



HEALTH MATTERS

Fall/Winter 2024

Key vaccines to get this fall

The flu shot isn't the only vaccine that can help keep you and your family healthy this winter. These four routine vaccines are all important — and all covered by Mercy Care.

Flu

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot every year. It's best to get your shot in the fall before flu season is in full swing.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is a lung infection that can cause serious illness in young children and older adults. All children under 5 and

adults over 65 should get the vaccine. Others with certain medical conditions may need it too. Ask your provider if you or your children should get the shot.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

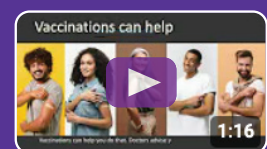
RSV is a common virus that can cause cold-like symptoms. Older adults are more likely to be

hospitalized from RSV. Experts recommend adults 60 and older get the RSV shot. Ask your provider if it's right for you.

COVID-19

As the virus changes, new vaccines can protect against the latest strains. Ask your provider if a new vaccine is available, and if you should get it.

WATCH: What vaccines should adults get?



What vaccines should children get?



6 healthy-weight strategies

Want to feel your best and reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes? Try these double-duty tips.

Keeping your weight within a healthy range can help lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer and more. Your doctor can help you figure out a healthy weight for you. And here are six small lifestyle changes that can make a big difference in your health.

Can't make all the changes? Start with one and work your way up. Each change brings you one step closer to reaching your health goals.

1 Sneak in fruits and veggies

It's tough — and even impossible — to make every meal perfectly healthy. But remember: Small steps make a big difference. Adding tomato slices to your sandwich or berries to your yogurt count.

2 Choose high-fiber foods

The more fiber you eat, the less hungry you'll be between meals — and the less likely you are to reach for unhealthy snacks. Get fiber from foods such as leafy greens, whole grains, avocados and almonds.

3 Drink plenty of water

It's no secret that water is an important part of good health and can help you feel full. Replacing sugary drinks with water can also help you lose weight. Try retraining your taste buds by adding fruit like lemon or strawberry slices to your water for flavor.

4 Trick your mind

If you're a visual eater, you might tend to eat everything on your plate even when you're full. That's not a bad thing if your plate has healthy



portions. Try using a smaller plate. And match your portions to the size of the plate.

5 Stick to a schedule

Your metabolism, gut and blood sugar will regulate when you eat at the same time every day. And that can have a big impact on your weight. Don't worry about whether you're eating breakfast at 7 AM or noon. Just pick a time that works for you to eat your meals or have a snack. Then try to stay consistent.

6 Keep moving

Physical activity is key to reaching a healthy weight. It has tons of other benefits, too, like preventing chronic disease and boosting your mood. Experts recommend getting two and a half hours of moderate exercise like walking each week. That comes out to about 30 minutes most days of the week. Start with something simple, like taking a 15-minute walk after a meal.

All these steps can help you manage your weight and feel good. Want to track your progress? Log in to Mercy Care Health Assistant at mercyar.es/healthasst to track your health measures and complete healthy activities.



Need to renew? You must renew your Medicaid coverage every year. Look for your renewal notice in the mail. Go to aet.na/fa24az-acc-1 or scan the QR code to learn more.



Ask a pediatrician

My child has a cold/the flu/COVID. How might it affect their asthma?

Getting sick is no picnic for anyone. But it can be downright dangerous for kids with asthma. Research shows that kids with lung diseases, such as asthma, are more likely to have serious problems from colds or the flu.

“Any respiratory virus, including COVID, can make asthma symptoms worse,” says Dr. Theresa Guilbert, MD. She’s the director of the asthma center at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. She’s also a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics. “It’s the most common trigger for an asthma attack.”

Kids with asthma already have inflamed airways and lungs. And the fevers and coughs that

come with respiratory illnesses put even more stress on those airways. Other kids may shake off a cold more easily. But kids with asthma are more likely to have serious problems, including pneumonia.

When it comes to protecting kids with asthma, preventing illness is key, says Dr. Guilbert. Try these tips:

- Get vaccines for the flu and COVID-19.
- Teach your kid to wash their hands often. And teach them to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.
- Make sure your child follows their daily care plan. The best way to avoid potential problems is to help them keep their asthma under control.

Need help managing a condition?

A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. This is a covered service for members with certain health needs.

Visit [mercycareaz.org/acc-rbha/care-management](https://www.mercycareaz.org/acc-rbha/care-management) to see if Care Management is the right step to help you manage your health.

Depression signs through the ages

Depression can happen to anyone. It's also highly treatable. But symptoms can vary between age groups. Here's what to watch for at different life stages.



