

# INSPIRING HEALTHY LIVES

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## Shark Bite Survivor Grateful for Good Luck and Great Care

### Monterey Family Thanks Natividad Staff with Homemade Cookies

"The shark bite was unlucky. But after that, I have just had so much good luck," said Steve Bruemmer, 62, who was saved by bystanders after being bit by a 15-foot great white shark in Pacific Grove. Following the harrowing rescue, Steve was rushed by ambulance to the Natividad Trauma Center, where trauma experts are ready to care for the most critically and severely injured, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Upon arrival, Natividad's trauma team immediately brought Steve to the operating room, where they controlled the bleeding, gave him a blood transfusion of 28 units (pints) of blood, and trauma surgeons Dr. Kuong Ngann and Dr. Nicholas Rottler washed and repaired the lacerations. His injuries came within millimeters of hitting a major artery. The operation lasted over two hours and included several hundred stitches. Two days following the incident, Orthopedic Trauma and Joint Surgeon Dr. Kartheek Reddy operated on Steve's legs, which were severely damaged.

Dr. Alexander Di Stante, Natividad Trauma Medical Director and Chief of Surgery said, "Mr. Bruemmer was

lucky to have survived his injuries. The real heroes of this story are the paddleboarders who swam toward the danger as well as the first responders and good Samaritans on the beach. I am proud of our EMS and trauma team for delivering the care necessary to save his life."

One week after he came to Natividad Trauma Center, Steve was transferred to the Sam Karas Acute Rehabilitation Center at Natividad where he recovered and received two weeks of intensive occupational and physical therapy. To thank Natividad staff for saving his life, Steve's family surprised everyone with beautiful cookies handmade by Steve's sister-in-law, Kirsten Matsumoto. Steve's wife, Dr. Brita Bruemmer brought the cookies to a dozen departments and well over 100 people who were involved with his care.

"We will be forever grateful to everyone who participated in Steve's rescue and care," said Dr. Brita Bruemmer. "We appreciate the Trauma Service and everyone else who works at Natividad. The compassionate and professional care has been outstanding."

For more information about Natividad's Trauma Center:  
[natividad.com/trauma-center](https://natividad.com/trauma-center)



“The fact that Natividad has a Trauma Center was a lifesaver.”

— Steve Bruemmer  
Shark Bite Survivor



Watch Steve's story



Watch KSBW's interview  
with Trauma Surgeon  
Dr. Nicholas Rottler

  
**Natividad**<sup>®</sup>  
Inspiring healthy lives

# Checkups You Need at Every Age

## Your Essential Guide to Preventative Health Care

Do you know how often your blood pressure should be checked? When should you get a general health checkup? How often do you need to get cancer screenings?

Most of us might not know these answers. When to see your doctor and the type of care you need to stay healthy also changes as we age. However, we can all benefit from regular health and wellness care. Even the healthiest among us should see a doctor regularly.

“If we’re feeling fine, it’s easy to go through our lives and neglect some more routine health checks,” said Dr. Minerva Perez-Lopez, a family doctor with Natividad Medical Group. “But basic check-ins with your doctor can help you identify conditions in their early stages when they’re easier to address. Early intervention can be a lifesaver.”

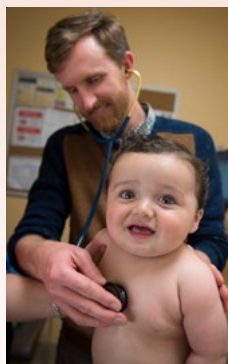


See the next page to find a simple guide to preventative care that answers:

- What kind of health monitoring do I need?
- When do I need it?
- How often do I need it?

Medical recommendations differ for different age groups. If you don’t currently see a private practice doctor, nurse practitioner, clinic, or physician’s assistant, now is a good time to find one. Insurance typically covers most preventative care. This chart is meant to be a baseline for reference and does not substitute for your doctor’s advice. Be sure to talk with your doctor about their recommendation for you. You may have a specific condition that requires a different approach or more frequent care.

