

Member Newsletter

Working together for a healthier you

Maternity care keeps you and baby healthy

Regular doctor visits are important to stay healthy. They're also the best way to keep your unborn baby healthy. Make an appointment with your provider as soon as you think you might be pregnant. You can use the "Find a provider" directory at www.MercyCareAZ.org. Your first maternity visit is very important. The doctor will examine you and your growing baby to make sure everything is all right. They will do a complete checkup of your physical and emotional well-being.

You should tell your doctor about all medications you take. Some may affect the health of your baby. You should not smoke, drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.

Smoking, drinking alcohol and using street drugs can cause problems during pregnancy for a woman and her baby. This includes premature birth, birth defects, and infant death. Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) happens when you use certain drugs during pregnancy. Your baby can

go through drug withdrawal after birth.

NAS can also occur when you take opioids while pregnant. Opioids help take pain away and are sometimes prescribed by a doctor after an injury or surgery. Tell your provider if you are taking any medicine for pain, even if it is prescribed by another doctor. Babies born with NAS are more likely to have a low birth weight, breathing and feeding problems, and seizures. If you are pregnant and drink alcohol, smoke, use street

drugs or take opioids, talk to your doctor or seek help from a local treatment center before quitting. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your doctor about your problem, call Mercy Care RBHA Member Services for help.

Based on your health and other factors, your doctor will decide how often you should be seen. Be sure to follow your doctor's advice. You may also get a special case manager who will help you. Any time you have concerns about your

continued on page 2

Caring for yourself and your baby

Postpartum (after you have your baby)

All women need care after giving birth. It is important to schedule and go to all of your visits, even if you feel fine. You should see your doctor within 7-84 days of having your baby. Your doctor may want to see you more than once. This is to make sure you are healing properly, to discuss how you are feeling, and to answer any of your questions.

These are warning signs that you should call your doctor right away. These can happen up to a year after having your baby:

- Headache that won't go away or gets worse over time
- Dizziness or fainting
- Thoughts about hurting yourself or baby
- Changes in your vision
- Fever of 100.4F or higher
- Trouble breathing or fast-beating heart
- Chest pain
- Severe belly pain and/or nausea
- Heavy bleeding (more than one pad/hour)
- Severe swelling, redness or pain in your leg or arm

If you feel like something just isn't right, or aren't sure if it's serious, call your doctor. Be sure to tell them you were pregnant in the last year. If you are having a medical emergency, call **911**.

Family planning services

Did you know Mercy Care covers birth control at no cost for men and women of reproductive age? These services and supplies help protect against pregnancy. Some also help protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). You can choose from these options—they're covered:

- Birth control pills
- Injectable contraceptives
- Subdermal implantable contraceptives (under the skin)
- IUDS (Intra-uterine devices)
- Diaphragms
- Condoms
- Foams
- Suppositories
- Natural family planning
- The morning-after pill

continued on page 2

Maternity care keeps you and baby healthy

continued from page 1

pregnancy, be sure to call your doctor. There is no copayment or other charge for covered pregnancy-related services.

Your first appointment

Your doctor should be able to see you within 14 days of when you call for your first appointment if you are in your first trimester. The first trimester is the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. You should be seen within seven days if you are in your second trimester. The second trimester is week 13 to week 27 of your pregnancy. If you are in your third trimester, you should be seen within three days. The third trimester is the last three months of your pregnancy. Transportation

to the doctor is covered.

After your first visit, a common schedule is:

- Weeks 4-28: Visit at least every 4 weeks
- Weeks 29-36: Visit at least every 2 weeks
- Weeks 37-40: Visit at least every week

Pregnant women should be tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). These tests are covered at no cost to you. Your PCP or OB/GYN can perform these tests. If you test positive for any STI or HIV, your doctor can help. You can receive counseling services and any needed care.

Preparing for baby

Eating right is always good, but it's extra important when you are pregnant. When your baby gets the right vitamins, he/she is more likely to be born healthy.

Follow these simple healthy eating tips:

- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water each day.
- Avoid foods with "empty" value such as fried, fatty and sugary foods.
- Avoid foods that could make you or your baby sick such as raw fish, raw or undercooked meat and eggs, soft cheeses, unpasteurized milk and juices, and raw sprouts.

Regular well visits can keep you healthy

It's important for everyone to schedule a regular well visit with their doctor. If you're a member who is 18, 19 or 20 years old, Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment, or EPSDT, is a complete health program for you.

What is the EPSDT program?

EPSDT, also known as a well-child visit, is important to ensure that you receive all necessary physical and behavioral health services you need.

What does an EPSDT (well visit) include?

