



mercy care

HEALTH MATTERS

Spring/Summer 2022

Helpful information and resources on COVID-19

- COVID 19-vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19 and limiting the spread of the virus that causes it.
- There is no charge to you for COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccines.
- Everyone ages 5 and older can get vaccinated (5 and older for the Pfizer vaccine, 18 and older for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines).

Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Visit www.azhealth.gov/findvaccine or call **1-844-542-8201**.

What does “fully vaccinated” mean?

- Two weeks after the second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine

Am I safe once I get vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19. Even after you are fully vaccinated, it’s still recommended to wear a mask in public, social distance at least 6 feet in public and wash your hands often.

Can I get transportation to my COVID-19 vaccination appointment?

Yes. Once you’ve scheduled your vaccine appointment, call Member Services to schedule transportation. Try to give at least three days’ notice before your transportation needs. For ACC members, call **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**. For RBHA members, call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY/TDD 711)**.

Sources: Arizona Department of Health Services; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Smartphones at no cost to you

You may be able to get cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you through the federal government's Lifeline program. Call Mercy Care Member Services at **602-263-3000** or toll-free at **1-800-624-3879 (TTY 711)** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program. You will have to show proof of eligibility to enroll into the Lifeline phone program.

Assurance Wireless Lifeline service includes:

- Data each month
- Unlimited text messages
- Voice minutes each month
- Android smartphone

Extra Mercy Care benefits include:

- Health tips and reminders by text
- Calls to Member Services that don't count against your monthly minutes

For more information, call Mercy Care Member Services at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)** or go to **www.MercyCareAZ.org** and select "For Members," then select "Member Resources."

For a behavioral health crisis

Mercy Care members can call the Behavioral Health Crisis Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Central Arizona

- Maricopa County: **1-800-631-1314** or **602-222-9444 (TTY/TDD 1-800-327-9254 or 602-274-3360)**
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: **1-855-331-6432**
- Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities: **1-800-259-3449**
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: **480-461-8888**
- San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation: **480-461-8888**
- Text **HOPE** to **4HOPE (44673)**

Southern Arizona

- Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz and Yuma counties or the San Carlos Apache Tribe: **1-866-495-6735**
- Tohono O'odham Nation: **1-844-423-8759**
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe: Tucson, **520-591-7206**; Guadalupe, **480-736-4943**

Northern Arizona

- Gila, Apache, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo and Yavapai counties: **1-877-756-4090**
- White Mountain Apache Tribe: **928-338-4811**
- Navajo Nation: **928-551-0508**

Veterans Crisis Line:
1-800-273-8255, press 1

National crisis text line: Text **HOME** to **741741**, about any type of crisis, or go to **www.crisistextline.org/text-us**.

National suicide prevention hotline:
1-800-273-8255



Teen Lifeline phone or text:
602-248-TEEN (602-248-8336)

Crisis Line staff can help:

- Meet you in the community
- Take you somewhere safe
- Help you identify your resources for care
- Help you arrange counseling
- Provide options for dealing with other urgent situations

*Always call **911** in life-threatening situations.*

If you need someone to talk to: Call the Warm Line, **602-347-1100**. It's a support line operated by credentialed peer support specialists. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mental health recovery

Peer and family supports lend a helping hand

Each Integrated Health Home location has trained peer support specialists to assist members. These people are mentors who can relate to your friend or loved one.

The peer support specialist can help families and their loved one living with a serious mental illness (SMI) determination. Peer support specialists know the recovery process because of their own lived experience. Peer support specialists receive training on how to engage people in services to support their recovery.

Peer support provides members:

- Resources to connect with the community
- Tools to use in times of crisis
- Help with treatment and wellness plans
- An advocate who will work with their clinical team

There are also family support specialists who educate and guide you through the behavioral health system. A family support specialist is an advocate for your friend or loved one and for you. Family support specialists help give a voice to the member's family of choice. They give you the chance to explain your unique family situation.

