

Fall 2009

# Best Health

*with Sharp Health Plan*

## TOMORROW'S HOSPITAL TODAY:

Inside Sharp Memorial Hospital

## SAN DIEGO

A top fit city

## BEST IN CLASS

Free wellness programs for the whole family

## GET OUT!

5 outdoor activities to get you moving

**Rolf Benirschke**  
Making a difference in San Diego

ATTN: CURRENT RESIDENCE  
AMBA MARKETING  
11665 AVENA PLACE  
SUITE 205  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92128



**SHARP**  
HEALTH PLAN

Welcome home.

# Introducing Best Health with Sharp Health Plan



Melissa and Rolf

At Sharp Health Plan, our mission is to improve the health of those we serve with a commitment to excellence in all that we do. We strive to be recognized as your trusted health care partner and advocate by delivering a superior health care experience.

*Best Health* is our effort to provide a simple and accessible resource that gives you the information you need to live a happy and healthful lifestyle. Inside you will find out how simple things like laughter can reduce stress, along with ideas for healthful, budget-friendly activities around San Diego.

We believe that a little goes a long way. Taking small steps in our daily lives can make a difference in our community, and in our own well-being. In this issue, learn more about how local San Diegan Rolf Benirschke—San Diego Chargers' Hall of Famer and ulcerative colitis survivor—exemplifies the power of positive thinking, and what he does to give back to others who are in need of support and hope.

We encourage you to share *Best Health*. Let us know what you would like to see in upcoming issues by, e-mailing us at [shp.besthealth@sharp.com](mailto:shp.besthealth@sharp.com). We want to hear from you!

From our family to yours,

President and CEO  
Sharp Health Plan

P.S. Turn to page 12 to learn about our complimentary wellness classes, programs and services.

**Be healthy, get active!**  
**Check out some fun things to do in San Diego on page 10.**





### Behind the scenes:

Our cover story was shot on top of Mount Soledad in La Jolla. At 823 feet, this prominent San Diego landmark features panoramic views of downtown, Pacific Beach and La Jolla Shores.

### Features

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# Don't Fall Behind: Strategies to Keep You Ahead of the Game



*“Excess weight in kids often reflects unexpressed feelings and unmet needs.”*

*Tell your children you love them. Encourage them to share their feelings.”*

Candy Cumming MS, RD  
Wellness Education Specialist / Certified Solution Provider  
Sharp Weight Management and Health Education

## Fight Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is a serious medical condition that can lead to health problems that were once considered adult issues, among them, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.

Excess weight in children can be caused by a host of behavioral, medical, and genetic factors, but most often it is the result of physical inactivity and regular consumption of high-calorie foods such as fast foods, desserts, candy, and soda.

Keep your kids healthy by replacing junk foods with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and making sure they get their hearts pumping every day.

Here are five ways to jump start your family's healthier habits:

### 1. Make a few small changes

Switch from soda to low-fat or nonfat milk, or water. Take a family walk after dinner.

### 2. Determine family goals

Set realistic, measurable goals for each family member

### 3. Prepare for situations where you might fall back to old habits

Come up with a strategy, like packing school lunches or sharing snacks at movies and events.

### 4. Celebrate your successes in healthful ways

When your family meets a goal, get together for a movie night, a picnic, or a trip to the pool.

### 5. Keep the process positive

Focus on good-for-you lifestyle changes, rather than on numbers on the scale.





## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

One in eight women born today in the United States will develop breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. The American Cancer Society recommends that women in their 20s and 30s have a clinical breast examination by a health professional at least every three years. Women 40 years and older should be examined annually, and include a yearly mammogram.

We encourage you to think pink and take advantage of the preventive services offered by Sharp Health Plan.

### Think pink: Knowledge is power

#### Get the mammogram without a physician's referral

Don't wait in line, make the call. Contact your doctor's office to locate a contracted radiology facility within your Plan Medical Group. Then call them directly to set up an appointment.

