



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).
- Consent is required for children and youth in out-of-home care to receive COVID-19 vaccines. Please reach out to your DCS Specialist to discuss consent for vaccinations.

Where can the child in my care 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

Is the child in my care safe once they get vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19. Even after someone is fully vaccinated, it's still

recommended to wear a mask in public, social distance at least 6 feet in public and wash hands often.

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

Yes. Once you've scheduled the vaccine appointment, call Member Services to schedule transportation. Try to give at least three days' notice before your transportation needs. Call Member Services at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY/TDD 711)**.

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

Smartphones at no cost to you

Medicaid members 18 years and older may be able to get cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you through the federal government's Lifeline program. Call Member Services at **602-212-4983** or toll-free at **1-833-711-0776 (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 Member Services at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY/TDD 711)** or go to **www.MercyCareAZ.org** and select "For Members," then select "Member Resources."



For a behavioral health crisis

Mercy Care DCS CHP 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.

Peer and family supports lend a helping hand

Peer and family supports are a group of trained behavioral health mentors, specialists and advocates that can help individuals and families. Anyone can benefit from mental health support.

Transition-age youth and young adult support

Young adults who have aged out of foster care may work with peer supports if they are recovering from mental health or substance use issues.

Peer support provides:

- 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

The Recovery Empowerment Network's HERO Discovery Center hosts peer supports and other services to assist people ages 18–25. Visit its website, www.renaz.org/h-e-r-o-discovery-center, for information or call **602-248-0368**. The young adult's insurance provider may also have information on other peer support groups.

Family support

Family support specialists educate and guide people through the behavioral health system. A family support specialist is an advocate who can help parents find housing, food, work, respite service and parenting classes. They may also provide services for children, such as help with school and life skills training. Visit the Family Involvement Center website, www.familyinvolvementcenter.org, for support services.

Children in foster care

Peer supports are not currently available to children in foster care, but help is available for children placed in foster care to address their behavioral issues. Support will come to them from caring adults who are part of their Child and Family Team. It includes the child, their caregiver, a DCS specialist, a behavioral health representative and any key person in the child's life who is invited to participate.

If a child in care is going through a behavioral health crisis, call the Crisis Response Network Foster Care Line at **602-633-0763**.

Caregiver support

Who is caring for people who care for others? Caregivers, such as foster and kinship parents, may

need a caring person to help them deal with difficult emotions and stressors. They should contact the foster and adoption agency they work with and ask about local mental health supports. Mental Health America also has tools and resources to help caregivers — visit www.mhanational.org/mental-health-resources-caregivers.

Peers and families play an important role in helping members be as healthy as possible. That is why Mercy Care DCS CHP 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.



Detecting and managing type 1 diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is an incurable disease in which the body doesn't produce insulin. Insulin is needed to help blood sugar get into the body's cells to be used as energy. If the blood sugar can't get into the cells, it stays in the bloodstream

instead. This is harmful and even life-threatening to a person who has diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is often diagnosed in children or young adults, but people of any age can get it.

Symptoms

People who have untreated diabetes may:

- Need to pee often
- Feel thirsty all the time
- Be tired often
- Lose weight (even when eating more than usual)

If you notice that the child in your care has these symptoms, let their doctor know. It's important to get it diagnosed. A simple blood test can tell you whether it's type 1 diabetes.

Managing blood sugar

Type 1 diabetes requires lifelong treatment. It takes a daily effort to keep blood sugars maintained.

Testing blood sugars

Blood sugars need to be tested three to four times a day to make sure they're within a normal range. Home blood glucose (sugar) devices are available. A common way to test blood sugar is to prick your finger with a small lancet, place the blood on a test strip and read the results using a home meter device. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has also recently approved continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) to check blood sugar levels (see www.healthline.com/health/diabetes/blood-sugar-monitor-without-finger-pricks#4-monitors). These are wearable devices that don't require blood draws and work with smart devices to give results.

A doctor has to prescribe the blood sugar testing device. Devices





that are covered for Mercy Care DCS CHP members are:

- Dexcom G6 CGM System (new) — ages 2 years old to less than 4 years old
- Freestyle Libre System (new) — ages 14 and up
- Freestyle Libre 2 System (new) — ages 4 years old and up

Giving insulin

People with type 1 diabetes need to take insulin to control blood sugar. Insulin can be taken using a syringe or pen injections, an insulin pump or an insulin inhaler. Ask the doctor about Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (see

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/education.html). This training can teach you and/or the child in your care how to give insulin and much more.

