



# THE CENTER OF HEALTH

*A monthly newsletter from the Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic*

March 2022

**SYTHC Mission:** *Provide the highest quality healthcare honoring cultural values and incorporating best practices*

**SYTHC Vision:** *A Center of Optimal Health for Years to Come*

## **SYTHC TO EXPAND ITS HOURS**

**Richard W. Matens, M.Div., Chief Health Officer**

In the fall of 2021, the Health Board and Clinic Management discussed ways in which we could expand access to services for our patients. Due to the fact that we have limited space, an immediate potential solution used was to expand our hours for clinical service at Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic.

Since a large percentage of our patients work traditional hours Monday through Friday, they need to use their personal time off for their healthcare appointments. Having to use such time off can create a barrier for patients who want to address their needs in a proactive manner.

Consequently, beginning sometime in April, the clinic will be offering non-traditional hours of operation for primary medical care. We will start two evenings per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) by expanding our clinical operation until 8 pm. Eventually, we plan to expand to Saturday mornings as well once we develop an appropriate staffing plan and hire support staff for that expansion.

Our goal is to assess the patient response to these additional hours of operation throughout the current calendar year so we can determine if this is a service we wish to offer in perpetuity. As mentioned above, we are beginning this initiative in the Medical Department only. Should it be successful in Medical, we will assess the feasibility to offer this expanded programming in Dental and Behavioral Health as well.

As always, we are looking for ways to improve the service delivery at the clinic. Please know that we will explore other opportunities in the months to come as well.

# SAMALA

# YOUTH NEWS!



## GONA 2022

Gathering of Native Americans

### What is GONA?

GONA (Gathering of Native Americans) is a journey of healing and transformation. It is about healing the past and building a better tomorrow for future generations. At GONA, participants will receive a road map and tools for their healing journey. It is an interactive program that supports and empowers native youth through the use of cultural values, traditions, and spiritual practices. Each day of GONA focuses on one of GONA's four pillars: belonging, mastery, interdependence, and generosity.

**When?** April 4-7, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Each day participants will meet at the SY Tribal Hall.

**Where?** Transportation for programs outside of Santa Ynez will be provided.

**Who?** Native youth ages 8-24 living in Santa Barbara County are invited to attend.

**How?** Visit the link in our bio!



Email Gina at [gvanni-duran@sythc.org](mailto:gvanni-duran@sythc.org) for more information about this year's GONA program!

## DENTAL EROSION

Dental erosion is the loss of the tooth structure caused by the combined influence of chemical and mechanical forces. Some of the signs and symptoms of dental erosion may include a dull and yellowish appearance of the teeth, flattened chewing surfaces of the back teeth, thinned edges of the front teeth, as well as general tooth sensitivity. Even before you can see or feel these signs of damage, the acids in your mouth can begin dissolving protective enamel away making it easier for otherwise “normal”, everyday activities to damage your teeth. If you ingest large quantities of acid-containing food or beverages, have a gastro-esophageal reflux disorder (GERD), vomit frequently, take certain medications or dietary supplements, or experience dry mouth, you might be more prone to have erosive wear on your teeth.

### HOW DOES EROSION WORK?

The first step of the erosive tooth wear process is softening of the tooth surfaces. The acids you consume or the acidic byproducts from your stomach can soften the outer layer of the teeth. Once the top protective layer is softened, brushing, eating, and other regular everyday activities slowly remove the enamel and expose the underlying structures. When the tooth-protective outer surface is compromised, other environmental factors continue stripping away the tooth structure, leading to more and more damage over time. The loss of protective tooth structure makes the mouth more vulnerable to other diseases such as dental caries, jaw pain, and severe tooth sensitivity.

### TAKE THESE STEPS TO PREVENT EROSIIVE WEAR OF YOUR TEETH:

Avoid consuming food and drinks that expose your mouth to acids and replace them with products with a high calcium concentration, such as yogurt, milk, and cheese. Talk to your medical practitioner or your dentist:

- ◆ If you have conditions that may increase the production of stomach acids.
- ◆ If you take medication or supplements, specifically for acid reflux if your saliva production is compromised.

