Tips for staying safe during your teen years

Your teen years can be tough. You may be going through changes in how you feel, look and interact with others around you.

Bullying:
If anyone bullies, stalks or abuses or threatens you, you should confide in parents/guardians, your doctor, or other trusted adults, like teachers.
They can help you. For your safety:
- Learn to manage conflict without violence. Walk away if you have to.
- Avoid risky situations. Avoid violent people. Call for help if things get dangerous.

Suicide:
Suicide is when someone hurts themselves with the intent to end their lives, and they die as a result of their actions. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States.
Most young adults usually give warning signs of their intentions. The best way to prevent someone from hurting themselves or taking his or her life is to know the factors that put them at bigger risk for suicide, take these warning signs seriously, and know how to respond.

Early warning signs:
Intense feelings or dramatic changes in mood such as hopelessness, rage, agitation
- Sudden, unexplained improvement in mood with carefree appearance
- Inability to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Behaviors not normal of that person (e.g. acting recklessly, increase alcohol/drug use)

Warnings of immediate danger:
- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself (always take such comments seriously)
- Looking for ways to kill oneself (weapons, pills, or other means)
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide

Sexual risk behaviors:
Many young people take part in risky sexual acts that can result in unwanted health outcomes. This places teens at risk for HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unplanned pregnancy. Not having intercourse is the only 100 percent sure way to prevent HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy.

What’s a healthy diet?
- Fruits and vegetables (5 servings a day)
- Lean meats, nuts and eggs
- Whole-grain breads and cereals
- Foods that are broiled, grilled, or steamed, instead of fried
- Limit fast food and junk food
- Water or milk instead of sugary fruit drinks and sodas

Young people experience many changes during the teen years. Building healthy food and physical activity habits will help you now and as you enter adulthood.

ChooseMyPlate.gov offers resources, tips, and ideas that can help you take charge and learn to make your own choices.

If you’re pregnant, you can find a list of foods to avoid on March of Dimes website (http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/foods-to-avoid-or-limit-during-pregnancy.aspx).

Lowering risk of chronic illness

Chronic illnesses are the most easily preventable of all health problems. These unhealthy behaviors can cause chronic illness:
- Lack of activity
- Poor Nutrition
- Smoking
- Drinking large amounts of alcohol

You can lower your risk of chronic illness by doing the following:
- Increasing exercise
- Eating healthy
- Quitting smoking
- Limiting alcohol
You can call us at 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465, TTY/TDD 711.

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 ensuring 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 or a gown to keep you covered)
- 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, like 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 man/well woman 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 Member Services. We can help you schedule an appointment. You can call us at 602-234-1956 or 1-800-525-3243, or online at www.aznic.org.

Avoiding low birth weights

Low birth weight is when a baby is born weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces. The March of Dimes estimates that about 1 in every 12 babies in the U.S. is born with low birth weight. There are two main reasons why this happens; premature birth, and babies that don’t gain enough weight before they are born. Low birth weight babies can have serious health problems at birth, or in the future. Some women are more likely than others to have a baby with low birth weight. But there are things you can do to prevent the chances of this:

- Don’t smoke, drink, or use street drugs
- Make sure to tell your doctor what medications you are taking and how often. Always follow your doctor’s advice.
- Birth spacing is good for you and your baby. Women who have babies less than 18 months apart are more likely to have low birth weight or premature babies.
- It’s best to stay pregnant for at least 39 weeks. If you schedule to induce labor or schedule a cesarean (also called a c-section) and your date is off by a week or two, this can cause problems for you and your baby.

Having your baby too early can cause breathing or temperature problems, feeding difficulty, jaundice, hearing and vision problems, and learning and behavior issues.

You are never too old to quit.

Tobacco smoke has a deadly mix of more than 7,000 chemicals; many are harmful, and about 70 can cause cancer. Smoking gives you a higher risk for poor health, diseases, and even death.

People who stop smoking lower their risk for disease and early death. Although the health benefits are better for people who stop at a young age, there are benefits at any age.