Treating low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)

A person with low blood sugar will have symptoms such as a fast heartbeat, shakes, sweats, confusion, dizziness and hunger. This needs to be remedied right away by eating something with about 15 grams of carbs — such as ½ cup of juice or soda or one tablespoon of sugar or honey — or by taking glucose tablets. Diet,

exercise levels or insulin dosages need to be adjusted if someone has frequent low blood sugar.

Diabetic ketoacidosis

Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is a serious medical issue. It's when a person with diabetes does not get enough insulin, which then leads to high blood sugar. DKA can onset from illness or missing insulin doses. Talk to the doctor about preventing DKA.

Sources: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/what-is-type-1-diabetes.html; www.diabetes.org/diabetes/type-2/symptoms; www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/type1.html

Community support

A healthy diet with limited carbs and exercise also plays an important role in managing type 1 diabetes.

It can be hard for a child or young adult to cope with the strict lifestyle changes once they find out they have type 1 diabetes. It can also be challenging for a parent or guardian to care for someone with

type 1 diabetes at first. Learning more about the disease and joining support groups can help. Type 1 diabetes is manageable.

The **American Diabetes Association's Arizona chapter** and the **Arizona Diabetes Foundation** are some organizations that have support resources.



Taking medication the right way

Mercy Care DCS CHP wants the child in your care to be as healthy as possible so they can enjoy life. One of the most important ways you can help them stay healthy is to make sure they take their medications as their 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 good 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 some people do not “feel” the effects of these diseases all of the time, it can be hard to remember to take their medications.

Here are some tips to help:

- Keep their medications in a place that you remember to visit every day.
- Unless their doctor tells you a specific time, make sure they take their medications when it is easy for you both to remember. Make taking their medications part of their daily routine.
- Use a pillbox and write on the pillbox the time they are to take their medications.
- Use an alarm clock or an electronic device (tablet, smartphone) to remind you that it is time for the child in your care to take their medications.

Always keep medications away from children. Medications can be poisonous for children and can be misused. If you have any questions about the medications the child in your care takes, ask their doctor or pharmacist.

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 the 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.

Their 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 their dentist's lead on how often to take the child. Here's what experts usually recommend:

- **Babies.** Take the 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.** Kids should see the dentist every six months.

During your visit

Tell the dentist if the child's health has changed. Also, let the dentist know the medications the child is on, as some medications can affect the child's teeth. Medical conditions may affect the teeth, especially if the child in your care 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



Risks of vaping and tobacco use in youth

Vaping is a form of smoking that provides nicotine, marijuana or other chemicals through inhaling “vapor,” a cloudy mist. Vaping is popular with teens and young adults for several reasons. Vaping devices are often easy to hide because they look like USB drives, pens or other everyday items. (Some look like cigarettes or pipes.) Young people enjoy the taste of the flavorings added to vaping devices, known as “e-juice” or “e-liquid.” Many people also view vaping as safer than tobacco cigarettes. Vaping has risks of its own though.

Nicotine and addiction

Many vaping devices, such as JUUL, a popular brand, contain high levels of nicotine. Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical, and it has negative effects.

According to www.drugabuse.gov, young people who vape are more likely to start smoking tobacco cigarettes later. Smoking cigarettes can cause cancer and other health problems.

Vaping has several other risks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Some young people do not know that vaping products contain nicotine.
- Nicotine can harm how young people’s still-growing brains develop.
- Nicotine fuels the pleasure and reward parts of the brain, which can lead to addiction.
- Using nicotine may also lead to future addiction to other drugs.

Vaping lung disease

In 2019, thousands of people got very sick and a few dozen died



from a vaping-related lung disease. Many of the affected people used vaping products from family, friends or online sources that contained THC and vitamin E acetate. These chemicals were linked to the vaping lung disease.

Getting help to quit

Programs are available to help teens and young adults quit vaping and/or tobacco products.

The N-O-T: Not On Tobacco program was created by the American Lung Association. It’s designed to help people ages 14 to 19 quit smoking tobacco products and/or vaping. Visit the website for details: www.lung.org/quit-smoking/helping-teens-quit/not-on-tobacco.

Prevention

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has banned the sale of e-cigarettes

to anyone under 21 in stores or online. They have also launched “The Real Cost” campaign to bring tobacco and vaping use prevention and education for youth to the public. Visit the website for details: www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/public-health-education/real-cost-campaign.