#### Stay on track with effortless appointment reminders

Visit [www.sharp.com](http://www.sharp.com) and select Appointment Reminders under the mySharp features. Sharp HealthCare will send you an e-mail reminder to schedule your annual mammogram on the date that you request.

#### Make one easy payment—your copayment

Because mammography is a covered radiology service, you will be responsible only for your copayment.

## H1N1 (Swine) Flu Update

The H1N1 virus is a new strain of influenza virus to which the human population has virtually no immunity. Young children, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions are at highest risk for H1N1-related health complications. Because it passes person to person, largely through sneezing and coughing, be aware of what you can do to reduce the risk of infection for yourself and those you care for.

Symptoms of H1N1 flu virus include:

- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Fever
- Cough
- Chills
- Fatigue



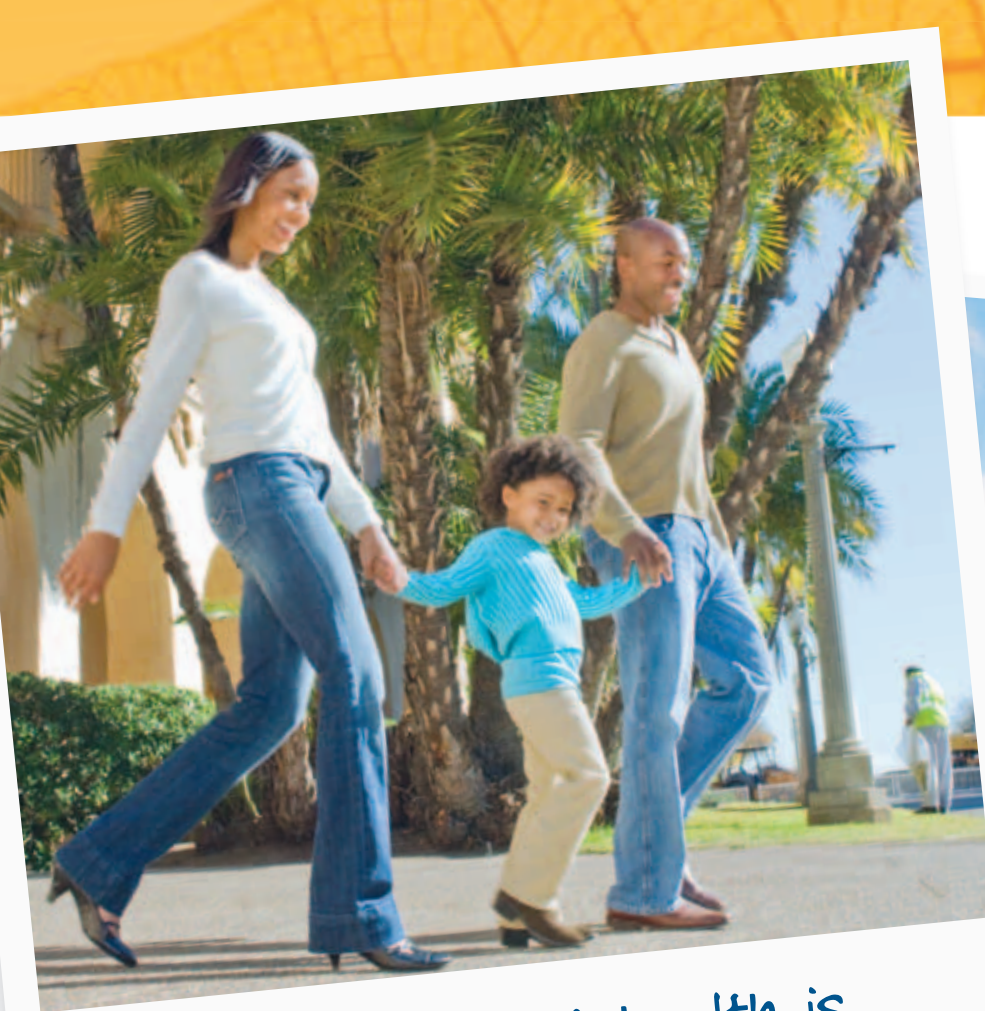
## 3 smart strategies:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth because germs spread that way.
3. If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