## WELL CHILD VISITS



Newborns through teenagers should see their doctor regularly to stay healthy. Your pediatrician may recommend a slightly different schedule. Your child will receive a variety of screenings, immunizations and preventative tests throughout their childhood. Visits are also a great opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

### Newborns

A few days after birth

### Babies and toddlers

2 weeks  
2 months  
4 months  
6 months  
9 months  
12 months  
18 months  
21 to 24 months

### Preschool and school age children

3 years  
4 to 5 years  
5 to 6 years  
6 to 8 years  
8 to 10 years  
10 to 12 years

### Teens

Every 1 to 2 years, based on your child’s doctor’s or nurse practitioner’s advice

Natividad Medical Group’s bilingual doctors and practitioners provide comprehensive care for the entire family. Now accepting new patients: (831) 759-0674

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL ADULTS 18+

Flu shot (annual) | Blood pressure screening (annual) | Dental exam and cleaning (2X per year) | Eye exam (every 2 years)  
Tetanus-Diphtheria booster (every 10 years) | Keep current with recommended COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters

### MALES

### FEMALES

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

18 to  
39 yrs

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Cervical cancer screening (every 3 years for ages 18 to 29 and every 3 to 5 years for ages 30 to 39)

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

40 to  
44 yrs

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Cervical cancer screening (every 3 to 5 years)

Optional mammogram (initiation and frequency based on individual risk)

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

First colorectal cancer screening at 45  
(follow-up frequency based on individual risk and type of test)

45 to  
49 yrs

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Cervical cancer screening (every 3 to 5 years)

First colorectal cancer screening at 45  
(follow-up frequency based on individual risk and type of test)

First mammogram (optional before 50, based on individual risk;  
then every 1 to 2 years based on individual risk)

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Diabetes screening (every year)

Lung cancer screening for those who have a 20 pack/year  
smoking history and currently smoke OR who have quit within  
the past 15 years (every year until 15 years without smoking)

50 to  
64 yrs

General Wellness Checkup (every 3 to 5 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Diabetes screening (every year)

Cervical cancer screening (every 3 to 5 years)

Mammogram (every 1 to 2 years based on individual risk)

Lung cancer screening for those who have a 20 pack/year smoking  
history and currently smoke OR who have quit within the past 15 years  
(every year until 15 years without smoking)

General Wellness Checkup (every 1 to 2 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Diabetes screening (every year)

Lung cancer screening for those who have a 20 pack/year  
smoking history and currently smoke OR who have quit within  
the past 15 years (every year until 15 years without smoking)

65 to  
69 yrs

General Wellness Checkup (every 1 to 2 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Diabetes screening (every year)

Cervical cancer screening only for those with a history of abnormal  
pap smear results

Mammogram (every 1 to 2 years based on individual risk)

Lung cancer screening for those who have a 20 pack/year smoking  
history and currently smoke OR who have quit within the past 15 years  
(every year until 15 years without smoking)

General Wellness Checkup (every 1 to 2 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Diabetes screening (every year until 75 years old)

Lung cancer screening for those who have a 20 pack/year  
smoking history and currently smoke OR who have quit within  
the past 15 years (every year until 15 years without smoking)

70+  
yrs

General Wellness Checkup (every 1 to 2 years)

- Individual risk assessment & checks
- Cholesterol levels
- Check height & weight

Diabetes screening (every year until 75 years old)

Cervical cancer screening only for those with a history of abnormal  
pap smear results

Mammogram (every 1 to 2 years until 74 based on individual risk)

Lung cancer screening for those who have a 20 pack/year smoking  
history and currently smoke OR who have quit within the past 15 years  
(every year until 15 years without smoking)



# HOW ELECTIVE SURGERIES CHANGE LIVES

When many of us think of elective surgeries, we probably think of procedures that are more “nice to have” (like cosmetic surgery) than “need to have.” But an elective surgery is any type of surgery that doesn’t address a life-threatening problem. For example, if someone has a painful hernia or needs a joint repair, those conditions can have a negative effect on quality of life. However, they are considered elective surgeries.

Natividad’s quality team carefully developed safety precautions to protect our patient’s health. The hospital’s approach has paid off with several national safety recognitions in recent years.

“Natividad provides the highest quality care and top-rated safety,” said CEO Dr. Chad Harris. “Our doctors, nurses and clinical teams prioritize patients and their safety, and our diligence pays off.”



