Two more members of the of the El Centro Regional Medical Center patient accounting staff have earned credentialing by a national accreditation organization as certified patient account technicians.

The certification of Christina Izaguirre and Steve Flores raises the number of staffers to five employees who have completed their certification for Medicare billing and follow-up in the Patient Accounting Department. The certification is granted after passing written tests that require more than six months of preparation. Lily Diaz, Rosita Mauricio and Laura Villagomez are also certified patient account technicians.

The accreditation is offered by the American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management, headquartered in Fairfax, VA. The written examination was taken in Temecula.

“I am proud of Christina and Steve and the other Patient Accounting staff members

who have earned this certification,” said Kathleen J. Farmer, chief finance officer.

Izaguirre has worked for the hospital for 14 years, starting in dietary and later transferring to Patient Accounting. She and her husband, Eddie, a supervisor for the National Gypsum Co., have three children, Michael, 12, Edward, 7 and Arianna, 3. She is a graduate of Central Union High School and was a business administration major at Imperial Valley College.

Flores is in his second association with the billing department. He worked there from 1998-99 when he left to join a credit counseling agency in San Diego. He returned in 2002 and moved right back into his former job with ECRMC. He is a graduate of Central Union High School and currently is enrolled in Imperial Valley College in a computer technician curriculum. He and his wife, Jessica, reside in El Centro.

## Newborn Classes Available at ECRMC



The Education Department of El Centro Regional Medical Center offers a selection of classes as a service to mothers-to-be and new mothers.

### BREASTFEEDING CLASSES

A class on breastfeeding is offered to new and prospective mothers at 5:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month with

instructor Roberta Webster, R.N., a certified lactation nurse. A breastfeeding support group meets at 3:00 p.m. each Thursday.

### NEWBORN CARE CLASSES

Instruction for mothers-to-be in the care of newborns is the subject of a class to be offered on the first Wednesday and Thursday of each month with instructor Roberta Webster, R.N., pre-registration is required. Please call 339-7377 to register.

### OTHER INFANT CARE CLASSES

There also are a number of classes offered on the care of infants following birth. All classes are held in the El Centro Regional Medical Plaza, 1271 Ross Ave. Further information can be obtained on each class and support group by calling the Education department at 339-7377.



*Did you know...*

**...1,307** Baby’s  
were born at **ECRMC**  
in the year **2003!**

## 10 Tips to a Healthy Pregnancy

*Healthy Pregnancy, from page 1*



*Carter, one of Dr. Moukarzel’s many special deliveries, was born at ECRMC weighing in at a healthy 10 pounds and 12 ounces.*

### EXERCISE REGULARLY

A good exercise program can give you the strength and endurance you’ll need to carry the weight you gain during pregnancy and to handle the physical stress of labor. It will also make getting back into shape after the baby is born much easier. What’s more, exercise is a great way to beat the pregnancy blues; a recent study found that staying active can boost your level of serotonin, a brain chemical linked to mood. Just remember not to push yourself too hard, stay hydrated, and don’t overheat.

### AVOID ALCOHOL

Don’t drink while you’re pregnant: whatever alcohol you drink rapidly reaches your baby through your bloodstream and across the placenta. “Women who have had more than two drinks a day are known to be at a greater risk for giving birth to a baby with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)

than those who drink less,” according to Dr. Stephen Gocke, a obstetrician on the medical staff, “but no one knows if there’s any safe amount you can drink during pregnancy.” Children born with FAS suffer from mental and growth retardation, behavioral problems, and facial and heart defects. So play it safe - have a nonalcoholic drink instead.

### CUT BACK ON CAFFEINE

Although a cup or two of coffee a day won’t hurt your baby, no one knows for sure what the effects of drinking three or four cups a day are. Some researchers say that too much caffeine may contribute to the risk of having a low-birth weight baby. Drink decaffeinated coffee or tea instead. Or, better yet, try a refreshing glass of mineral water with a spritz of lime.

### STOP SMOKING

Smoking increases your risk of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, abnormal placental implantation, premature placental detachment, vaginal bleeding, premature delivery, and infant death. Not convinced yet? Some studies have shown that women who smoke 20 or more cigarettes a day during pregnancy are more likely to give birth to a baby with a cleft lip or palate. It’s never too late to quit or cut back.

### GET SOME REST

The fatigue you feel in the first and third trimesters is your body’s way of saying “slow down.” So listen up and take it easy, as much as you can. If you can’t swing a nap in the middle of the day, give yourself a break outside of work and let your other responsibilities go a little. Relaxation techniques such as yoga, stretching, deep breathing, and massage are all great ways to combat stress and get a better night’s sleep.

**DISCLAIMER** This El Centro Regional Medical Center (“ECRMC”) newsletter is for the sole purpose of providing readers with reference information as a means of introducing them to ECRMC and to the services provided by its physicians, health care providers, and affiliated clinics. The Information provided is not intended to replace obtaining medical evaluations and health care advice from qualified health care providers. Reference to specific products, processes, businesses, facilities, or services does not constitute or imply recommendation or endorsement by ECRMC. Physicians are not employees of ECRMC.

Staff Writer Robert V. Liggett ©2004 CONVEYOR GROUP