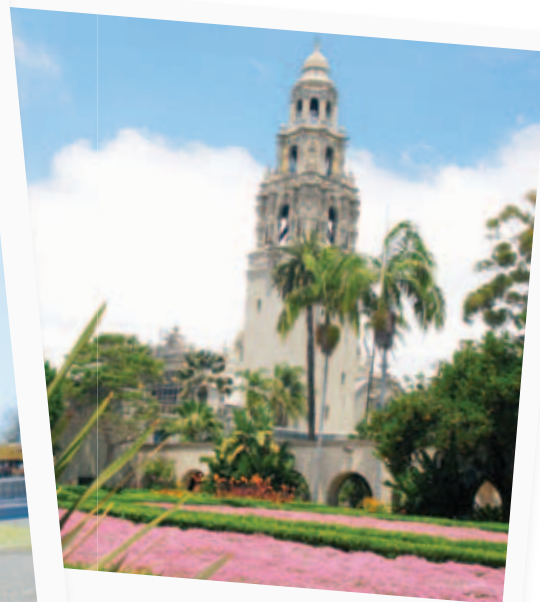
A vaccine is currently being tested, and reports indicate that 85 million doses will be available by the end of October.

This vaccine will not replace the seasonal flu shot that protects you from other strains of flu viruses, but shots may be administered together for your overall protection.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



We believe best health is within reach.



Magnesium supports more than

**300**

biochemical reactions in the body

Magnesium helps maintain normal muscle and nerve function, supports a healthy immune system, and keeps bones strong. Halibut, almonds, and spinach are all excellent sources.

Source: National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements

## 10 excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Fish is abundant in beneficial omega-3 fatty acids, an essential fat that our bodies cannot produce on their own. Numerous studies show that omega-3 fatty acids decrease heart disease, reduce blood pressure, help prevent arthritis, help prevent abnormal heart rhythms, and promote healthy brain function. Good choices to boost your omega-3 intake include:

1. Salmon
2. Tuna (canned light)
3. Trout
4. Sardines
5. Sea bass
6. Oysters
7. Crab
8. Perch
9. Shrimp
10. Cod



Source: Washington State Department of Health



## Make room for a juicer

Healthful and low in calories, vegetable juices are good sources of beta carotene and vitamins B, C, E, and K—all essential to the development and health of many body tissues, including the skin and eyes.



Source: *The Juicing Book* by Stephen Blauer

## Gotta love garlic

Preliminary research suggests that garlic may slow the development of arterial hardening, which can lead to heart disease or stroke. Other early studies show that eating garlic or taking garlic supplements may reduce the risk of several types of cancer, especially those of the digestive tract. In one study, the more garlic consumed, the lower the risk of stomach and colorectal cancer.



Source: National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine

## Laughter really *may* be the best medicine

A classic study tracked two groups of cardiac patients recuperating from heart attacks. One group of patients received medical care alone; the other group received medical care and **watched 30 minutes of comedy per day**. During the year-long study, the laughing group had fewer repeat heart attacks than those receiving medical care alone.