## King City Resident Gets an Overdue Adventure

Andrew Pedersen — friends call him “Andy” — is a grandpa. He and his wife Christine have two sons and three grandchildren, including a joyful granddaughter named Maizy.

Before his hip surgery, the Pedersen family made plans to visit the new Monterey Zoo in Salinas. Maizy was excited to explore and see the wild animals. Once there, Andy could not walk. Rather than spoil the outing, Andy found a bench and insisted the family go on without him. “They found me a spot by the lions,” he explained. “I stayed there all day, wanting so badly to be able to join my family and see my granddaughter experience the zoo for the first time.”

Even with his condition, Andy was always active playing city league softball, basketball with his sons, and taking active vacations with his wife, Christine. Professionally, Andy worked as a heavy equipment operator, climbing up nine feet to get into a bulldozer, loader and excavator. Over time, the disease continued to progress, making work and leisure much more difficult. While the condition was not a surprise, the sudden inability to walk that day at the zoo was a devastating development.

As soon as he got home from the zoo, Andy made a doctor’s appointment — and a list. He wrote down all the things he wanted to be able to do again. He was going to take his wife on an anniversary trip, where he would cook her breakfast and walk her through rows of antique stores. He was going to play a pick-up game of basketball with his sons again. He was going to swing a golf club. And, at the top of his list, he was going to walk his granddaughter through the zoo.

“What we’re seeing now are people who’ve been putting off their surgeries for two years or longer. That’s a long time to live in pain. The pandemic has really taken a toll on quality of life for many people suffering from limited function and debilitating damage to their joints.”

— Dr. Kartheek Reddy  
Orthopedic Surgeon



Andy was able to enjoy the Monterey Zoo with his granddaughter after his hip replacements.

## Leaning on His Doctors

Andy has been a patient at Natividad Medical Group, the hospital's family care practice, since 1999. He explained how much he trusts his longtime family medicine doctor, Dr. Marc Tunzi. They have a unique relationship, having worked through a few different health conditions. "He knows how I am," Andy laughed. "He knows that I've gotten frustrated with hip doctors before and walked out of their offices. They weren't understanding and had no solution."

During his appointment with Dr. Tunzi, Andy told him everything. "Dr. Tunzi looked at me and said, 'Let me send a referral to our specialist doctors at Natividad, and I'll actually talk to them, too. I think we can do this right here.'"

Dr. Tunzi referred him to his colleague Dr. Kartheek Reddy, an orthopedic traumatology and adult reconstructive surgeon. After tests found zero cartilage left in his hips, Dr. Reddy said he would need to have two complete hip replacements.

Dr. Reddy made sure Andy was in optimal health before the surgery. Within a month of his first orthopedic visit, Dr. Reddy and Andy's care team of doctors cleared him for the operation that would help him walk again.

## Back on His Feet

Later that year, Andy had his second surgery with Dr. Reddy to replace his left hip. Before his elective surgery, Andrew's hip pain — the result of a genetic condition — was intense. He could only walk about 50 steps without resting. "Now, I'm able to walk anywhere and everywhere without pain. It's life changing. I use that term a lot when I'm telling people about my experience. Natividad has made a huge difference."

"Both of Andy's surgeries were done through the minimally invasive, anterior approach," explained Dr. Reddy. "The total hip arthroplasty provides a faster recovery and is my preferred approach."

After his second surgery, Andy and Christine took their family back to the Monterey Zoo. This time, Andy didn't miss a minute. He walked with his granddaughter, swinging her around and sharing in the experience. His years of dealing with pain and limited mobility from his hip condition are over, and Andy isn't looking back. Andy's wife Christine added, "We are truly lucky. Andy stands tall again and is the happy-go-lucky guy I married."

For more information about joint replacement:  
[natividad.com/darrigo](https://natividad.com/darrigo)



Dr. Kartheek Reddy is an orthopedic traumatology, joint replacement and adult reconstructive surgeon at D'Arrigo Family Specialty Services. For an appointment, ask your doctor for a referral or call (831) 755-4156.



Dr. Marc Tunzi is Chief of Staff, a family doctor and on faculty at Natividad. He is accepting new patients of all ages at Natividad Medical Group at (831) 759-0674.