Adults

- Often annoyed, frustrated, irritable and/or angry
- Loss of interest in socializing and hobbies
- Restless, agitated or sluggish
- Feeling worthless or very guilty
- Hard time concentrating, remembering and making decisions
- Older adults may also be anxious, confused, helpless or quick to cry

New mothers (called postpartum depression)

- Feeling overwhelmed or “empty”
- Detachment from baby

- Panic attacks
- Tired
- Decreased interest in activities
- Self-doubt, guilt, anger
- Changes in sleep or eating
- Thinking of harming themselves or their baby

Children

- More argumentative, grouchy or annoyed
- Often tired or agitated
- Problems concentrating in school
- Feeling inadequate, guilty or worthless
- Self-injury or self-destructive behaviors
- Angry outbursts or tantrums

Teenagers

- Doing poorly in school
- Often restless or agitated
- Overreacting to criticism
- Lacking energy, motivation or enthusiasm
- Using substances like alcohol or drugs
- Poor self-esteem
- Not taking care of appearance

If you see any of these signs in a loved one or yourself, reach out to your primary care provider (PCP) for help.

Trualta for caregivers

Do you care for an aging family member, child or person with disabilities at home? Get no-cost training and resources to help build caregiving skills at home.

Improve confidence, reduce stress and prevent burnout by learning care skills. Create an online account to read articles and watch webinars and videos about caring for your loved one.

Register at mercycare.trualta.com.

How do I talk to someone about suicide?

Sometimes when a loved one is struggling in their life, they may be considering suicide. It's important to know the warning signs and to seek help.

They may say they want to die or talk about feeling hopeless, having no purpose or being a burden to others. Listen to them carefully. Let them know you are there for them. Get them connected to resources.

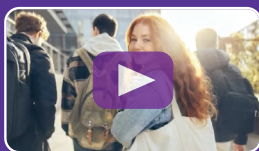
Other times a loved one is thinking about suicide but doesn't tell anyone. Look for warning signs such as them being withdrawn, sleeping too much or not enough, increasing drug or alcohol use, or being anxious, agitated or reckless. Ask them if they are considering suicide. Let them know that suicide is a serious matter. Connect them to resources.

The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a no-cost, national service. Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They offer support in English and Spanish. Call or text the lifeline at **988** or visit **988lifeline.org** to chat.

More resources:

- [save.org](https://www.save.org)
- [988lifeline.org/help-someone-else](https://www.988lifeline.org/help-someone-else)
- [bethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence](https://www.bethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence)
- [mercyareaz.org/crisis-services](https://www.mercycareaz.org/crisis-services)

WATCH:
How do I talk to someone about suicide?



Help for a behavioral health crisis

Mercy Care members can call the **Arizona Behavioral Health Crisis Line** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **1-844-534-HOPE (4673)** or text HOPE to **4HOPE (44673)**. Chat support is available at **crisis.solari-inc.org/start-a-chat**.

The Crisis Line staff can help:

- Provide crisis support over the phone
- Dispatch a crisis mobile team to support you
- Arrange transportation to take you somewhere safe
- Help you arrange counseling or a connection to your outpatient provider
- Provide options for dealing with urgent situations
- If you feel unsafe at home

Tribal crisis lines:

- San Carlos Apache Reservation: **1-866-495-6735**
- Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities: **1-800-259-3449**
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: **1-855-331-6432**
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: **480-461-8888**
- San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation: **480-461-8888**
- Tohono O'odham Nation: **1-844-423-8759**
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe: Tucson **520-591-7206**; Guadalupe **480-736-4943**
- White Mountain Apache Tribe: **928-338-4811**
- Navajo Nation: **928-551-0508**

Veterans Crisis Line: 988, press 1

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988

National crisis text line: Text HOME to **741741**. Chat support is available at **crisistextline.org/text-us**.

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

If you need someone to talk to, call the Warm Line at **602-347-1100**. Get 24/7 support from trained Peer Support Specialists.

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

Do you know MAT?

MAT stands for medication-assisted treatment. It involves using approved medicines and behavioral therapies, like counseling, to treat substance use disorders. This treatment may also be called MOUD or Medications for Opioid Use Disorder.

When people abuse opioids, their bodies can become addicted or dependent on them. If they don't have opioids in their system, they can feel opioid withdrawal. The symptoms of opioid withdrawal can include diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, rapid heartbeat and intense cravings. When you're ready to get connected to MAT, these medications can help in your recovery from opioid dependence.

- **Methadone** comes in a liquid or pill dose. It may provide better control of withdrawal symptoms and cravings for long-term opioid users.
- **Buprenorphine** reduces cravings from opioids. It can come in a pill form, cheek film or 6-month implant under the skin.
- **Naltrexone**, which can be taken as a daily pill or monthly injection, works a little differently. If a person on naltrexone starts abusing opioids again, the naltrexone blocks the "high" and sedative effects.

MAT can support you

Your relationship with MAT will be about more than just medications. As part of your care, you'll get behavioral health therapy such as counseling. Some of our providers have sites called MAT 24/7 Access Points.

Mercy Care contracts with many providers who offer MAT services. They're ready to introduce you to MAT. They can show you how MAT can get you started on a path to recovery, health and wellness. For locations near you, visit DoYouKnowMAT.com.

