



LONG TERM CARE CONNECTION

Fall/Winter 2023

Budget-friendly healthy snacks your whole family will crave

Handing out the right snacks can do double duty. It can fuel good energy and health now. And it can boost immunity to help fight off illness as we enter cold and flu season. But common go-tos like packaged chips, cookies and candy can be pricey and harm your health over time. Instead, try these easy snacks. They're good for your health and kind to your wallet.

Greek yogurt

It's thick and creamy, and loaded with calcium and protein. Throw in some banana slices for potassium. Or add berries (fresh or frozen) for vitamin C and antioxidants.

Apple and peanut butter

Peanut butter serves up healthy fats and protein. Added that to filling fiber from an apple, and you've got a snack that will keep you full until your next meal.

Glass of milk

A cold glass — or a warm mug — is an easy way to satisfy hunger. Plus you're drinking up immune-boosting minerals like calcium, and vitamins A and D.

Fresh veggies and hummus

Made of pureed chickpeas, hummus is a great source of plant-based protein. Pair with raw veggies like carrots and bell pepper.

www.MercyCareAZ.org

MCL-1657

IT'S TIME TO RENEW!

Find out how to renew your coverage by going to healthearizonaplus.gov



Depression signs through the ages

Depression can happen to anyone. It's also highly treatable. Since some symptoms vary between age groups, it's important to know what to watch for.

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

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

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

How to talk to a loved one 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, 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.

Other times a loved one is thinking about suicide but doesn't tell anyone. Look for warning signs such as:

- Being withdrawn
- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Increasing drug or alcohol use
- Being anxious, agitated or reckless

Ask them if they are thinking about suicide. Let them know that suicide is a serious matter. You can help connect your love one to helpful 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:

- livingworks.net
- save.org
- 988lifeline.org/help-someone-else/
- bethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence/
- mercycares.org/wellness/crisis

Behavioral health crisis resources

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

Crisis Line staff can help:

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

Veterans Crisis Line: **1-800-273-8255**, press 1

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: **988**

National crisis text line:

Text HOME to **741741**, about any type of crisis, or go to crisistextline.org/text-us/.

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

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**

If you need someone to talk to, call the Warm Line at **602-347-1100**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's a support line operated by credentialed peer support specialists. Always call **911** in life-threatening situations.

Your family's healthy-all-year secret

Spoiler alert: It's vaccinations. They can help your family stay well this winter. And for many seasons to come. Here are six shots to keep on your radar. Go to [CDC.gov/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines) for a full list. You can schedule vaccinations with your Primary Care Provider.



Chickenpox (varicella)

When it's given: Children get two doses. One dose is given at 12 to 15 months old. The second dose is given between ages 4 and 6. If you've never been vaccinated or had chickenpox, you'll need the shot now.

Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP, Tdap)

When it's given: Younger children usually get five doses of DTaP between ages 2 months and 6 years. Tdap is for older kids, with a first dose between ages 11 and 12. Adults need a Tdap booster shot every 10 years (more often if pregnant).

Flu (influenza)

When it's given: Every year. Get the vaccine as soon as you can. That's usually in September or October in the fall.

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

When it's given: First dose is given between ages 11 and 12. If you're older and haven't had the shot, talk to your doctor. HPV, a sexually transmitted infection (STI), can cause cervical cancer and other cancers.

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)

When it's given: Between 12 and 15 months of age for the first dose. And between ages 4 and 6 for the second dose. Sometimes adults need to get it again. Ask your doctor if you need the shot.

Pneumococcal

When it's given: Infants, young children and older adults need this. It's given to children at 2, 4 and 6 months and between 12 and 15 months for a total of 4 doses. Adults get one more dose at age 65 or older.

Flu season is here again

Influenza is a virus, and it can change each season. That's why you need to get a flu shot every year. If you are 65 or older, or have a chronic condition, you are more likely to get very ill from the flu. This can lead to a hospital stay, or even death.

Things you can do to protect yourself:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands often using soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects.
- Get plenty of sleep, eat well and stay active.