Use daily oral care products that can shield the enamel and prevent the wear of your teeth, such as stannous fluoride-containing toothpastes. See your dental professional regularly to be screened for erosive tooth wear and receive customized recommendations on how to prevent damage from dental erosion.



# MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

*NOEMI DOOHAN, MD, PHD, MPH*

## **COVID 19: Pandemic or Endemic. Where do we stand now?**

Greetings. I am Dr. Noemi Doohan, a board-certified Family Physician and the new Medical Director of the Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic. Before coming to work here, I served as the Public Health Officer of Mendocino County through the pandemic, and I currently serve as a Pandemic Strategic Support Specialist for the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and as Deputy Health Officer for Santa Barbara County. Therefore, as a front-line health care worker and public health professional, I have been living pandemic response for the last two years. All of us can feel something is different now with the pandemic. It feels like COVID-19 has become “endemic” like other common communicable diseases, such as influenza. During a pandemic due to a new virus, no one on the planet has immune protection against the emerging disease. That is why pandemics are so dangerous—because world populations can get sick all at once and thus crash health care systems and other social infrastructures. We still do not have enough global immunity to protect us from COVID-19 pandemic conditions, but we are very well protected overall in Santa Barbara County.

Tribal leadership chose very wisely early on in the pandemic by electing to follow all county and state public health guidelines. We are seeing the positive outcomes of those wise decisions now as we open up freedoms and return to what feels like more normal life. As we are all wondering what happens now and next with the pandemic response, we can turn to CDPH for some excellent guidance, which is outlined below.

### **CDPH and the State of California are promoting the SMARTER approach to COVID.**

<https://covid19.ca.gov/smarter/>

We are using the lessons of the last two years to prepare for future COVID-19 surges or variants. **SMARTER** stands for:

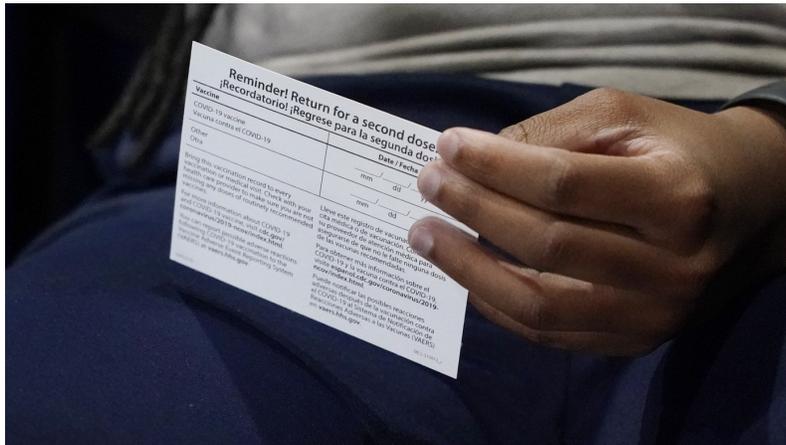
- ◆ **Shots:** Vaccines are the most powerful weapon against hospitalization and serious illness.
- ◆ **Masks:** Properly worn masks with good filtration help slow the spread of COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses.
- ◆ **Awareness:** We will continue to stay aware of how COVID-19 is spreading, evolving variants, communicate clearly how people should protect themselves, and coordinate our state and local government response.
- ◆ **Readiness:** COVID-19 is not going away and we need to be ready with the tools, resources and supplies we will need to quickly respond and keep public health and the healthcare system well prepared.
- ◆ **Testing:** Getting the right type of tests—PCR or antigen—to where they are needed most. Testing will help California minimize the spread of COVID-19.
- ◆ **Education:** California will continue to work to keep schools open and children safely in classrooms for in-person instruction.
- ◆ **Rx:** Evolving and improving treatments will become increasingly available and critical as a tool to save lives.

# MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

The SMARTER Plan is not just for COVID-19. We can use these strategies and systems for future emergencies. We will improve the SMARTER Plan as we learn what works.

As we approach endemic conditions in California, we are now enjoying updated indoor mask requirements. Masks are no longer required in most indoor settings for unvaccinated people. Masks remain strongly recommended for everyone indoors.