Also, they can connect you with Mercy Care's other community partners that can provide services such as employment and housing support for your loved one. These

community partners are members of the treatment team that you will be able to interact and connect with for your friend or loved one.

Peers and families play an important role in helping members be as healthy as possible. That is why Mercy Care works with the Arizona Peer and Family Coalition, an organization of peer and family member advocates. The coalition makes sure individuals and families have a say in the behavioral health policy decisions that affect their community.

Want to learn more about how to get involved?

Or about peer and family support resources?

Just email the Office of Individual and Family Affairs at OIFATeam@mercycaarez.org.





Medicare Part D

Taking your medication the right way

Mercy Care wants you to be as healthy as possible so that you can enjoy life. One of the most important ways you can stay healthy is to take your medications as your doctor prescribed and take them on time.

The term used to describe if patients are taking their medication the right way is “medication adherence.”

Consistent medication adherence is important to your health. There are many diseases and health conditions that do not show their bad effects every day. These can include diabetes,

high blood pressure, high cholesterol and others. Since you do not “feel” the effects of these diseases all of the time, it can be hard to remember to take your medications.

Here are some tips to help you:

- Keep your medications in a place that you remember to visit every day, like the cabinet next to your toothbrush.
- Unless your doctor tells you a specific time, take your medications when it is easy for you to remember. Make taking your medications part of your daily routine.

- Use a pillbox and write on the pillbox the time you are to take your medications.
- Use an alarm clock or an electronic device (tablet, smartphone) to remind you to take your medications.
- Have a family member or close friend help remind you to take your medications.

Always keep your medications away from children. If you have any questions about the medications you take, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Tips to help prevent or manage type 2 diabetes

What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is a warning sign that you are likely to develop type 2 diabetes. Your blood sugars are too high but are not yet high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. More than 1 out of 3 American adults has prediabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

It's important for you to get checked by your doctor for prediabetes. If you have it, take it seriously. Know that a few lifestyle changes can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes down the road. These changes can also help manage type 2 diabetes if you already have it.

Lose weight. Losing a small amount of weight, even 10 to 15 pounds, can help.

Be active. About 30 minutes of walking or similar activity four to five times a week can help you be healthier in many ways.

Eat healthy. Sugar is in almost everything we eat, from prepackaged meals and snacks to drinks and even condiments. Read food labels to check for added sugars. Reducing sugars and eating healthier foods is a good start.

Foods to limit:

- Many foods can be naturally high in sugar. These include table or baking sugar, honey, maple syrup, certain milks, and fruits such as watermelon, pineapple and bananas.
- Many processed foods — such as microwave dinners, fast food, bread, chips, cookies, crackers, ketchup, salad dressings and boxed side dishes — contain added sugars and/or

carbohydrates. Carbohydrates turn into sugars in your body when they're not burned off. These types of foods may also include unhealthy fats, high sodium (salt) and chemical preservatives that can lead to weight gain.

Diabetic-friendly foods:

- The right sugar substitutes in foods can still deliver that “sweet fix.” There are many tasty options now, including stevia, monk fruit, erythritol and xylitol. These do not significantly spike your blood sugar.
- Low-glycemic fruits such as cherries, peaches, cranberries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries can be a healthier sweet and provide important vitamins and nutrients.

- Oatmeal and other high-fiber foods, like beans, have many benefits, such as helping digest food, lowering cholesterol, controlling blood sugars and aiding weight loss.
- Vegetables, especially greens like spinach, kale, broccoli, cucumbers, cabbage and celery, should be included in a healthy diet.

Take this test at www.cdc.gov/prediabetes/risktest/index.html to see if you are at risk for prediabetes, and consider weight loss, exercise and a healthy diet for a variety of life-changing benefits.

Sources: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/prediabetes.html;
www.diabetes.org/diabetes-risk/prediabetes



Family planning services

Did you know that Mercy Care covers birth control at no cost to you, for men and women of reproductive age? These services help protect against pregnancy.

