



Fall/Winter 2019

Vaccines help keep you healthy

It's important for people of all ages to stay up-to-date on their vaccinations. And, if you are an adult, the vaccines you received as a child may wear off as you get older. It's important to stay current with all of your vaccines to protect against disease and help you and your family stay healthy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says it's important to get vaccinations for these diseases:

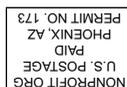
- Flu
- Whooping cough
- Tetanus
- HPV (human papillomavirus)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Chicken pox
- Shingles (for members ages 50 and older)
- Rotavirus
- DTaP/Tdap
- Pneumococcal (PPV)
- IPV (polio)
- Meningococcal (two types)

You and your doctor can discuss which vaccinations are right for you during a well visit. If you haven't had your yearly visit, you can call Mercy Care Member Services Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**. We can help you schedule an appointment.

Member Handbook

You can get a copy of the Member Handbook or the Provider Directory from Mercy Care Member Services at no cost to you. Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**. You can also find the handbook and directory at www.MercyCareAZ.org.

WH



Integrated care

Integrated care means that a member needs only one health plan to get care for their mind and body. Mercy Care members can get their physical and behavioral health services from us. We have offered integrated health services to our members in long-term care since 2000, to our RBHA SMI members since 2014, and to our ACC members since 2018. Beginning Oct. 1, 2019, we will offer integrated services to our DDD members.

Mercy Care has also been expanding our Integrated Health Home (IHH) clinic networks. At these clinics, care is provided by a team of health and wellness professionals who work together to focus on the whole person. This team works to empower members and improve their health and well-being.

Our members now have more options for getting physical and behavioral health care and wellness services from a single health plan. We are glad you have chosen Mercy Care. If you have any questions or need services, you can call Member Services from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**.



Staying healthy between pregnancies

It is important to stay healthy between pregnancies. If you have recently had a baby, you may want to think about birth spacing. Birth spacing is the time between pregnancies. After having a baby, it is good to wait at least 18 months before your next pregnancy. Waiting 18 months can reduce the risk for low birth weight or having a premature baby. Babies who have a low birth weight or are premature may have other health problems, such as asthma, developmental delays, or hearing and vision loss. Birth spacing is good for you and your body, and it's good for your baby.

Nine things to do before getting pregnant

1. Plan when you want to have your baby.
2. Use birth control until you're ready to get pregnant.

3. Take a multivitamin that contains 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.
4. Get help to stop smoking, drinking alcohol and using drugs.
5. Get a checkup.
6. Eat healthy and get to a healthy weight.
7. Do something active every day.
8. Avoid exposure to chemicals and other harmful substances at work and at home.
9. Reduce your stress.

Thinking about becoming pregnant again? Talk to your doctor about birth spacing.

Sources: "Birth Spacing and Birth Outcomes" from the March of Dimes; "9 Things to Do Before Getting Pregnant" from the March of Dimes

Language and interpretation services

Mercy Care can help you get a telephone or sign language interpreter for your health care visits at no cost to you. If you need help in your language or if you are deaf or have difficulty hearing, call Member Services for an interpreter at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**.

Suicide: Know the warning signs and get help

Would you be able to tell if someone you cared about was having thoughts of suicide?

Most people who take their own lives aren't sure that they want to die, and they want help to live. Thoughts of suicide are often a result of emotional pain and a want for that pain to end.

Suicide doesn't discriminate. People of all ages, genders, races, ethnic backgrounds and from all walks of life could have thoughts of suicide. If we are more aware and alert, we can help our friends, family members, co-workers and others who may be thinking about suicide.

What to watch for

It's important to know the warning signs and to always take them seriously, especially when someone talks about suicide. Almost all persons with thoughts of suicide give out "invitations," although they may not always be clear or direct.

Sometimes those invitations are actions. A person might give away items that are important to them or make a will. Another sign could be verbal. For example, they might say things like, "If I see you again," "I'd be better off dead" or "There's no way out." They may also talk about feelings, such as worry, and life events that they're going through, such as the loss of a relationship, death of a loved one or school problems.

There are other warning signs to take seriously too. Get help if someone:

- Seeks out guns, pills, knives or anything else that could be used for suicide



If you'd like to become more alert, you can attend one of our free trainings on suicide intervention. Visit: <https://mercycaresafetalk.eventbrite.com> or <https://mercycareassist.eventbrite.com> for a list of upcoming training dates.

- Is obsessed with death — for example, they might write poems about it
- Appears hopeless or feels trapped
- Expresses self-loathing or shame
- Is self-destructive or reckless
- Withdraws from family and friends
- Has dramatic mood changes
- Says goodbye as though they won't be seen again
- Gets their affairs in order — for example, makes a will

Also be aware that certain people are more vulnerable to suicide than others. Risk factors include:

- Mental health problems (such as depression), alcoholism or drug abuse
- Past suicide attempts or a family history of suicide or physical or sexual abuse

Take action

If there's any chance someone you know may be considering suicide, don't leave them alone. Be sure to remove any weapons or potentially deadly objects like pills and get them help.

For a behavioral health crisis

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

- Maricopa County: **602-222-9444**
- Pima and Pinal counties: **1-866-495-6735**
- Gila County: **1-877-756-4090**

Crisis Line staff can:

- 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**.

The support line is operated by credentialed peer support specialists. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Sources: American Association of Suicidology; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; HelpGuide.org; National Institute of Mental Health



Health care across cultures

Beliefs. Customs. Values. They are key parts of your culture, religion or ethnic background. They help make you who you are. But what if your doctor comes from a different background? You may not share the same ideas about health, illness or medical treatment.

That doesn't mean you won't get great care. But to do so, you and your doctor should talk.

For instance, be sure your doctor respects your views about:

- How you want to talk about your symptoms and other health issues
- Who should provide your treatment

- What treatments you may not want

Once your doctor knows and values your background and beliefs, it will be easier for you to stay healthy — and to get well if you get sick.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health; National Institutes of Health

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 called *medication adherence*. High medication adherence is important to your health. There are many diseases that do not show their bad effects every day. These diseases 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 to remember. Make taking your medications part of your daily routine.
- Use a pill box and write on the pill box the time you are to take your medications.
- Use an alarm clock or an electronic device (tablet, smart phone) 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.

HEALTH MATTERS is published for the members of Mercy Care, 4755 S. 44th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85040.

Contract services are funded under contract with AHCCCS.

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 Mercy Care Member Services Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)**. 24-hour nurse line: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879**.
www.MercyCareAZ.org

2019 © Coffey Communications, Inc.
All rights reserved.

MC-1274