Don't risk a gap in your Medicaid coverage. Update your contact information with AHCCCS, your Medicaid agency. This way, they'll be able to reach you to renew your coverage. Visit [healtharizonaplus.gov](https://www.healtharizonaplus.gov) for information about renewing your benefits.

Medicare Part D

Prescription drug benefits for dual eligible individuals

Medicaid individuals who are eligible and enrolled in Medicare are considered dual eligible. Once you are Medicare eligible, your Medicaid plan can no longer pay for your drugs. Dual eligible individuals need to enroll in a Medicare plan that includes Part D prescription drug coverage. Medicare Advantage plans include coverage for Medicare covered services, Part D prescription drugs and other benefits not covered by Medicare. Some Medicare Advantage plans are Special Needs Plans. These plans include coverage for Medicare covered services, Part D prescription drugs, additional benefits and will coordinate with the Medicaid plan coverage a dual eligible individual has.

Mercy Care offers a dual eligible Special Needs Plan, called Mercy Care Advantage and it includes Part D drug coverage. With Part D drug coverage, you will pay a small amount for covered drugs. If you live in a nursing home and have full Medicaid coverage, you pay nothing for covered drugs. If you don't join a Medicare plan that includes Part D drug coverage, Medicare will automatically enroll you in a standalone Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Individuals who are dual eligible can switch Medicare plans during certain times of the year.

Note: AHCCCS does not contract nor oversee the activities of any separate stand-alone Medicare Part D prescription drug plans.



Network pharmacies

You must always use a pharmacy that is in the Mercy Care network to get your prescription medicine. Please note, Walgreens is not a Mercy Care network pharmacy. You can find a network pharmacy on our website at [mercycareaz.org/find-a-provider](https://www.mercycareaz.org/find-a-provider). Or you can call Member Services for help at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY 711)**.

ACC-RBHA members with a SMI designation, call Mercy Care ACC-RBHA Member Services at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY 711)**.

DCS CHP members, call Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY 711)**.

To find out about our pharmacy management and updates, visit the links below. You can see which drugs are covered and any requirements for getting them. You can also see what your doctor needs to do if you want a medication that isn't covered.

- ACC members:
[mercycar.es/a-pharmacy](https://www.mercycar.es/a-pharmacy)
- ACC-RBHA members:
[mercycar.es/r-pharmacy](https://www.mercycar.es/r-pharmacy)
- ALTCS members:
[mercycar.es/l-pharmacy](https://www.mercycar.es/l-pharmacy)
- DDD members:
[mercycar.es/d-pharmacy](https://www.mercycar.es/d-pharmacy)
- DCS CHP members:
[mercycar.es/dcs-pharmacy](https://www.mercycar.es/dcs-pharmacy)

Heart disease 101

Heart disease isn't just one condition. There are many types, including coronary artery disease, congestive heart disease, arrhythmia, heart attack and stroke. But they share a lot of symptoms. Screenings are often the same, too. If you're worried about your heart health, talk to your primary care provider (PCP) about having one of these tests.



CT scan

This looks for calcium in the arteries, which is a sign of plaque buildup. If the test shows plaque buildup, your doctor may recommend medicine to lower your cholesterol.

Stress test

This test usually involves walking on a treadmill while monitoring your heart. If you're having chest pain, a stress test can help your PCP decide if that's a heart problem.

Electrocardiogram (EKG)

This is a simple, painless test. It records your heart's electrical activity with electrodes placed on your chest.

Angiogram

If your other tests are abnormal, or if you're having symptoms, you might get this test. It shows blood flow through your arteries and veins to check for blockages.

If you think you may be having a heart attack, call **911** right away. Getting help fast can save your life and lead to a better recovery.

