



mercy care

# HEALTH MATTERS

Spring/Summer 2020

## HIV and pregnancy: Why testing matters

Are you thinking about having a baby? Are you pregnant now? Be sure to get tested for HIV. That's 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.

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.

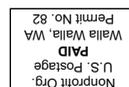
Learning your HIV status will help ensure that you and your baby are healthy. Ask your doctor about how to get tested. If you test positive for any sexually transmitted disease (STD) or HIV, your doctor can give you medication and help you find counseling. Testing, medication and counseling are provided at no cost to you.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

HMH

## Member Handbook

You can get this year's Member Handbook from Mercy Care Member Services at no cost to you. They can also send you a copy of the Provider Directory 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)**.



## It's time to quit 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 chance for successfully quitting tobacco. You can get help or coaching through group education, over the phone and by text messaging. You can get medication from your primary care physician (PCP).

The Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) offers coaching and resources to help you quit tobacco. The ASHLine also offers 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:

1. Call Mercy Care Member Services.
2. If you are part of Mercy Care's Care Management program, talk to your case manager.
3. Talk to your doctor.
4. Call the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) directly at **1-800-556-6222**, or visit **[www.ashline.org](http://www.ashline.org)**.

In addition to the ASHLine, there are other resources available for you. Go to Tobacco Free Arizona at **<http://bit.ly/2M2FHj6>** for more information. Tobacco Free Arizona is a program to help Arizonans know the risks of tobacco use and resources for quitting.



## 5 ways to reduce obesity risk by cutting back on added sugars

There are sugars that occur naturally in many foods. But there are also added sugars like syrups and caloric sweeteners. These sugars are added to processed or prepared foods. Diets that limit added sugars are linked to a reduced risk of obesity and certain chronic diseases.

Candy, cookies, cakes and regular sodas have added sugars. But added sugars are also listed on packaged food labels under dozens of different names. Among them: cane sugar, syrup, brown sugar and many words ending in *ose* (like *fructose* or *dextrose*).

You don't have to avoid all sugars. However, you should limit them to less than 10% of your daily calories. To help cut back:

1. Choose naturally sweet fruits for desserts or snacks. Add fruit (instead of sugar) to cereal. Make a peanut butter sandwich with bananas or berries instead of jelly or jam.

2. Shop for foods with less or no added sugar. For instance, choose plain (instead of flavored) yogurt and add your favorite fruit. Try unsweetened applesauce and fruit canned in water or natural juices rather than heavy syrup.

3. Swap your usual sweetened soda, punch or energy drink for water or milk.

4. When baking, try using only half the sugar. Chances are, nobody will notice.

5. Make candy, cookies and other sweets a rare treat.

Limiting added sugars is just one of many smart things you can do to help ensure a healthy eating plan. For more ideas, check out **[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)**.

*Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Heart Association; U.S. Department of Agriculture*

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

Regular dental visits are important for people of all ages. Plaque forms from food and causes dental decay (cavities). Arizona children, on average, have five teeth affected by cavities. That's about 1 out of every 4 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 dentist clean your child's teeth. 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.
- **Children.** Kids should routinely see the dentist every six months starting at age 1.

### During the visit

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

- Tooth sensitivity
- Puffy or bleeding gums
- Persistent bad breath
- Pain or swelling in your mouth
- Dry mouth
- Diabetes, heart disease, an eating disorder or HIV

- A family history of tooth decay or gum disease

*Sources: American Dental Association; National Institutes of Health; Arizona Department of Health Services: Division of Public Health Services, Public Health Prevention Services, Office of Oral Health; Arizona School Dental Survey, 1999–2003*



## DispatchHealth

Instead of going to the ER, you can now get urgent care in the comfort of your home. An ER-trained medical team will come to your home in a few hours. You can stay home and focus on feeling better. To request care, call **480-493-3444**, visit **www.dispatchhealth.com** or download their mobile app from the Google Play Store or Apple's App Store.

## 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)**.

## 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 at **602-347-1100**. The support line is operated by credentialed peer support specialists. It's available 24 hours a days, 7 days a week.



## 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 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.

### 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.illofaz.org](http://www.illofaz.org).

*Sources: "Your Guide to Breastfeeding" from CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention); Office on Women's Health*

\*This does not take the place of immunizations.

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](http://www.MercyCareAZ.org)

2020 © Coffey Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.