

FROM THE HEALTH EXPERTS AT NATIVIDAD MEDICAL CENTER

INSPIRING HEALTHY LIVES

COVID-19 Survivor Stories:
Fighting for Life (page 2)

8 Things You Can Do to
Stay Healthy & Boost Your
Immune System (page 4)

Should You Stay In or Should
You Go Out? (page 5)

FALL 2020

Should You Get a Flu Shot This Year? YES, DEFINITELY!

Flu season is here and the COVID-19 pandemic is still active, so Natividad's medical experts are emphasizing that it's more important than ever to get the flu shot this year.

Why? The flu (influenza) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses that can cause hospitalization and even death; getting both at the same time is likely to be especially dangerous. While scientists are still working on a vaccination for COVID-19, we have a vaccine against seasonal flu which is safe and effective.

"In recent decades, the flu shot has proven to be the most effective way to decrease serious illness," said Dr. Sundeeep Gupta, family medicine physician at Natividad Medical Group. "The vaccine is safe and does not cause the flu."

COVID-19 and the flu have similar symptoms, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, sore throat and runny nose. So, anyone having any of these symptoms this year should be tested to rule out COVID-19. Depending on the test, results can take some time. [\(cont. on page 7\)](#)

Natividad COVID-19 Hotline (831) 772-7365

Do you have questions about COVID-19 or think you need to get tested? If you have symptoms like cough and fever, call us and speak with a bilingual nurse to find out what to do next.



COVID-19 Survivor Stories: FIGHTING FOR LIFE

COVID-19 affects different people differently. For some, its symptoms may be mild. But for two patients treated at Natividad, the road to survival was agonizing and far from certain.

Anastacio Cruz, 59, was gravely ill. The first time Dr. Tony Medawar, medical director of Pulmonary and Critical Care at Natividad, saw Cruz, he remembered, “I ran downstairs, took one look at him and knew it would be a very long road.”

While Cruz’s age put him at a slightly higher risk for complications due to COVID-19, he had no medical conditions which could make his fight with the disease even more difficult. Cruz fought through extremely low blood pressure, secondary lung infections and a lung collapse. Dr. Medawar described Cruz as one of the most determined patients he has had. “I don’t know that many people could have overcome what he did.”

Cruz’s daughter, Isela, called the hospital regularly to check on him. They were the first family to use Natividad’s Virtual Visit program, which helps patients connect with their loved ones by video conferencing. His daughter said the nurses would hold the camera up so they could see his face. “They’d show us his whole body, the room and the medical equipment. Then, they’d put the tablet up to his ear,” she said. “My mom, siblings and I would tell him to



Anastacio Cruz

keep fighting and believing that God would help him get through this.”

After 10 weeks in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Cruz was transferred to Natividad’s Acute Rehabilitation Center. He spent three weeks exercising with Natividad’s therapists and working on developing mobility and strength. After almost three months in the hospital, Cruz was discharged home. His family was there to greet him at the door. While Cruz no longer has COVID-19, it will take time to recover from its effects on his body.

“I don’t wish this on anyone. It is very hard. I suffered a lot. But, thank God, I am getting stronger,” Cruz said. “I have a wonderful family. They were

always there. I just want to hug my family — hug them very tight.”

Aurora Vazquez, 44, had some mild upper respiratory symptoms, and as others have reported with COVID-19, she began to feel better. But three days after she thought she was over it, the symptoms came back, only stronger. She started coughing and experiencing shortness of breath.

Vasquez was diagnosed with COVID-19 and admitted to the ICU. There, she was put into a coma and placed on a ventilator for 24 days. Though she was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes during her hospitalization, she previously had no disease symptoms. Conditions like diabetes, and other underlying





Aurora Vazquez



Your Health Can't Wait

Health care providers like Natividad are open and safe for care and any emergency. We are taking steps to ensure that you and our staff stay healthy during a visit. During the pandemic, it's especially important that you keep taking care of yourself. If you have any pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, make sure to see your doctor regularly and continue your medical treatment.



IF YOU HAVE A SEVERE INJURY, TROUBLE BREATHING, CHEST PAIN OR CONFUSION, CALL 911 OR GET EMERGENCY CARE IMMEDIATELY

health issues such as lung, kidney or heart disease, can make people more susceptible to the virus.

"Ms. Vazquez was extremely sick," Dr. Medawar said. "At one point, we had to put her in a special bed so we could place her on her stomach to keep her body oxygenated. It's incredible what she had to endure and that she came out of this and made a recovery."

Like Cruz, Vasquez was also moved to the Acute Rehabilitation Center so she could regain as much mobility and independence as possible after her illness. She worked with physical therapists to relearn daily living activities, such as standing and showering. Doctors are hopeful she will make a full recovery.