Quitting smoking can give you the following health benefits:
- Lowered risk for lung cancer and many other types of cancer.
- Reduced risk for heart disease and stroke
- Reduced heart disease risk within 1 to 2 years of quitting.
- Reduced symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.
- Reduced risk of developing some lung diseases.
- Women who stop smoking during pregnancy also reduce their risk of having a low birth weight baby.

You can call us at 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465, TTY/TDD 711.

Vaccines help keep you healthy

It’s important for individuals to stay up-to-date on their vaccinations. The vaccines you received as a child may wear off as you get older. Getting vaccinated throughout your adult life will help you stay healthy. That’s why it is important to stay current with all of your vaccines.

For young adults, it’s important to protect yourself against diseases. For that age group, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) say it’s important to get vaccinations for these diseases:
- Flu
- Whooping cough
- Tetanus
- HPV (human papillomavirus)
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Chicken pox

You and your doctor can discuss this during a well visit. You can make an appointment now for your yearly checkup. This is important, even if you don’t feel sick. You can call Mercy Care RBHA Member Services. We can help you schedule an appointment.

You can call us at 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465, TTY/TDD 711.

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.lllofaz.org.

You can call us at 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465, (TTY/TDD) 711.

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Maternity care keeps you and baby healthy

Regular doctor visits are important to keep yourself healthy. They’re also the best way to keep your unborn baby healthy. Your first maternity visit is very important. At that time, you will get a complete check up. The doctor will examine you and your growing baby to make sure everything is all right.

You should let your doctor know all the medications you are taking because some of them may affect the health of your baby. You should not smoke, drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.

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 pregnancy, be sure to follow up with your doctor.

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.

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). 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, 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

Taking childbirth classes is the best way to feel more prepared. Classes are available to Mercy Care RBHA members at no cost. These classes help you learn what to expect when you are pregnant and after your baby is born. You should start childbirth classes at about 30 weeks of pregnancy.

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 healthcare professional and/or delivery site until 60 days after delivery.

Dangers of lead exposure

Lead in a person’s blood can cause dangers. Lead poisoning is caused by breathing or swallowing lead.

If you’re pregnant, it’s important to avoid exposure to lead. Lead can pass from a mother to her unborn baby. Too much lead in your body can:

- Put you at risk of miscarriage
- Cause your baby to be born too early or too small
- Hurt your baby’s brain, kidneys and nervous system
- Cause your child to have learning or behavior problems

Lead can be found in:

- Paint and dust in older homes, especially dust from renovation or repairs
- Candy, make up, glazed pots, and folk medicine made in other countries
- Work like auto refinishing, construction, and plumbing
- Soil and tap water

Lead poisoning can be prevented. The key is to keep children from coming in contact with lead. If children are lead poisoned they must be treated. Learn how to prevent children’s exposure to lead.

To find more information about lead poisoning, you can visit https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tools/are_you_pregnant.pdf

Community resources  Continued from page 2

ASHLine
The Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) can help you quit smoking for good with coaches and online tools. They can be reached at 1-800-556-6222 or at www.ashline.org.

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
Nutrition Assistance supports families to prevent under-nutrition in Arizona.
Phone: 1-855-432-7587
https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/food/nutrition-assistance-formerly-food-stamp-program

ADHS Health Start
The Health Start program utilizes community health workers to provide education, support, and advocacy services to pregnant and postpartum women and their families in targeted communities across the state.
150 N. 18th Ave., Ste. 320
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Phone: 602-364-1421

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How to put your new baby to bed

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant. It is the number one cause of death in babies from one month to one year of age.

You should always place your baby on his or her back to sleep on a firm surface. Babies that are put on their backs to sleep have less chance of SIDS. Do not use fluffy blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, waterbeds, or other soft bedding in his or her crib. Babies should not sleep in the same bed with anyone else. This can cause accidental harm or suffocation, even without knowing.

To find more information, you can visit www.sidsalliance.org.

Caring for yourself and your baby

Your pregnancy will not be like anyone else’s in the world. This pregnancy is special, even if you have been pregnant before. Right now, growing a healthy baby is your most important job.