When you're ready, we'll be here. We can connect you to MAT or whatever treatment and support is right for you. Until you're ready, we want you and your loved ones to stay safe.

- Don't share or reuse needles and don't mix drugs.
- Get medical attention if you feel unwell (physically or mentally).



What to do in case of an overdose

Remember these steps if someone overdoses on opioids.

Step 1: Call for help (dial **911**).

Step 2: Check for signs of opioid overdose:

- You can't wake someone up by calling to them or rubbing their chest bone.
- Shallow breathing, a slow heartbeat or making a choking sound (death rattle).
- Lips or fingernails are turning blue/purple.
- Extremely small "pinpoint" pupils.

Step 3: Support the person's breathing. If oxygen isn't available, rescue breathing (mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) can be very effective.

Step 4: Monitor the person's response and breathing until emergency help arrives.

Step 5: Give the person Naloxone (NARCAN), a drug that can reverse the effects of an overdose. You can access Naloxone (NARCAN) over the counter at your pharmacy, from your PCP and at several community health centers and organizations.



Grant-funded programs to aid in recovery and mental health

Did you know that Mercy Care helps manage grant funding for recovery and mental health to behavioral health providers? The funding is made possible by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Even if your AHCCCS benefits don't cover some of these services, you may still be able to get treatment through the grant-funded programs described below. These programs also help people who are uninsured.

Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)

The MHBG provides mental health treatment services to:

- Adults with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) designation.
- Children with **Serious Emotional Disturbance** designation.
- People experiencing a First Episode of Psychosis (FEP).

For information on MHBG funding, visit mercycares.org/mental-health-block-grant.html

Substance Use Block Grant (SUBG)

The SUBG provides substance use treatment services to adults and youth. For information on SUBG funding, visit mercycares.org/substance-use-block-grant.html

State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant

The SOR grant helps give access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), integrated care, and opioid and stimulant use addiction recovery services. For information about treating an opioid addiction, visit mercycares.org/opioids-substance-use.html

Call Member Services Monday through Friday between 7 AM and 6 PM at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY 711)** to get connected to care. ACC-RBHA members with a SMI designation can call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY 711)** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Measuring cultural competency

We're committed to our members and their care. It's very important to us. That's why we spend a lot of time and effort making sure cultural competency is part of everything we do. This means being respectful to your beliefs and your culture. It also means understanding your language needs.

We require our providers to support members with culturally sensitive services. They use the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards as a guide. These standards make sure that services are respectful to your culture and language needs.

We have two departments at Mercy Care that keep an eye on how providers are doing. They are Cultural Competency and Quality Management. These departments offer support to providers. They make sure members are getting services in the right way. And that helps to make sure we are always improving services sensitive to your culture and way of life.



Improving your care

Mercy Care has a Quality Improvement (QI) program that sets goals to improve your health and the quality of your care. It's important to us that members can access care easily. If you're having trouble with your health care, please call and let us know. We want to make sure you get the highest quality health care possible!

2023 Strengths:

- Helping members who have diabetes with their blood sugar levels
- Helping members who have high blood pressure to keep it in the right range
- Getting children a well visit at least once a year
- Making sure that members who are pregnant have timely prenatal and postpartum care
- Making sure that members are satisfied with Mercy Care

2024 Opportunities:

- Making sure that children have all required vaccines before their second birthday
- Helping female members have well woman exams, including PAP tests

You can call the phone number on the back of your ID card to learn more or to get a copy of this information in writing.



Health equity in focus

Mercy Care’s mission is to help our members live a healthier life and achieve their fullest potential. One way we do that is by focusing on health equity which ensures the care you receive is just, accessible and person-centered to fit your needs.

There are societal factors, called Social Determinants of Health, that play a big part in your well-being. Some of those factors may include access to healthy food, housing, education and work opportunities.

These are some health and wellness resources you can reach out to for support:

2-1-1 Arizona

You can find information about employment and family services, food, clothing and shelter, and how to get help if you’re experiencing domestic violence.

Go to 211arizona.org or call **211**.

Substance abuse and mental health

You can locate sites for mental health and substance use treatment.

Go to findtreatment.samhsa.gov or call **1-877-726-4727**.

Health-e-Arizona

You can renew your AHCCCS benefits, check coverage and update your information.

Go to healtharizonaplus.gov

ARIZONA@WORK

You can get help finding a job.

Go to arizonaatwork.com.

More resources are available at mercycaarez.org/community-resource-guide.

HEALTH MATTERS is published for the members of Mercy Care.

4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150,
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 to Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM, or the 24-hour nurse line: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY 711)**.

For ACC-RBHA members with an SMI designation, call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY 711)**.

MercyCareAZ.org

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 the Provider Directory at no cost to you.

Or go to **MercyCareAZ.org** to view both resources. Just select your plan and click on “Forms and Materials.”

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:
 - Qualified sign language interpreters
 - 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:
 - Qualified interpreters
 - 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
4570 S. 44th Place, Ste. 150
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>