"I am much better," she said. "Now, I can walk around. They gave me books and puzzles. I got to talk on the phone, FaceTime and text with my family. My family came to visit at my window, and I remember I was in tears the first time I saw them."

Vazquez said she also wants people to know that COVID-19 is not a hoax. "I was so scared in the beginning, but Natividad gave me my life back. Everyone did everything they could to save me. And now, I am COVID-free."

CONGRATULATIONS

Natividad Sam Karas Acute Rehabilitation Center and our team for their dedication to excellence!

- ★ **RANKED #1** for Quality and Outcomes for Acute Rehabilitation Units by Kindred for 2019
- ★ **RANKED #2** Nationally for Overall Quality and Outcomes for Acute Rehabilitation Units by UDS for 2019
- ★ **TOP 10%** of Acute Rehabilitation Units in the Country by UDS – Three Years in a Row



8 Things You Can Do to STAY HEALTHY & BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

- 1 Get your flu shot now!** Read the article on page 1 and find out why this year it's more important than ever to get your flu shot.
- 2 Make sure you're current on other vaccinations.** Vaccines are safe and effective in avoiding outbreaks of preventable diseases. Vaccines have greatly reduced infectious diseases that once regularly harmed or killed many infants, children and adults. Germs that cause vaccine-preventable diseases still exist and can be spread to people who are not protected by vaccines. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules or talk to your doctor.
- 3 Get urgent care if you need it.** Natividad is open and safe for any emergency. People suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 are treated in areas separate from other patients, and the hospital has thorough cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Not seeing a doctor can make you sicker or even threaten your life.
- 4 Maintain your regular health routines.** If it feels safer to you, Natividad Medical Group, Natividad Cardiology Clinic, and other medical providers offer phone and video visits with doctors and health care providers. Call us to make an appointment.
 - **D'ARRIGO FAMILY SPECIALTY SERVICES (831) 755-4156**
 - **NATIVIDAD MEDICAL GROUP (831) 759-0674**
 - **CARDIOLOGY CLINIC (831) 796-1630**
- 5 Take care of your heart.** If you have heart disease, you are at higher risk for significant complications if you contract COVID-19. It's vital that you take COVID-19 precautions, continue your medical treatment as directed and stay in close contact with your doctor.
- 6 Manage your diabetes.** Diabetes increases the risk that you could experience more significant complications when infected with any virus, including COVID-19. Fortunately, your risk is much lower if your diabetes is well-managed. That makes it more critical than ever to care for yourself and maintain healthy blood sugar levels.
- 7 Limit alcoholic beverages to one per day.** Yes, that's the latest recommendation from health experts for both men and women. It's based on research that illustrates links between drinking habits and all causes of death, including heart disease, cancer and car accidents.
- 8 Don't neglect your mental health.** California Peer-Run Warm Line is a 24/7 service that provides free non-emergency emotional support for anxiety, panic, depression, finances, and alcohol and drug use. You can speak with an English- or Spanish-speaking counselor at (855) 845-7415.

53%

That's the percentage of people in our area that the Food Bank for Monterey County is serving. And half are children. If you need access to healthy food, please ask for help.

FOOD BANK FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

(831) 758-1523 or
www.foodbankformontereycounty.org

CALFRESH FOOD STAMPS

(877) 410-8823 or
www.getcalfresh.org

MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Breakfast & lunch for kids
www.montereycoe.org

DOROTHY'S PLACE

Free meals
(831) 757-3838

MEALS ON WHEELS

Delivers to seniors
(831) 758-6325



Call 211 to Get Help With:

- Supplemental food and nutrition programs
- Shelter and housing options and utilities assistance
- Health care and flu vaccination locations
- Addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs
- A safe, confidential path out of physical and/or emotional abuse



Should You Stay In or Should You Go Out?

“You wear a mask to protect me, and I wear a mask to protect you.”



Most of us crave the social connection that comes from getting together with our friends and family. And there are many benefits from social connection. Since Monterey County issued its COVID-19 Shelter in Place Order in March, we have all had to make decisions about social contact without really knowing the extent of the risk to ourselves and our loved ones.

“Gatherings of groups are one of the main reasons Monterey County residents are getting sick from COVID-19,” said Natividad Chief of Quality Dr. Chad Harris. “Young people can get COVID-19 without any symptoms, which frequently happens after seeing friends. They then take it home to their family members who are older or have other health conditions and are much higher risk of becoming extremely sick and possibly dying.”

If we can all make an effort to understand the COVID-19 transmission risk of the activities in our lives — and make choices to minimize the risk and reduce the spread of infection — we’ll be better able to get back to a more normal life.

Remember that people can be contagious before they have a fever or cough, while other people can have no symptoms ever but still have the disease. Shorter gatherings outdoors, 6 feet apart while wearing masks, are the safest option. On the other hand, large indoor crowds in poorly ventilated rooms and when you or other people are not wearing masks puts you at the highest risk for getting or spreading COVID-19.