Some also help protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). You can choose from these options — they're all covered:

- Birth control pills
- Injectable contraceptives
- Subdermal implantable contraceptives (under the skin)
- IUDs (intra-uterine devices)
- Diaphragms
- Condoms
- Foams
- Suppositories
- Natural family planning
- The morning-after pill
- Contraceptive counseling
- Sterilization (tubal ligation for women or vasectomy for men) for members 21 and older
- Pregnancy screening
- Screening and treatment for STIs (sexually transmitted infections) for both men and women



Ask your doctor about options for LARC (long-acting reversible contraceptives). You can choose to get family planning services and supplies from any appropriate provider. No referral is needed, and there is no charge to you for these services.

Quitting tobacco

Do you use tobacco? Quitting tobacco is one of the best things that you can do for your health. If you get medication and coaching, you can double your chances of quitting tobacco. You can get help or coaching through group education, over the phone and by text messaging. You can also get medication from your doctor.

Your doctor can also refer you to the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) for coaching and resources to help quit tobacco. You don't need a referral to the ASHLine. The ASHLine can give you information to help protect you and your loved ones from secondhand smoke.

Many people have quit smoking and stopped tobacco use through programs offered by the ASHLine. If you

want more information to help you or someone you know quit tobacco, you have choices. You can:

- Call Mercy Care Member Services. For ACC members, call **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**. For RBHA members, call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY/TDD 711)**.
- If you are part of Mercy Care's Care Management program, talk to your care manager.
- Talk to your doctor.
- Call the ASHLine directly at **1-800-556-6222** or visit **www.ashline.org**.

There are other resources available for you to quit tobacco. Go to Tobacco Free Arizona at **azdhs.gov/prevention/tobacco-chronic-disease/tobacco-free-az/index.php**. Tobacco Free Arizona is a program to help Arizonans know the risks of tobacco use and resources for quitting.



Breastfeeding protects baby and mother

The cells, hormones and antibodies in breast milk may protect babies from illness. This protection is unique and changes to meet your baby's changing needs. And breastfeeding can help you, too, by lowering your risk of type 2 diabetes, certain types of breast cancer and ovarian cancer. Breastfeeding may also help you lose pregnancy weight.

Learning to breastfeed takes time, practice and patience. A good latch is important for your baby to breastfeed correctly and for your comfort. During the early days of breastfeeding, it can take time for your baby to latch on well.

You can tell whether your baby is getting plenty of milk. He or she will be mostly content and will gain weight steadily after the first week of age. If you worry that your baby is

not getting enough milk, talk to your baby's doctor.

You can take certain medicines while breastfeeding, but not all. Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist about medicines you are using, and ask before you start using new medicines. This includes prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and dietary or herbal supplements.

You can still breastfeed even after you return to work or school. Planning ahead for your return to work can help ease the transition. Talk with your employer about your options.

Source: "Your Guide to Breastfeeding" from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office of Women's Health

Resources for you

- The Arizona Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program offers food, nutrition counseling and access to health services for women, infants and children. Breastfeeding mothers may receive peer counselor support, an enhanced food package, breast pumps and other supplies. Call WIC at **1-800-252-5942** to see if you qualify.
- You can call the Arizona Department of Health Services Breastfeeding Hotline at **1-800-833-4642**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- La Leche League of Arizona offers mother-to-mother support for women who choose to breastfeed. Call **602-234-1956** or visit www.llofaz.org.

Child dental health: Don't skip brushing — or checkups

Regular dental visits are important for people of all ages. Plaque forms from food and bacteria and causes dental decay (cavities). On average, Arizona children have five teeth affected by cavities. That's about

one out of every four teeth in a child's mouth. Brushing and flossing doesn't get rid of all of the plaque that causes cavities.

That is why it is important to have your child's teeth cleaned by a

dental professional. A teeth cleaning will remove what's left behind. Routine dental services are covered for members up to 21 years of age.

Your dentist can also catch problems early, when they're easier to treat. For example, cavities are easier to fill when they're small. And gum disease can be reversed if caught early.