Sources: www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/health-risks-of-tobacco/health-risks-of-e-cigarettes.html; www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html; www.cdc.gov/tobacco/infographics/youth/pdfs/e-cigarettes-usb-flash-508.pdf; www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/vaping-devices-electronic-cigarettes



Sexually transmitted infections and prevention

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are common and on the rise in Arizona. According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, almost 56,000 cases were reported in 2020, and cases have tripled since 2000. Young adults ages 15 to 24 are most at risk of getting an STI.

Talk openly with the child in your care about safe sex. A few moments of unsafe sexual practices can result in long-lasting effects on their lives.

STIs are spread by having oral, anal or vaginal sex with an infected person. STIs do not always show symptoms. For anyone who is sexually active, the best way to know if they have an STI is to get tested regularly.

Chlamydia is one of the most common STIs. Some symptoms that may occur are abnormal discharge from the vagina or penis and a burning sensation when urinating. Men and women can also get chlamydia in their rectum from having anal sex. The symptoms may include rectal pain, discharge

and bleeding. In women, untreated chlamydia can make it difficult to get pregnant or cause problems during pregnancy. It can also be passed to their baby upon delivery.

Chlamydia can be treated and cured with antibiotics, but repeat infections are common.

Syphilis can cause serious health problems if left untreated. Untreated syphilis can spread to the brain and nervous system. There is currently an outbreak of syphilis in Arizona. Symptoms of syphilis are sores on the penis, vagina or anus. Sores can also be in the rectum or on the lips and in the mouth. Rashes on the hands and feet may appear as well. In women, syphilis can also be passed on to their baby during pregnancy.

Syphilis can be treated and cured with specific antibiotics. It can also cause permanent damage to nerves, vision and/or hearing at any stage.

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS. There is no cure for HIV, but treatments can keep it controlled. If someone gets HIV disease, they must live with it for the rest of their lives.

Getting any STI puts a person at greater risk of contracting HIV. The reason is because sores or breaks in the skin may be present from other STIs, allowing the HIV virus to enter the body. Also, the risky activities that can lead to other STIs are the same for HIV infection. HIV attacks the immune system, and if left untreated, it can be fatal.

STIs and pregnancy

It is recommended to get tested for HIV and other STIs at the first prenatal visit. STIs can put a pregnant woman and her baby at serious risk if left untreated.

Prevention

- The only way to guarantee avoiding STIs is not to have sex (practice abstinence).
- Using condoms, the correct way, can protect a person and their partner during sex.
- Limiting the number of sexual partners and asking them to get tested for STIs prior to sex can help prevent STIs.
- Practicing safe sex can also prevent unintended pregnancy.

Mercy Care DCS CHP covers testing and treatment for STIs. Make an appointment with the child's primary care provider.

Sources: www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/disease-integration-services/std-control/index.php; www.cdc.gov/std

Child welfare and trauma informed care

Trauma from painful life experiences affects how youth in child welfare react to the world around them. They can have issues forming healthy relationships with caregivers and other people. This trauma also causes stressors that prevent healthy physical and mental development. Early health screenings and services are needed to help treat trauma and improve the child's positive experiences.

Children in foster care often experience different forms of trauma. The child may struggle to cope in certain situations due to trauma. Reminders of the trauma can bring stressors, such as meltdowns or fear responses.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study has linked harmful childhood events, such as abuse,

with increased likelihood of unhealthy risk-taking and disease. Skills can be taught to caregivers to help build a healthy and nurturing relationship between them and the children in their care. This will allow children to learn ways to overcome future trauma.

The Neurosequential Model in Caregiving is a training program for caregivers and families. Bruce Perry, MD, PhD, designed the program, which explains how child abuse, neglect and other traumas affect children's brain development. Caregivers will learn to help foster children build resilience and gain healthy coping skills to work through trauma.

Visit www.azcouncil.com/neurosequential-model-for-caregiving to learn more and register for training.





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.

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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 DCS CHP Member Services Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY/TDD 711)**. 24-hour nurse line: **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776**; select "Speak to a nurse."

www.MercyCareAZ.org

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Nondiscrimination Notice

Mercy Care DCS CHP 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 DCS CHP does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Mercy Care DCS CHP:

- 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 the member's ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

If you believe that Mercy Care DCS CHP 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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