There are still many things we don’t know about COVID-19. If you or anyone you live with or have close contact with is in a high-risk group, be sure to use extra caution.

“Remember that low-risk doesn’t mean risk-free,” Dr. Harris said. “The most effective way to prevent COVID-19 continues to be staying home and avoiding contact with people who don’t live with you.”

If you have questions about how you can stay safe, call our COVID-19 hotline at (831) 772-7365 and speak with a Spanish- or English-speaking nurse.

What’s Your Level of Risk?

Type and level of group activity	LOW OCCUPANCY			HIGH OCCUPANCY		
	Outdoors & well-ventilated	Indoors & well-ventilated	Poorly-ventilated	Outdoors & well-ventilated	Indoors & well-ventilated	Poorly-ventilated
Wearing face coverings, short contact time						
Silent	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MODERATE
Speaking	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MODERATE
Shouting, Singing	LOW	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
Wearing face coverings, prolonged contact time						
Silent	LOW	LOW	MODERATE	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Speaking	LOW	LOW-MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW-MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
Shouting, Singing	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
No face coverings, short contact time						
Silent	LOW	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
Speaking	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
Shouting, Singing	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
No face coverings, prolonged contact time						
Silent	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
Speaking	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Shouting, Singing	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

This chart, from a study published in the BMJ (a British medical journal) illustrates how different factors affect the risk of transmitting COVID-19. (Source: BMJ 2020;370:m3223)

Caldo Tlalpeño

(Soup of the Land)

Adapted by Dr. Britt Rios-Ellis, Natividad Member Board of Trustees and CSUMB Founding Dean of Health Sciences and Human Services

This soup comes from a small municipality just outside Mexico City named Tlalpan, which means “on the land” in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. Sometimes referred to as Mexico’s version of Thailand’s Tom Yum, this spicy Mexican soup is healthy beyond comparison and will warm even the coldest soul on a stormy night. It is the favorite dish of my *tia* Maria Eugenia and after trying it for the first time, it quickly became mine as well! *¡Es delicioso y muy nutritivo!*

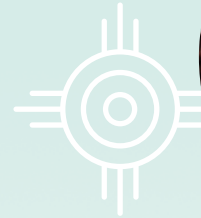
INGREDIENTS (serves 4-6)

- 2 large chicken breasts (about 1 pound)
- 1 teaspoon total of mixed basil, marjoram and thyme
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large white onion, diced
- 2 large carrots, julienne cut (cut like matchsticks)
- 2 large zucchinis, julienne cut
- 1 can of garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 1-2 canned chipotle chili in adobo, minced (use more if you like it extra spicy)
- 1 large ripe avocado, sliced
- 1 large lime, cut in small wedges
- 8 ounces of *queso fresco*, broken into small pieces
- 1/4 head of cabbage, shredded (to make it extra healthy!)
- Salt

DIRECTIONS

- Season the chicken with the basil, marjoram and thyme. Place chicken in a large saucepan and add water about 1/2 inch above the chicken. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to medium and simmer for 15 minutes or until cooked through
- Carefully remove the meat and set aside to cool, reserving the broth for the soup
- In a larger soup pot, cook the onion in olive oil over medium-high heat, stirring until nearly browned
- Stir in the carrots and zucchini, and cook the mixture for 8-10 minutes or until vegetables are slightly tender
- Add garlic to the vegetables and cook for 1 minute
- Shred the chicken and add it to the soup pot, along with the reserved broth
- Add the rinsed garbanzo beans, the chili and cilantro
- Bring the soup to a boil then reduce the heat to keep warm or serve immediately
- Garnish with avocado, *queso fresco*, cabbage and a squeeze of lime, then salt to taste

ENJOY this delicious soup!



NATIVIDAD RECOGNIZED BY NEWSWEEK
**BEST MATERNITY
HOSPITALS 2020**

To earn a spot on the prestigious list, organizations must meet tough maternity care standards, including having low rates of early elective deliveries, C-sections among low-risk mothers and episiotomies.

Should You Get a Flu Shot This Year? (cont. from page 1)

“This year is different than any other year in history, with anticipated dual epidemics of a severe respiratory illness. Because the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are so similar, doctors won’t know which you have without testing for either or both,” cautioned Dr. Gupta, a medical epidemiologist who worked on international disease control programs with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for more than a decade.

“While you wait for your test results, you will want to isolate yourself to avoid risking spreading COVID-19 to your family or others with whom you live,” Dr. Gupta said. “In addition, those you live with will want to quarantine themselves (meaning they must stay home from work and other activities) even if they do not have symptoms, to avoid unknowingly spreading COVID-19 further, until we know your results. The flu vaccine not only helps prevent influenza, but also this potentially unnecessary cycle of quarantine for yourself and your household members.”