As soon as you find out you are pregnant, make an appointment with your doctor. Your doctor will help keep you and your baby healthy. Your first visit is very important because he/she will do a complete checkup. 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

Your new baby is here

After your baby is born, it is normal to feel sore and tired. Don’t push yourself too hard. You should make an appointment to see your doctor 21 to 56 days after your baby is born.

This visit is very important because your doctor will make sure you are healing well. If you had a c-section, you may need to see your doctor more than once.

You can also talk to your doctor about family planning choices that will work best for you after you have your baby. If you miss your appointment, be sure to reschedule within 60 days of having your baby.

Postpartum depression

It is normal to feel anxious or even a little sad after having a baby. This can be caused by hormone changes, being tired, or from stress. If your feelings of sadness do not go away in a couple of weeks, you may be feeling postpartum depression (depression after the birth of your baby). It is important to call your doctor if these feelings get worse. It is most important if you:

- Have trouble taking care of tasks at home or work
- Lose interest in your baby
- Lose interest in taking care of yourself
- Have thoughts of hurting the baby
- Have thoughts of hurting yourself

Some women feel ashamed or guilty about feeling depressed when they are supposed to be happy about their new baby. But being depressed does not mean you have done anything wrong. Many women feel this way. You are not alone. There are many people available to help you. Talk to your doctor about getting help with these feelings, or contact your case manager at your behavioral health clinic. You can also call a care manager at Mercy Care RBHA Care Management at 602-798-2627, or the Crisis Line at 602-222-9444.

Is this an emergency?

Sometimes, we all need help making decisions about our health. One minute everything’s fine, and the next minute, you may be injured or not feeling well.

How do you know when it’s best to go see your primary care provider? Or, when you should go to a walk-in clinic or an urgent care center? Or, when you should go to the emergency room? If you know your options in advance, it can help you make the best decision.

If you’re thinking of hurting yourself or someone else, you can call the Crisis Line at 602-222-9444. They’re available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can go to many walk-in clinics and urgent care centers seven days a week. You can also go during nights, weekends and holidays. They don’t often require you to make an appointment. That makes visiting them easier. It also saves you a trip to the ER. Mercy Care RBHA has a list of walk-in clinics and urgent care centers online at www.mercymaricopa.org. Just go to the “For Members” page. Then, click on Benefit Summary.

Urgent care

This is when you need care today, or within the next couple of days, but aren’t in danger of lasting harm or of losing your life. For example:

- Bad sore throat or earache
- A cut that may need stitches
- Migraine headaches
- Medication refill or request
- Flu
- Back pain
- Sprains

What to do

Call your doctor before going to an urgent care center. Look in your member handbook to find the urgent care center closest to you, or look on www.mercymaricopa.org/find-provider.

You can expect to be seen by:

- Your PCP within two (2) days
- A specialist or dentist within three (3) days

If it’s late at night or on the weekends, your doctor has an answering service that’ll get your message to your doctor. Your doctor will call you back and tell you what to do. You shouldn’t go to the emergency room for urgent/sick care.

Emergency care

This is when you have a serious medical condition and are in danger of lasting harm or the loss of your life.

For example:

- Poisoning
- Overdose
- Car accident
- Convulsions
- Sudden chest pains/heart attack
- Deep cuts
- Broken bones
- Serious burns
- Trouble breathing
- Very bad bleeding, especially if you’re pregnant
- Signs of stroke (numbness/weakness in face, arm or leg weakness, trouble seeing with one or both eyes)
- Migraine headaches

What to do

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You don’t have to call your doctor or health plan first. You don’t need prior authorization to call 911. If you can, show them your health plan ID card and ask them to call your doctor.

Community resources

CPLC Parenting Arizona
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.parentingaz.org

text4baby

text4baby is a 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 get a ride to your appointments and find childbirth classes near you. Call Mercy Care RBHA Member Services at 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465. (TTY/TDD) 711. Or visit our website at www.MercyCareAZ.org.

Special Staying Healthy Edition