



mercy care



HEALTH MATTERS

Fall/Winter 2020

Flu season questions and answers

Q: Can I get the flu from the flu shot?

A: No. The flu shot is made up of either killed flu virus or a part of the virus. Neither one can cause the flu.

Q: Do I need the flu shot every year?

A: Yes. The strains of flu usually change every year and your protection against the flu drops over time.

Q: I never get the flu — why should I get a flu shot?

A: Not everyone gets the flu every year. When you do get it, you can get very sick and may need to go to the hospital. Getting a flu shot may also protect other people who are at

risk of serious flu illness, like babies, young children and people with chronic health conditions.

Q: Can I still get the flu even if I get the flu shot?

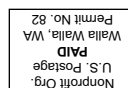
A: It is possible to get the flu even if you get a flu shot. But if you do get a flu shot, the illness won't be as severe and your risk for hospitalization or death will be lower.

Q: Isn't it better to get the flu than to get the flu shot?

A: No. The flu can make you very sick and put you at risk of hospitalization or death. The flu shot is safer than getting the flu, especially for older adults or those with a chronic health condition, like asthma, heart disease or diabetes.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MH



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 or 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 while waiting for help.

- Monitor the person's response and breathing until emergency help arrives.

Step 5: Give the person Naloxone, a drug that can reverse the effects of an overdose. You can access Naloxone in your community at Sonoran Prevention Works at no cost by calling or texting **480-442-7086**.

Using medication to treat substance use disorders and opioid addiction

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.

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 dose. It may provide better control of withdrawal symptoms and cravings for long-term opioid users.
- **Buprenorphine** reduces cravings for opioids. It can come in a pill form, cheek film or six-month implant under the skin.
- **Naltrexone**, which can be taken as a daily pill or a 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 meds. As part of your care, you'll get behavioral therapy, such as counseling. Some of our providers have sites called MAT 24/7 Access Points.

Mercy Care contracts with over 35 different opioid treatment programs. 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).

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)**.

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 delay, or hearing and vision loss. Birth spacing is good for you, your body and 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 abusing 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. Learn to lower 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)**.

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 members with a serious mental illness designation since 2014, to our AHCCCS Complete Care members since 2018 and to our members with a developmental disability since Oct. 1, 2019.

We remain committed to providing our members with more options for getting physical and behavioral health care and wellness services. 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)**.

Be aware of fraud — don't give out your information

Scammers may use the COVID-19 emergency to get access to your information. This could be your insurance, debit card or credit card information. They may target you over the phone, on social media, in an email or in person at your home.

Medicare, Medicaid and Mercy Care will **never** contact you asking for your information. If you are contacted by someone asking for your information, **do not give it to them**. If this happens, call the Mercy Care Fraud Hotline at **1-800-810-6544**.

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 and 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, like a loss of a relationship, death of a loved one or school problems.

Get help if someone:

- Seeks out guns, pills, knives or anything else that could be used for suicide
- 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 use
- 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 help. They 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. The support line is operated by credentialed peer support specialists — available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Maricopa County: **602-347-1100**
- Pima County: **520-770-9909**
- All Arizona: **1-888-404-5530**

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

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. They 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.

Health and wellness beyond physical and mental health care

Health and wellness is about more than just making sure you get to your doctor's appointments. It's about more than just taking all your medications. There are social factors, too, that play a big part in your well-being.

You might hear some people call these "social determinants of health." Some of those include education, employment and social support networks.

Here are some resources that can help:

- **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 www.211arizona.org or call **211**.
- **Sites for HIV testing, mental health and substance use treatment.** To find them, go to findtreatment.samhsa.gov or call **1-877-726-4727**.
- **Health-e-Arizona.** You can apply for Medicaid or see if you're eligible for other coverage, benefits or services. Go to www.healtharizonaplus.gov.
- **Arizona @ Work.** You can get help finding a job. Go to www.arizonaatwork.com.



Get information about Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D)

Medicare prescription drug coverage is an optional benefit offered to everyone who has Medicare. You can learn more about Part D drug coverage at www.medicare.gov/drug-coverage-part-d. Here you can get tips for making the right choices for you.

You can learn about:

- How to get prescription drug coverage
- What Medicare Part D drug plans cover
- Costs for Medicare drug coverage
- How Part D works with other insurance

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

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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

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