Regarding being vaccinated, please call SYTHC if you have any questions about the vaccine. You can also schedule a shot through the CDPH website: <https://myturn.ca.gov/>. *It's your turn. The vaccine is free to everyone ages 5 and up.*



Safe, free, effective COVID-19 vaccines and confidential testing are available to all regardless of immigration or insurance status. Stay healthy, protect others, and help slow the spread.

**COVID-19 Booster vaccines are recommended following the primary vaccination series for specific populations.**

Regarding COVID-19 Booster Vaccines, here is a great source of information:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccine-Boosters.aspx>

If you have been vaccinated and need a vaccine record you can get it here:

<https://myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov/>

NOTE: If you received your vaccinations from a federal agency (e.g., Department of Defense, Indian Health Services, or Veterans Affairs), you will need to contact those agencies for any assistance with your vaccination record.

*We welcome springtime, warmer weather so we can comfortably and safely gather outdoors, and healthy times ahead!*

## No-Show/Cancellation Policy!

The Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic has adopted a new No-Show/Cancellation Policy. You will start to notice that the Front Office will have you sign this acknowledgement form so that you are aware of our new expectations. This policy will reduce the number of appointments we no show or cancel daily. Our hope is to provide more appointments for patients that need to be seen. This policy will apply to all departments in the Clinic (Medical, Dental and Behavioral Health). We appreciate your understanding as we work on improving our access to the providers.



The mission of the Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic is to provide the highest quality of health care, honoring cultural values and integrating best practices. When any of our scheduled appointments are cancelled by a patient with short notice, when a patient arrives late for their appointment, or when a patient “no-shows”, there is insufficient time for us to reappoint that time for another patient. Late cancellations/arrivals or “no-shows” are a lost opportunity for patients to take advantage of our valued services.

The following guidelines outline our Cancellation/No-Show Policy for the SYTHC Behavioral Health, Medical and Dental clinics, effective immediately:

- ◆ Cancellations of scheduled appointments should be received by the Front Desk **at least 24-hours prior** to the scheduled appointment time.
  - *Exceptions will be considered in the event of an emergency or illness on a case-by-case basis.*
  - *Any late cancellation (not received 24 hours prior to the appointment time) will be considered a “no-show”.*
- ◆ When a patient arrives more than ten (10) minutes late for their scheduled appointment time, the appointment will be considered a “no-show”.
- ◆ If a patient does not show up for their scheduled appointment (w/o sufficient or zero notice), this will be considered a “no-show”.
- ◆ If a patient has two (2) “no-shows” over a 6-month timeframe for any of our clinical departments, the patient may not be eligible to schedule an appointment in that clinical department for six (6) months, from the date of the second no-show.

Your cooperation is vital to the clinic’s ability to offer the highest quality health care to all of our patients.

# Elders & Exercise!

## 5 Benefits of Exercise for Seniors and Aging Adults

You've heard it time and again: physical activity and exercise are good for you, and you should aim to make them part of your routine. There are countless studies that prove the important health benefits associated with exercise, and it becomes more important as we age. Regular physical activity and exercise for seniors helps improve mental and physical health, both of which will help you maintain your independence as you age. Below, we outline five benefits of exercise for seniors and [aging adults](#).



## 1. Prevent Disease

Studies have shown that maintaining regular physical activity can help prevent many common diseases, such as [heart disease](#) and [diabetes](#). Exercise improves overall immune function, which is important for seniors as their immune systems are often compromised. Even light exercise, such as walking, can be a powerful tool for preventable disease management.

## 2. Improved Mental Health

The mental health benefits of exercise are nearly endless. [Exercise produces endorphins](#) (the “feel good” hormone), which act as a stress reliever and leaves you feeling happy and satisfied. In addition, exercise has been linked to improving sleep, which is especially important for older adults who often suffer from insomnia and disrupted sleep patterns.

## 3. Decreased Risks of Falls

Older adults are at a higher risk of falls, which can prove to be potentially disastrous for maintaining independence. Exercise improves strength and flexibility, which also help improve balance and coordination, reducing the risk of falls. Seniors take much longer to recover from falls, so anything that helps avoid them in the first place is critical.