When to see the dentist

Follow your dentist's lead on how often to take your child. Here's what experts usually recommend:

- **Babies.** Take your baby to the dentist after the first tooth sprouts. The American Dental Association says babies should see a dentist before turning 1 year old.
- **Children.** Most kids should see the dentist every six months.

During your visit

Tell your dentist if your child's health has changed. Medical conditions may affect the teeth, especially if your child has:

- Tooth sensitivity
- Puffy or bleeding gums
- Persistent bad breath
- Pain or swelling in the mouth
- Dry mouth
- Diabetes, heart disease, an eating disorder or HIV
- A family history of tooth decay or gum disease

Sources: American Dental Association; Arizona Department of Health Services: Division of Public Health Services, Public Health Prevention Services, Office of Oral Health; Arizona School Dental Survey, 1999–2003; U.S. National Library of Medicine





Dangers of lead exposure

Lead in a person's blood can cause serious health problems. Lead poisoning is caused by breathing in or swallowing lead.

Lead can be found in:

- Paint and dust in older homes, especially dust from renovation or repairs
- Candy, makeup, toys, jewelry, glazed pots and traditional medicines made in other countries
- Work like auto refinishing, construction and plumbing
- Soil and tap water
- Spices, herbal remedies and ceremonial powders

Lead exposure during pregnancy

If you are pregnant, it's especially important to avoid exposure to lead. Lead can pass from a mother to her unborn baby. Too much lead in the body can:

- Put you at risk of miscarriage
- Cause a baby to be born too early or too small
- Hurt a baby's brain, kidneys and nervous system
- Cause a child to have learning or behavior problems

Dangers to children

Lead exposure in children can cause:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Slowed growth and development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems

It's hard to tell if a child has been exposed to lead, because no symptoms may be present. The best way to check for lead poisoning is by giving the child a blood lead test. Check with the child's doctor about testing.

Lead poisoning can be prevented. The key is to keep children from coming in contact with lead. If children are poisoned by lead, they must be treated. Learn how to prevent exposure to lead. To find more information about lead poisoning, you can visit www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/default.htm.



HIV and pregnancy: Why testing matters

Are you thinking about having a baby? Are you pregnant now? Be sure to get tested for HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.

A woman who has HIV can pass the virus on to her child. This can happen while she is pregnant. It can also happen when she is giving birth.

If a woman knows she is infected, she can take steps to keep her baby and herself well. Special medicines can help her avoid passing the virus to the baby.

These medicines work best if you start them early. But if you can't, they can still help if used before labor begins and the baby is born.

HIV testing is encouraged for all pregnant women, even those who don't think they have HIV. People who have HIV may not have any symptoms for years at a time.

Learning your HIV status will help ensure that you and your baby are healthy. Ask your doctor about how to get tested.

If you test positive for any STI (sexually transmitted infection) or HIV, your doctor can give you medication and help you find counseling. Testing, medication and counseling are provided at no cost to you.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HEALTH MATTERS is published for the members of Mercy Care. 4500 E. Cotton Center Blvd., Phoenix, AZ 85040.

This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

Mercy Care is administered by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC, an Aetna company.

Call for Mercy Care Member Services Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., or the 24-hour nurse line: For ACC members, call **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**.

For RBHA members, call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY/TDD 711)**.

www.MercyCareAZ.org

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Nondiscrimination Notice

Mercy Care complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Mercy Care does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Mercy Care:

- Provides no-cost aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
 - o Qualified sign language interpreters
 - o Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides no-cost language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - o Qualified interpreters
 - o Information written in other languages

If you need a qualified interpreter, written information in other formats, translation or other services, call the number on your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

If you believe that Mercy Care has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with our Civil Rights Coordinator at:

Address: Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator
4500 East Cotton Center Boulevard
Phoenix, AZ 85040
Telephone: **1-888-234-7358 (TTY 711)**
Email: MedicaidCRCoordinator@mercycareaz.org

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD).

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.
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