



mercy care

LIVING WELL WITH HYPERTENSION

Fall/Winter 2022

Quitting smoking: 3 places to turn for help

If you have high blood pressure and you smoke, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your heart. It can lower your risk of heart disease and add years to your life.

Quitting smoking for good may take a few tries. The good news: You don't have to do it on your own. If you need help to kick the habit, here are three ways to find support:

1. **Talk to your doctor.** Your doctor can offer resources and medicines to help you quit. There are several types of medicines. Your doctor can help you choose what's right for you. Be sure to take them as directed.

2. **Join a support group.** You'll meet other people who want to stop smoking. It's a chance to share encouragement and tips. Your doctor or hospital can help you find a support group that meets in person or online.

3. **Call a free quit line.** You can talk to experts on quitting smoking. They can help you make a plan to quit. Call the Arizona Smokers' Helpline (ASHLine) directly at **1-800-556-6222** or visit **www.ashline.org**.

Sources: American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org); American Heart Association (www.heart.org); National Cancer Institute (www.smokefree.gov)

It's not too late!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. If you haven't had yours yet, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to **www.MercyCareAZ.org** or call Member Services at **1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711)** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.



High blood pressure: Check it at home

Is your blood pressure high? If so, your doctor may want you to track it with a home monitor.

Why? Tracking your blood pressure over time — not just in the doctor's office — helps show whether your treatment is working.

Six tips for at-home tests

For more accurate readings at home:

1. Do the test at the same time each day.
2. Don't exercise, smoke, or drink caffeine or alcohol within 30 minutes of a test.

3. Empty your bladder and sit quietly for five minutes before a test.
4. Sit up straight with your back against a chair. Put both feet flat on the floor. Rest your arm on the table.
5. Put the bottom of the blood pressure cuff above the bend of your elbow. Wrap the cuff around your bare arm, not over clothing.
6. Follow any other instructions your doctor gave you. For instance, you may be asked to take two or more readings each time.

High blood pressure puts you at risk for serious health problems. Medicines can help — but only if you take them exactly as directed.

Source: American Heart Association (www.heart.org)

4 ways to take charge

If you have a chronic condition, take it step by step:

1. Learn all you can about it.
2. Work with your doctor on a care plan.

3. Take your medications.

4. Aim for healthy habits.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (www.niddk.nih.gov)

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www.MercyCareAZ.org