## 4. Social Engagement

Whether you join a walking group, go to group fitness classes or visit a gardening club, exercise can be made into a fun social event. Maintaining strong social ties is important for aging adults to feel a sense of purpose and avoid feelings of loneliness or depression. Above all, the key is to find a form of exercise you love, and it will never feel like a chore again.

## 5. Improved Cognitive Function

Regular physical activity and fine-tuned motor skills benefit cognitive function. Countless studies suggest a lower risk of dementia for physically active individuals, regardless of when you begin a routine.

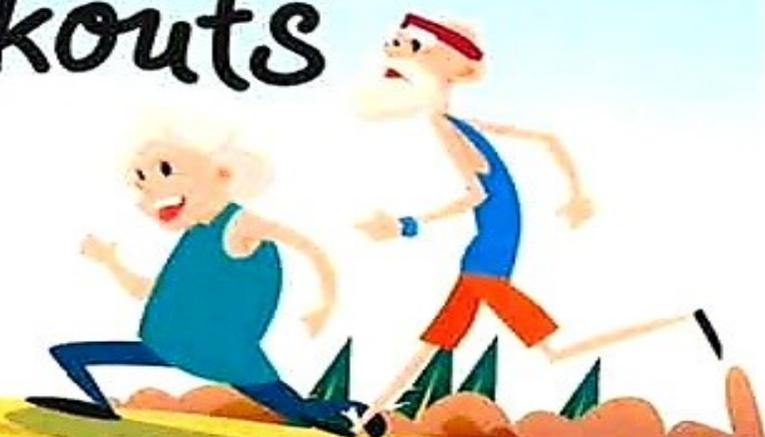
## In Conclusion

Exercise is good for you; it's just a matter of making it a priority and habit in your daily life. In the aging population, exercise has been shown to prevent disease, lower the risk of falls, improve mental health and well-being, strengthen social ties, and improve cognitive function. Regardless of your age, we hope this will motivate you to incorporate exercise into your life.

Learn more about The GreenFields Health & Rehabilitation Center, specializing in [subacute rehabilitation](#) and [outpatient therapy services](#).

# Best Workouts for Seniors

[blog.fitorn.com](http://blog.fitorn.com)



It's no secret that many of us become less active with age. Here are some of the best and safest workout strategies for individuals in their golden years.

**Light Weights:**  
Start with 1 to 2 pounds and increase weight size gradually.

Benefits: Not only does weight training increase strength, but it also aids in balance and reduces your risk of osteoporosis.



**Water Aerobics:**  
Start by walking in the water and progress to more strenuous exercises.

Benefits: Aquatic exercise is perfect for individuals with injuries or those just embarking on a physical fitness routine.

**Yoga:**  
Find a class designed with senior mobility in mind or fire up a yoga DVD in the comfort of your own home.

Benefits: Along with improving posture and increasing flexibility, yoga can ease arthritis pain and even help mitigate anxiety.



[blog.fitorn.com](http://blog.fitorn.com)

# *2021-22 Patient Survey*

**SYTHC continues to conduct its annual Patient Survey. When you visit the clinic, our Team Members facilitate the survey that covers the following 12 questions.**

- 1) *What services do you receive at the Clinic? (Please select all that apply)*
- 2) *How did you find the experience of scheduling appointments?*
- 3) *How empathetic were our staff members to your needs?*
- 4) *How long did you have to wait until the provider attended to you?*
- 5) *How satisfied were you with your interaction with the provider you saw?*
- 6) *How easy is it to navigate our facility?*
- 7) *How satisfied are you with the cleanliness and appearance of our facility?*
- 8) *How would you rate the professionalism of our staff?*
- 9) *Was your provider able to address your concerns?*
- 10) *How likely are you to recommend the Clinic to your friends and family?*
- 11) *How would you rate the Clinic overall? (5 being the highest rating)*
- 12) *Are there things you feel we could improve upon? If so, please share them here.*

**We hope that you will please take the time to complete the survey to let us know how we can better serve our community.**

## **Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic**



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