## Natividad Is KEEPING YOU SAFE DURING COVID-19

- Prescreening and testing patients for COVID-19
- Visitor restrictions, including requirement for vaccination or proof of negative test
- Masking requirements and physical distancing
- Separation and isolation of COVID-19 patients
- Rigorous cleaning and disinfection protocols
- All Natividad staff are vaccinated against COVID-19 and up-to-date on boosters
- Telehealth appointments available with some providers





# Bountiful, Fresh & Healthy

Natividad Certified Farmers' Market Offers Fresh Produce from Local Farmers



Wednesdays,  
11:00 am to 3:30 pm,  
May through October



## Warm Summer Squash Salad

We are fortunate to live in one of the nation's richest agricultural regions. We love bringing all that delicious produce at its peak to our Farmers' Market every week during spring, summer and fall. Now is a great time for the tastiest summer squash. Whether you find it at our market or have your own backyard bumper crop, we think you'll enjoy this simple, satisfying recipe from local chef, Brandon Miller.



Brandon Miller  
Chef Owner Paella, LLC  
paellallc.com

- 3 lbs. assorted zucchini or other summer squash
  - 1/4 cup sliced natural almonds
  - 1 tablespoon olive oil
  - 2/3 cup Parmesan cheese, shaved
  - Salt and pepper to taste
1. Cut the ends off the squash and grate, zoodle, or cut in julienne
  2. Warm oil in sauté pan with almonds. When almonds are lightly browned, add squash and remove from heat
  3. Toss the squash with almonds and oil, season with salt and pepper and place in serving dish
  4. Top with cheese and serve

## Better Medical Coverage NOW AVAILABLE FOR ADULTS 50+

Medi-Cal provides free or low-cost health care to people who qualify. If you're age 50 or older, you may be eligible for full scope medical benefits, regardless of immigration status.



Learn more:  
[natividad.com/resources](https://natividad.com/resources)

## A Day in the Life of ER Doc Val Vigil, MD



Ever wondered what it's like to be an emergency medicine doctor (and a mom)? Early days, fast pace, COVID-19, coffee, overdoses, accidents, and even costume-making.



Scan the QR code to follow Dr. Vigil through her day.

# A LONG, HARD JOURNEY BACK TO LIFE

Castroville Resident, Ruth Juarez, Survived COVID-19



December of 2020 was the tenth month of the COVID-19 pandemic, and vaccines were not yet available. Ruth Juarez worked as a Certified Nurse's Aide (CNA) at Natividad, where she'd been for two years. On December 10, she called in sick. She was exhausted and wanted to ensure she didn't infect anyone else if she was contagious.

Two days later, Ruth had a terrible cough, chest pain and fever. She drove from her home in Castroville to the Natividad Emergency Department, where she tested positive for COVID-19 and was admitted to the hospital.

By the time Ruth got to her room she was feeling worse by the minute. Her heart was racing, and her oxygen levels were dropping quickly. Ruth knew how devastating COVID could be, and she was scared.

As terrible as she felt, she will never forget the kindness of her nurse, Michael Ronquillo. "He brought me breakfast, but I refused to eat. Then, he asked me if he could get me anything. Some juice or applesauce? I said, 'No. I want a Jamba Juice.' He giggled good-naturedly and reminded me that there's no Jamba Juice at the hospital."

## Fading to Black

Soon, Ruth was so tired that she couldn't talk anymore. She felt like her life was slipping away, and she remembers, "I started texting my goodbyes to my family. It was so difficult." And then, in walked Michael with a Jamba Juice. "I was so touched. I think he probably thought of it as a goodbye gift."

Because she couldn't breathe well, the medical team positioned Ruth face down, a position called proning that helps with breathing. "Then everything went black," she said.

Ruth didn't regain consciousness until two months later. During that time, she was transferred to a long-term acute care hospital and was connected to a breathing tube, a feeding tube, and a PICC (peripherally inserted central catheter) line. When she awoke in this unfamiliar environment unable to speak, she was disoriented and confused.