Your doctor will:

- Examine you (you'll wear underwear and/or a gown to protect your modesty)
- Check to make sure you've had all your shots
- Check your height, weight and body fat
- Check your hearing, vision, gums and teeth
- Ask about any personal or family history of health problems
- Talk about healthy eating
- Discuss topics, like tobacco, alcohol and drug use
- Talk about ways to prevent injury, such as wearing your seat belt, gun safety and the dangers of texting while driving
- Check your blood pressure
- Test your blood for various levels
- Send you to the lab for additional tests, if needed

Why are they important?

Well woman/well man visits allow doctors and nurses to have regular contact with you and keep track of – or *monitor*– your overall health and development through various screenings. It is important to your health to attend your EPSDT visit.

You should make an appointment now for your yearly checkup. This is important, even if you don't feel sick. You can call Mercy Care RBHA at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465**; (TTY/TDD) **711**.

For all emergencies dial **911**. We can help you schedule an appointment. We can also help you get a ride to your appointment.

Postpartum Depression (PPD)

If you have feelings of sadness that last a long time, are severe and cause you to have problems doing normal daily activities, call your doctor right away. They will figure out if your symptoms are caused by postpartum depression (PPD) or something else. PPD is more than the "blues." It's an illness and needs treatment to get better. If you need to talk to someone because you have troubling thoughts, contact your doctor or nurse right away. Do not wait to get help. If you need help getting behavioral health services, you can call Mercy Care RBHA at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465**; (TTY/TDD) **711**. For all emergencies dial **911**.

Family planning services

continued from page 1

- Contraceptive counseling
- Sterilization (tubal ligation for women or vasectomy for men) for members 21 and older
- Pregnancy screening
- Screening and treatment for STIs (sexually transmitted infections) for both men and women

Ask your doctor about options for LARC (long-acting reversible contraceptives) and IPLARC (immediate postpartum long-acting reversible contraceptives). You can choose to get family planning services and supplies from any appropriate Mercy Care provider. No referral is needed, and there is no charge for these services.

Signs of active labor

If you are pregnant, these are signs that your baby is coming soon:

- Lightening – you feel your baby has dropped lower.
- Your water breaks – you may feel a trickle or a gush.
- Contractions – you may feel pain in your back or pelvis. They happen in a regular pattern and get closer together.

At least 39 weeks of pregnancy gives your baby the time they need to grow before being born. If you have your baby too early, they might miss an important stage of development. Scheduling a C-section or inducing your baby before 39 weeks without a medical need can be dangerous for you and your baby. Your provider will talk to you if there is a medical need for you to have your baby early.

A birth plan is how you share what you want for your baby's birth. A plan makes it easier for your provider to support you. It is recommended that if you are low-risk, you may benefit from:

- One-on-one emotional care such as a doula (someone trained to provide support during labor)
- Relaxation techniques such as the use of massage and spending time in water in early labor
- Moving freely throughout labor
- Pushing in a comfortable position

Be sure to talk to your provider about what's best for you and your baby. You can also sign up for birthing classes around week 28 of your pregnancy. Just call the hospital where you will have your baby to find out when classes are, and to sign up. Classes are available at no cost. Mercy Care can help schedule a ride to your classes if you cannot find one.

Source: "Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth" from ACOG

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 such as 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 Primary Care Provider (PCP) 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 <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/default.htm>.

Visit your dentist twice a year

Go to the dentist to get started on good oral health. You don't need a referral. Mercy Care RBHA covers two visits a year at no cost for member's 18-20 years old. Dental services for members 21 years and older aren't covered. However, we do cover medical and surgical services performed by a physician or dentist. The second covered visit must occur at least six months and one day after your first visit.

Poor dental health can cause health problems. Some of these are:

- Cavities (decay) and gum disease can lead to illnesses such as heart disease or diabetes.
- Gum disease can cause tooth loss and can affect your ability to eat and speak. If you're pregnant, poor oral health may cause your baby to be premature and underweight.

To prevent tooth decay:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with toothpaste that has fluoride
- Clean between your teeth daily with dental floss
- Eat nutritious and balanced meals
- Drink fluoridated water
- Visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and an oral exam

Your dental home

Your dental home is as important as your medical home. A dental home creates an ongoing relationship with you and your dentist. A dental home can take care of all your dental needs. A dental home delivers care in a family-centered way. Care is always available to you.

Dental visits may include:

- X-rays
- Fillings
- Cleanings
- Application of topical fluorides

Dental care is just a phone call away

We would like to help you find your dental home. We can help you schedule an appointment. We can also arrange a ride to your appointment. You can call Mercy Care RBHA Member Services at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465**; (TTY/TDD) **711**.