Symptoms of a heart attack can include:

- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Discomfort in the jaw or neck
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating, nausea or dizziness

Know the signs of preeclampsia

Preeclampsia is high blood pressure that can happen during pregnancy. It can be dangerous to both mother and baby. During your prenatal checkups, your doctor will screen for preeclampsia. Call your doctor right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Severe headaches
- Blurred vision, spots in front of your eyes or sensitivity to light
- Nausea and vomiting
- Swollen hands and feet
- Sudden weight gain of more than a pound a day
- Pain in the upper right side of your stomach
- Shortness of breath

Don't risk a gap in your Medicaid coverage. Update your contact information with AHCCCS, your Medicaid agency. This way, they'll be able to reach you to renew your coverage. Visit healtharizonaplus.gov for information about renewing your benefits.

Introducing Teledentistry

Your Dentist, Anytime Anywhere®

Mercy Care Medicaid members now have access to a dentist 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year-round. You can talk to a dentist by video on your smart device.

It's a simple and convenient option for **emergency dental care** at no cost to you. Emergency dental care may be a chipped or broken tooth, tooth pain, face swelling or bleeding.

When can I use Teledentistry.com?

- Whenever you need immediate dental care
- If your dentist is unavailable
- If you're considering the emergency room or urgent care for a dental concern
- When you don't have a ride arranged to get care

How does Teledentistry.com work?

- Call anytime at **866-302-0905**
- Have your Mercy Care member ID card ready
- Or visit bit.ly/AZ-teledentistry
- Follow the prompts to get care

Questions? Email support@teledentistry.com or call **866-302-0905**.



4 tips for healthy lungs

Whether you have a chronic lung condition like asthma, or a respiratory infection like a cold, use our tips to breathe easier.

- 1 Take your medicine as directed by your doctor. Also, if you are prescribed an inhaler, make sure to use it correctly.
- 2 Get a flu shot. Ideally, by the end of October.
- 3 See an allergist if needed. Allergies can trigger an asthma attack.
- 4 If you smoke, quit now. It's the best way to stop more lung damage.

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.



Integrated care

Integrated care means you can get care for your mind and body under one health plan.

We have offered integrated health services to:

- Members in long-term care since 2000
- Members with a serious mental illness designation since 2014
- AHCCCS Complete Care members since 2018
- Members with developmental disabilities since 2019
- Mercy Care Department of Child Safety Complete Health Plan (Mercy Care DCS CHP) members since 2021

We remain committed to providing you with more options to get all the care you need. We are glad you have chosen Mercy Care.

If you have any questions or need services, call Member Services.



Grant-funded programs to aid in recovery and mental health

Did you know that Mercy Care helps manage recovery and mental health grant funding 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 these grant-funded programs. 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 a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) designation
- People experiencing a First Episode of Psychosis (FEP)

For information on MHBG funding, visit mercycares.org/wellness/grants.

Substance Abuse Block Grant (SABG)

The SABG provides substance use treatment services to adults and youth.

For information on SABG funding, visit mercycares.org/wellness/sabg.

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/wellness/opioids.

Call Member Services Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. 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.

Do you have high blood pressure?

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is often called the “silent killer” because there are very few symptoms. The only way to know for sure is to have your blood pressure checked.

Some things that may put you at a higher risk for high blood pressure are:

- **Family history.** High blood pressure runs in families.
- **Age.** As you get older, your blood vessels get stiffer and increase your blood pressure
- **Race.** African Americans have a higher risk of high blood pressure
- **Gender.** Men are more likely to get high blood pressure before age 64; women are more likely to have high blood pressure after age 65

The good news is there are things you can do to lower your risks, such as:

- Exercise most days of the week
- Eat a healthy diet including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat dairy



- Lower the amount of salt in your diet
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Get a good night’s sleep

Talk to your healthcare provider and be sure to have your blood pressure checked at every visit.

Health equity in focus

Mercy Care’s mission is to help you live a healthier life and achieve your fullest potential. One way we do that is by focusing on health equity. This 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. Here are some 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/wellness/community-resources.

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 is also 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 and vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat
- 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 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 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).

LTC Connection is published for the members of Mercy Care.

4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150,
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

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 711)**.

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
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>