Source: Medicinenet.com

## Congratulations! San Diego is number 8 on the American College of Sports Medicine's list of America's fittest cities



The second annual American Fitness Index looked at 30 different indicators to determine which cities have **the healthiest residents**. It includes personal health indicators, such as physical activity, diet, and health insurance; and community health factors, such as acres of parkland, access to farmers' markets, and crime rates. San Diego's high number of dog parks and low percent of smokers helped land the fair city on the list. Here are the top 10 cities:

1. Washington, D.C.
2. Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN
3. Denver, CO
4. Boston, MA
5. San Francisco, CA

6. Seattle, WA
7. Portland, OR

**8. San Diego, CA**

9. Austin, TX
10. Virginia Beach, VA

Source: American College of Sports Medicine

## 3 tablespoons of flaxseeds for a healthier heart and body

Flaxseed is one of nature's richest sources of **omega-3 fatty acids**—good fats that have been shown to reduce the risk of heart attacks and certain types of cancer. Pump up the goodness of this tiny powerhouse by choosing two to three tablespoons of ground or milled flaxseed per day.

Source: Hall et al., *Advances in Food and Nutrition Research*, September 2006.

# Paying it Forward: The Legacy of Rolf Benirschke



The Benirschke Family

Rolf Benirschke knows crunch time. Clinching victories under extreme pressure with only seconds to spare is his stock in trade. But, in 1978, barely alive after two major surgeries, his body wasted to 125 pounds, the Chargers placekicker had little hope of triumph. And even less hope of returning to professional football. The surgical approach to treat his ulcerative colitis—inflammation of the large intestine—left Benirschke dependent on two ostomy devices for everyday functions. Discouraged by the long road to recovery, Benirschke was often tempted to throw in the towel, but with the help of his teammates, family and community, he made one of the most remarkable comebacks in the history of football.

Recruited from UC Davis where he was pursuing a degree in zoology, Benirschke signed with the Chargers in 1977. After a successful rookie year, he began experiencing debilitating symptoms of colitis, but he continued to play. He finally collapsed on the team plane. “It was devastating,” Benirschke remembers. “I was just making my way as a Charger when I was forced to deal with something I was completely unprepared for. I learned, however, that whatever circumstances you may face, there is always a silver lining.”

Months after his operations, and still weak from the ordeal, Benirschke’s teammates voted him honorary team captain and he walked onto the field for the pre-game coin toss holding the hand of teammate Louie Kelcher. It was a defining moment in his recuperation. “The people around me just would not let me give up,” he says. He fought hard to regain his spot on the team and played seven more seasons, retiring in 1987 as the Chargers’ all-time leader in points scored. He was named NFL Man of the Year in 1983, and was inducted into the Chargers Hall of Fame in 1997.

Throughout his career, Benirschke found ways to use his high profile as an NFL player to benefit causes important to him. He founded Kick for Critters, which raised \$1.5 million dollars for endangered species research at the San Diego Zoo, and Great Comebacks™, a support and advocacy group for patients with Crohn’s disease and colitis.

Benirschke’s most recent venture, Legacy Health Strategies, partners with companies to establish ongoing programs that raise public awareness of diseases, and provide support and education for patients dealing with complicated health issues. He has engaged the San Diego Chargers, the San Diego Blood Bank, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Amgen, and his own Legacy Foundation in fundraising programs to benefit The Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America, United Cerebral Palsy, the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association, the Autism Research Foundation, the Alzheimer’s Association of San Diego, the Lymphoma Research Foundation, and other associations.

Benirschke remains an inspiration to many and a model for turning life’s challenges into blessings. “Sometimes it’s not what you accomplish in life, but what you overcome,” he says. “It’s not enough to survive, you must grow to see the opportunities we have and appreciate the things we often take for granted.” A father of four and a successful entrepreneur, Benirschke and his family reside in Del Mar and proudly call San Diego home.



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO



*"Life is unscripted.  
Often, the greatest  
opportunities  
come in the least  
likely ways."*

## What Rolf Wants You to Know

### 1.

#### Don't ask, why me?

In a situation where your health is affected, that's not the right question. Ask, what now? Realize that you can't change the past; your responsibility now is to get better. Keep moving forward and control your attitude and actions. Then, get in the game and play on.

### 2.

#### Take recovery one step at a time.

No matter the condition, discover the spirit that gives you the ability to endure. Then make realistic, incremental goals that take you closer, step by step, to complete health.