While our community is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals are also at risk of filling up if they must take in flu patients in addition to coronavirus patients. This means that it’s more urgent and important than ever that people follow the Natividad and the CDC recommendation to get the flu shot. “If more people get the flu shot and continue to follow COVID-19 precautions, it’s more likely our health care systems won’t be overwhelmed,” said Natividad Chief Medical Officer Dr. Craig Walls.

According to the CDC, about 26 million people in the U.S. get sick from the flu every year. The CDC recommends that children as young as 6 months old and adults of any age get vaccinated against the flu. Flu shots are also recommended and approved for pregnant women and people with certain chronic health conditions. The CDC recommends getting the vaccine as early as possible (September or October); before flu season typically gets into full swing. It takes about two weeks for your body to build antibodies to this year’s influenza viruses. But it’s never too late.

“The best thing everyone can do right now is to get a flu shot and continue to follow expert advice about preventing COVID-19: wear a mask and stay 6 feet away from others when you’re in public or around people from outside your household. Also, be sure to wash your hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol often — especially before eating, and don’t touch your eyes, nose and mouth unless you’ve just washed your hands,” Dr. Walls said. “Avoiding the flu and COVID-19 this winter will help keep you and your family healthy — and out of quarantine.”

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



Getting a Flu Shot is Worth the Trip!

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the medical experts at Natividad strongly encourage you and your entire family to get the flu shot. In fact, everyone over 6 months old should get one! Flu shots are free with most insurance, just be sure to bring your photo ID and insurance info with you. Vaccinations are available at your primary care doctor during appointments or at local clinics, through VNA or you can walk-in to pharmacies throughout the area. Monterey County Health Department is offering free flu vaccine walk-in and drive-thru clinics. No insurance card or ID needed. Visit www.mtyhd.org for locations, times and dates. CVS and Costco are also taking online appointments. Natividad Medical Group, the family practice center at Natividad, is taking new patients of all ages. Call (831) 759-0674 to make an appointment.

Need Health Insurance?

Covered California, the marketplace for private health insurance that offers discounted plans. Visit www.coveredca.com or call (800) 300-1506.

Medi-Cal, the state’s free or low-cost health insurance for low-income Californians. Visit www.medi-cal.ca.gov or call (866) 323-1953.

Medicare, the federal health insurance program for people 65 and over or disabled. Visit www.medicare.gov or call (800) 633-4227.

Reaching Our Diverse Community

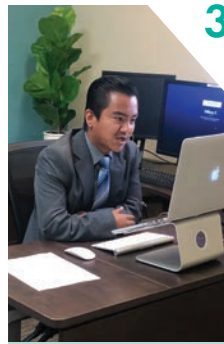
1 COVID-19 Education on the Job
Natividad partnered with Grower-Shipper Association and other local area hospitals to provide community education to local agricultural workers. Natividad's Family Medicine residents, registered nurses, and faculty went directly to the fields to provide in-person presentations in Spanish and English. Natividad Foundation provided Indigenous Interpreting+® interpreters to help. To date, the program has been presented to more than 5,000 agricultural workers.



2 Distributing Free PPE
We sent non-medical grade surgical and N95 masks to local agricultural workers so they could work more safely in conditions where they can't physically distance from others. Natividad Foundation also bought and donated 5,000 high-quality washable, reusable face coverings for ag workers. One of our Family Medicine residents, Dr. Anne Irvine, secured a donation of 40,000 reusable masks from an apron maker in Southern California and distributed the masks across our tri-county area.



3 PSAs in English, Spanish, and Indigenous Languages
We have developed public service announcements about coronavirus and the Shelter in Place Order in English and Spanish. Monterey County is home to an estimated 30,000 people who speak indigenous languages of Mexico. In partnership with Natividad Foundation, we created videos in some of the most commonly spoken indigenous languages in our area: Triqui, Zapoteco and Mixteco.



4 Partnering to Keep the Community Safe
Natividad has a team of medical experts and communicators who are part of MC-COA, a community activist coalition. Made up of dozens of local health care experts, legal advisers and agricultural leaders, the committee meets regularly to troubleshoot keeping our local ag workers safe.



You Help Us Provide Excellent Care



Thank you to the donors of Natividad Foundation for strengthening Natividad. Thanks to your generous financial support, you have helped provide our patients and community with:

- iPads to connect patients with their families (see the story on page 2)
- 5,000 reusable, washable masks for local essential agricultural workers (read more above)
- Equipment and technology for our isolation units so we can provide safe, excellent care for COVID-19 patients

- A medical tent to safely treat our patients in a separate area from our suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients
- Pop-up drive-thru COVID-19 testing sites
- And much more!

To give to Natividad Foundation's COVID-19 Response & Resiliency Fund, visit natividadfoundation.org/donate or call (831) 755-4187