Tips for better sleep

- Reduce noise
- Exercise
- Keep your room dark
- Keep a consistent schedule
- Limit your caffeine intake

Treatment decisions

If you are a newly assigned pregnant member, or getting care from a non-network provider, Mercy Care RBHA will help you continue to receive the care you need. If you transition in the last trimester of pregnancy, you may choose to continue with your current maternity health care professional and/or delivery site through the duration of your prescribed treatment.

Helpful information and resources on COVID-19

- You are less likely to catch and spread COVID-19 once you are vaccinated.
- There is no charge for COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccines.
- All individuals ages 6 months and older can get vaccinated (6 months and older for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, 18 and older for the Janssen vaccine)

Where can you get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Visit www.azhealth.gov/findvaccine or call **1-844-542-8201**.

What is considered "fully vaccinated"?

- Two weeks after the second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

Am I safe once I get vaccinated?

You are less likely to catch the COVID-19 virus if you have been fully vaccinated. Even after you are fully vaccinated, it's still recommended to wear a mask in public, social distance at least six feet in public, and to wash your hands often.

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

You can get transportation. Once you've scheduled your appointment, call Member Services to schedule transportation. Try to give three days' notice before your transportation needs. Call Member Services at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465**; TTY/TDD **711**.

Sources: CDC; Arizona Department of Health Services

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 it's good for your baby.

9 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.

Mercy Care

4500 E. Cotton Center Blvd
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.

 /MercyCareAZ

 @MercyCareAZ

 @MercyCareAZ

Call Mercy Care RBHA Member Services at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465**; (TTY/TDD **711**). We're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 24-hour nurse line: **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465**.

www.MercyCareAZ.org

Community resources

WIC

WIC (Women, Infants, & Children) offers healthy foods for moms and their babies. You can learn how to cook healthy meals and get help with breastfeeding. Call **1-800-252-5942** to apply for these free services or visit www.azdhs.gov/azwic.

La Leche League of Arizona

La Leche League gives free support for women who choose to breastfeed through the Valley Help Line and monthly support groups. They can be reached at **602-234-1956** or **1-800-525-3243**, or online at www.llofaz.org.

ADHS Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Hotline

A 24-hour, 7 days a week hotline answered by an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant RN, just call **1-800-833-4642**.

Strong Families AZ

A network of free home visiting programs that helps families raise healthy children ready to succeed in school and life. The programs focus on pregnant woman and families with children birth to age 5. Visit <https://strongfamiliesaz.com/> to find programs in your area.

Nurse-Family Partnership

Offers help for young, first-time moms-to-be, starting early in pregnancy in Maricopa or Pima County. A specially trained nurse will visit you in your home to help you have a healthier pregnancy, and can continue to visit until your baby is 2 years old. This is at no cost to you. Call **602-224-1740** or online at www.nursefamilypartnership.org/locations/Arizona

Birth to 5 Helpline

Free service available to all Arizona families with young children, as well as parents-to-be, with questions or concerns about their infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Call to speak with an early childhood specialist, on duty Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. You can also leave a voicemail or submit your question online anytime.

(877)705-KIDS

<https://www.swhd.org/programs/health-and-development/birth-to-five-helpline/>

Hushabye Nursery

Provides short-term medical care to infants with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). Offers non-judgmental support, education and counseling to families and caregivers. Call **480-628-7500** or online at www.hushabyenursery.org

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Nutrition Assistance supports families to prevent under-nutrition in Arizona.

1-855-432-7587

<https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/food-assistance>

ADHS Health Start

Uses community health workers to provide education, support and advocacy services to pregnant and postpartum women and their families in targeted communities across the state.

602-542-1025

www.azdhs.gov/prevention/womens-childrens-health/womens-health/index.php#health-start-home

CPLC Parenting Arizona

Offers positive parenting education to all Arizona families by empowering parents with the skills to raise healthy and successful children. For more information, call **602-248-0428** or online at www.cplc.org.

text4baby

Free text message service that sends you important information about prenatal care, safety and your baby's growth. To sign up, text "Baby" to **511411**. Enter your baby's due date and your zip code. And then wait for your texts. You can also sign up online at www.text4baby.org.

2-1-1 Arizona

Community Information and Referral Services transforms lives by linking individuals and families to vital community services throughout Arizona.

Dial **2-1-1** or <https://211arizona.org/>

Power Me A2Z

Provides free vitamins from the Arizona Department of Health Services, which is important for women's health. There are no hidden costs.

<https://www.powermea2z.org/>

Opioid Assistance and Referral Line

Local medical experts offer patients, providers, and family members opioid information, resources and referral 24/7. Translation services available.

1-888-688-4222

<https://www.azdhs.gov/oarline/>