### 3.

#### Allow people to support you.

Don't be afraid to share your burden with others. Allow them to help you and accept the support and encouragement family, friends, and the community have to offer.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rolf Byers".

# Sharp Memorial: Tomorrow's Hospital Today

Opened in January 2009, the new Stephen Birch Healthcare Center at Sharp Memorial Hospital offers clinical excellence with the latest technology and patient-centered care. With a commitment to heal the person, not just cure the illness, Sharp Memorial Hospital delivers personalized care based on the unique needs and preferences of each patient. Personal choices are welcomed to enhance the health care experience for everyone.

Sharp Memorial Hospital is a designated trauma center for San Diego County and has been recognized as a Magnet hospital for nursing and patient care excellence. The hospital is known for outstanding programs in heart care, cancer treatment, orthopedics, rehabilitation, robotic surgery, and multi-organ transplantation.

## A History of Firsts

### Sharp Memorial Hospital has a long history of medical firsts in San Diego

- First heart transplant
- First miniature defibrillator implantation
- First lung transplant in the county
- First major long-term rehabilitation center
- First open-heart surgery in 1950
- First to offer Novalis® Shaped Beam Surgery™
- First to use mechanical Jarvik-7 heart
- First to use the robotic da Vinci® Surgical System
- First to use of the Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD)

**Location:**  
7901 Frost Street, San Diego, CA 92123

**Phone:**  
(858) 939-3400

[www.SharpMemorialHospital.com](http://www.SharpMemorialHospital.com)



# A CLOSER LOOK



*Every room is a private room.*

Sharp Memorial Hospital is the only hospital in San Diego to provide private rooms for every patient—at no extra cost to patients or their insurance. Each of the 334 rooms, including those in Intensive Care, is designed to encourage family and caregiver interaction, known to speed the healing process.



*High-tech equipment for minimally invasive procedures*

High-tech operating suites are specially designed for every surgical situation from the most routine to the most complex, such as cardiac procedures, transplants, and robotic surgery. The new Emergency and Trauma Center is the largest and most modern in San Diego.

# Healthy Fun Abounds in Fall

*Outdoor activities are known to reduce depression, promote healing, lower stress levels, and increase concentration and life expectancy.*

*With apple orchards, sandy beaches, bucking broncos, and tall skylines all found within county limits, San Diego is never short on things to do. Get out there and reap the health benefits of fresh air at little to no cost to you and your family.*

## Harvest Festival

Stimulate mind and body as you sample gourmet food, live music, a pumpkin patch and unique handmade creations at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

**\$ Free for children 12 and under with 1 paid adult admission (\$9)**

[www.harvestfestival.com](http://www.harvestfestival.com)



October 23 to 25

**Carlsbad Village Street Faire**  
Take a long walk while browsing the largest street fair in the nation. Complimentary shuttles run all day from Westfield Plaza Camino Real.

**\$ Free**

[www.carlsbad.org](http://www.carlsbad.org)



# OUT AND ABOUT IN SAN DIEGO



November 1

## Annual Julian Apple Harvest

Enjoy refreshing mountain air, fall foliage, art shows, quaint antique shops, live entertainment, and, of course, fresh apples in this historic East County mining town.

**\$ Costs vary  
by activity**

[www.julianca.com](http://www.julianca.com)



Now through November 15

## Mother Goose Parade

Take in the sights and scenes at the largest parade west of the Mississippi. Walk or bike the course with your family, local celebrities, and new friends.

**\$ Free**

[www.mothersgooseparade.org](http://www.mothersgooseparade.org)



November 22

## San Diego Zoo

Reconnect with nature as you explore 100 acres of rare and endangered animals, and a botanical collection of more than 700,000 exotic plants. Children 11 and under are admitted free during the month of October.