The medical staff at the acute care facility didn't have high hopes for Ruth's recovery. They were trying to prepare her

family for what could happen, and that she might not live, or if she did, she may be severely disabled for the rest of her life. However, Ruth remembers those conversations and said her unknown future strengthened her will to regain her health and return to her family.

## An Unexpected Recovery

"Ruth is a miracle case. I didn't think she was going to make it," said Dr. Tony Medawar, medical director of Pulmonary and Critical Care. "Her family was amazing, especially her son Diego. His courage and determination definitely comes from her."

As Ruth recovered, she requested a transfer to Natividad's Sam Karas Acute Rehabilitation Center. Once there, she was excited to see familiar faces. Ruth worked with Physical Therapist Eric Walberg, who kept her motivated through physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy. "He got me walking again," she said. "That was the greatest feeling!"

The day before Ruth was discharged from the hospital, Nurse Michael came into her room. She recognized him, but he didn't recognize her at first. When he checked her chart and saw her name, he was shocked. "Ruth?" he said. "Ruth Juarez?" he said tearfully. "I was so worried. I prayed for you. You are definitely a miracle! Nobody thought you would make it."

"But I'm here," she said.

"Yes, yes, you are," said Michael.

## More Healing to Come

Ruth's recovery is still in progress. She has lingering shortness of breath and gets fatigued quickly. But she is on the mend. Ruth feels so fortunate to have had the devoted support of her family, her church community, and her co-workers at Natividad. Ruth said she is thrilled that she became a grandma this year.

"Life can change so fast," said Ruth. "I encourage everyone to get their COVID shot. Wear your mask. Use sanitizer. COVID is not your friend!"

For more information about COVID-19: [natividad.com/covid-19-resources](https://natividad.com/covid-19-resources)



# Now You Can Protect Your Young Kids from COVID-19 with Safe and Effective Vaccines



Dr. Reiko Sakai and husband Dr. Ian McDaniels (also of Natividad) with Baby Kenji.

We finally have FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines for young children! Recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and Natividad pediatricians, these vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are kid-sized doses and still provide similar protection as the adult version. You should know that during testing, no significant safety concerns were seen. And at this point, millions of children over age 5 have safely received a COVID-19 vaccine.

**"We were so relieved to get our 13-month-old son, Kenji, vaccinated! He recently had COVID-19 (thankfully, a mild case), but we signed him up as soon as he completed quarantine. We were eager to get it done as soon as possible to maximize his protection. He tolerated the shot very well and had no side effects."**



And how about you? Are you current on your COVID-19 vaccinations? Keeping up with the recommended schedule of vaccinations is one of the most important ways to help protect you from COVID-19. We've included a handy reference schedule, to the right, by vaccine type and age group. If you are severely immunocompromised, a different schedule may be recommended. Please consult your doctor.

Find vaccine availability near you:  
[myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) | [montereycountyvaccines.com](https://montereycountyvaccines.com)

Content and source information updated August 17, 2022.  
As we continue to study COVID-19, medical advice may change.  
Visit [natividad.com/covid-19](https://natividad.com/covid-19) or [cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov) for more info. Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about getting vaccinated.

## PFIZER-BIONTECH

6 months to 4 years	<b>3-shot series:</b> 2 doses, 3 weeks apart, followed by a 3rd at least 2 months later
	<b>Dosage:</b> one-tenth
	<b>Booster?</b> Not at this time
5 to 11 years	<b>2-shot series:</b> 2 doses, 3 weeks apart
	<b>Dosage:</b> one-third
	<b>Booster?</b> Yes, at least 5 months after second shot
12 to 17 years	<b>2-shot series:</b> 2 doses, 3 weeks apart
	<b>Dosage:</b> equal
	<b>Booster?</b> Yes, at least 5 months after second shot

## MODERNA

6 months to 5 years	<b>2-shot series:</b> 2 doses, 4 weeks apart
	<b>Dosage:</b> one-quarter
	<b>Booster?</b> Not at this time
6 to 11 years	<b>2-shot series:</b> 2 doses, 4 weeks apart
	<b>Dosage:</b> one-half
	<b>Booster?</b> Not at this time
12 to 17 years	<b>2-shot series:</b> 2 doses, 4 weeks apart
	<b>Dosage:</b> equal
	<b>Booster?</b> Not at this time