**\$ Free for kids 11  
and under**

[www.balboapark.org](http://www.balboapark.org)



Now through October 31



# Wellness Classes, Online Tools, and Discounts

**1-800-82-SHARP (1-800-827-4277)**

## Comprehensive wellness classes and programs

Sharp Health Plan offers **hundreds of free or discounted classes**, events, and support groups to meet your needs and help you pursue a healthful lifestyle. Classes are offered at various Sharp HealthCare locations throughout San Diego County, and taught in individual or group settings by highly skilled, supportive health care professionals.

For more information or to sign up for any of our programs, please call 1-800-82-SHARP (1-800-827-4277) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., or visit [www.sharp.com](http://www.sharp.com) and click on **Classes & Events** for more information. Classes and events include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Arthritis Support Group
- Asthma Education
- Cancer Support Groups
- Diabetes Programs
- Exercise/Fitness Programs
- Financial Planning
- Healthy Hearts Program
- Prenatal and Parenting
- Senior Education
- Smoking Cessation
- Stress Management
- Weight Management





## [www.sharphealthplan.com](http://www.sharphealthplan.com)

### Online programs and assessments

As part of the Sharp Health Plan wellness program, members are encouraged to participate in online assessments of their health. A range of programs and personalized health improvement plans is available in a convenient and easy online format.

Visit [www.sharphealthplan.com](http://www.sharphealthplan.com) for information on our Healthy Living Programs. You can find them under Wellness Tools.

- **Weight Loss Program**
- **Stress Relief Program**
- **Diabetes Fighting Program**
- **Smoke-Free Program**
- **Healthy Aging Program**
- **Cancer Fighting Program**

### Wellness discounts

Sharp Health Plan members receive discounts of 15 to 50 percent off suggested retail prices on more than 2,400 health and wellness products, services from alternative care providers, and initiation and membership fees at participating fitness clubs and exercise centers throughout San Diego.

To find out more about the range of available discounts, or to locate a provider near you, look under Wellness Resources at [www.sharphealthplan.com](http://www.sharphealthplan.com) and follow the links to Sharp Extras.

#### Product discounts

- Audio
- Books
- Diet and sports nutrition
- Homeopathic remedies
- Natural products
- Personal body care
- Videos and DVDs
- Vitamins and supplements
- Yoga and fitness products

#### Fitness club membership discounts

- 4 Women Only Fitness Center
- Being-Fit Fitness Centers
- Club La Jolla
- Curves
- Downtown YMCA
- Fitness World
- Frog's Fitness
- Gold's Gym
- Pure Fitness
- San Diego Athletic Club
- The Boxing Club
- The Gym @ 734
- Throwdown Elite Training Center
- Wave House Athletic Club
- Women's Fitness World

#### Alternative care discounts

- Acupuncturists
- Chiropractors
- Dietitians
- Massage therapists





*We believe in keeping our members informed.*

## We've updated the Sharp Health Plan Member Handbook

### What is the Member Handbook?

The Sharp Health Plan Member Handbook explains your health plan membership and benefits, guides you in how to use the Plan, and lets you know whom to call if you need assistance.

In an ongoing effort to provide you with the most current information regarding your health plan membership, the Member Handbook has been updated to reflect recent plan changes.

You can find a copy of the new Member Handbook online at [www.sharphealthplan.com](http://www.sharphealthplan.com). If you would like us to send you a copy, simply call Sharp Health Plan Customer Care at (619) 228-2300 or toll-free at 1-800-359-2002, or send us an e-mail at [customer.service@sharp.com](mailto:customer.service@sharp.com).

Be sure to keep an eye on this section in upcoming issues to find out what's happening at Sharp Health Plan, and how it may affect you.

**We're here to help!**

**Call our Customer Care team  
Monday through Friday,  
8 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

**(619) 228-2300 or 1-800-359-2002**

**SHARP**  
HEALTH PLAN  
Welcome home.



Sharp HealthCare