

# Staying Healthy Newsletter

Working together for healthier families

## Prenatal care visits

Prenatal visits happen during the pregnancy. These visits are the best way to keep the youth in your care and their unborn baby healthy. It is best if the first prenatal visit happens within their first trimester. As soon as they think they might be pregnant, make an appointment with their provider to get tested.

To find a provider, use the **“Find a provider”** directory on our website. There is no copayment or other charge for covered pregnancy-related services.

### First prenatal visit

The first prenatal visit is very important. The provider will examine the youth in your care and their growing baby to make sure everything is all right. The following will be done:

- A complete physical and emotional well-being check-up.
- Blood tests and a urine test.
- Screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This includes testing for syphilis and HIV.
- Treatment and counseling if the test results are positive.
- Tell the provider if they:
  - Take any medications, including any given to them by other providers.
  - Take any over the counter medicine, such as vitamins and supplements.
  - Participate in risky behaviors. Examples are drinking alcohol, doing illegal drugs, or smoking. This includes e-cigarettes and vaping. This will help them decide which resources to offer.

It is important that the youth in your care go to all of their prenatal care visits, even if they feel fine. Based on their health and other risk factors, the provider will tell them how often they should

be seen. They will also get a special pregnancy care manager assigned to help them throughout their pregnancy. Any time they have concerns about the pregnancy, call their provider.

### Appointment Schedules

The provider must see the youth in your care within the following timelines once a prenatal appointment has been requested:

- First trimester- 1 to 12 weeks (months 1 to 3) – within 14 calendar days.
- Second trimester- 13 to 27 weeks (months 4 to 6)- within seven (7) calendar days.
- Third trimester- 28 to 40 weeks (months 7 to 9)- within three (3) business days.
- People with high-risk pregnancies should be seen as often as their health requires. They should be seen no later than (3) three business days after finding out they are high-risk.
- You should be seen immediately if it’s an emergency.

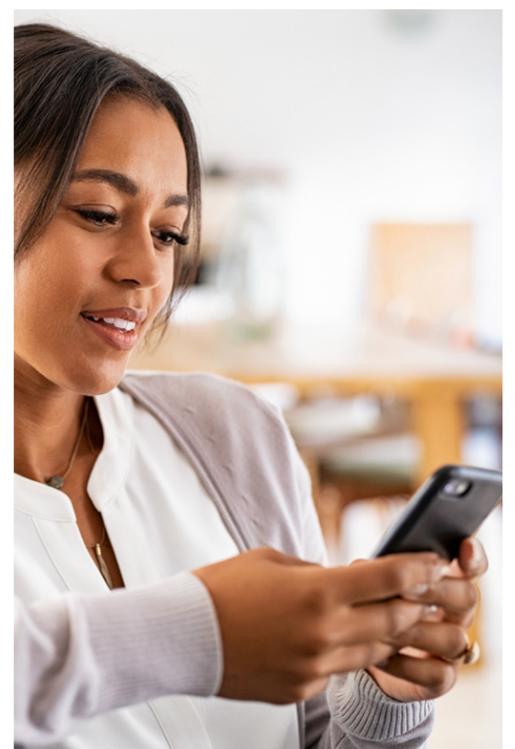
After the first visit, a common schedule is:

- 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.

## Assistance with scheduling prenatal or postpartum appointments or transportation

Do you need help with finding or changing a maternity care provider? Do you need help scheduling a prenatal or postpartum appointment? Do you need a ride to an appointment?

You can call member services for help. Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY 711)**.



**Inside this issue:** Page 2: Perinatal mood or anxiety disorders • Page 2: Family planning services & supplies • Page 3: Women’s wellness visits can keep you healthy • Page 3: Dental care and dental homes • Page 4: Keeping the child in your care and the baby healthy • Page 5: Dangers of lead exposure • Page 6: Limiting interventions during labor and birth • Page 6: Staying healthy between pregnancies • Page 6: Provider and treatment options when pregnant • Page 7: Regular well visits are important • Page 7: Signs of active labor • Page 8: Managing asthma • Page 8: Community resources • Page 9: Tips for better sleep

## Perinatal mood or anxiety disorders

There are many changes that can happen during and after having a baby. Some of those changes can make a person feel sad, anxious, overwhelmed, or confused. These thoughts and feelings may need treatment to get better. If the youth in your care has these feelings and they last longer than two weeks or are severe and cause them to have problems doing normal daily activities, call their provider right away. They will figure out if their symptoms are caused by depression, anxiety, or something else.

Being depressed is more than “feeling down” or having the “blues.” It’s not because of something they did or didn’t do. It’s an illness and needs treatment to get better. If they need to talk to someone because they are having troubling thoughts, contact their provider or nurse right away. Do not wait to get help. They can also get help from a behavioral health provider. They don’t need a referral from their maternity care provider to see them.

### We’re here when you need help

Do they need help finding a behavioral health provider? Do they need help with scheduling their appointment or finding a ride to their appointment? You can call member services for help. Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY 711)**. **24-hour nurse line for all members:** Use the phone prompt “speak to a nurse.”

For all emergencies, dial **911**.

### Mental Health Support Hotlines

Arizona Behavioral Health Crisis Line:  
**1-844-534-HOPE (4673)**

Arizona Behavioral Health Crisis  
Text Line:  
**4HOPE (44673)**

Maternal Mental Health Hotline:  
**1-833-TLC-MAMA (852-6262)**

Postpartum Support International:  
English **1-800-944-4773**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Administration (SAMHSA):  
**1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:  
**988**



## Family planning services and supplies

Mercy Care DCS CHP covers birth control for members between 12 and 18 years old, regardless of gender and at no cost. Family planning information should be provided to all children in out-of-home care, ages 12 and older within ten (10) days of them being placed in out-of-home care and annually thereafter. They can get family planning services and supplies from the primary care provider (PCP). They can also get them from any family planning service provider, including maternity care providers, as long as the provider works with AHCCCS. They do not need a referral or prior authorization.

If the youth in your care chooses to delay or prevent pregnancy, be sure to talk with their provider about which options best fit them. The options below may prevent pregnancy. They also protect against some sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These are the available options to choose from:

- Pregnancy testing
- Natural family planning education
- Contraception counseling
- Emergency contraception
- LARC (long-acting reversible contraceptives) and IPLARC (immediate postpartum long-acting reversible contraceptives) such as subdermal implantable contraceptive (implanted under the skin) and intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- Injectable and oral contraception
- Birth control pills, vaginal rings, diaphragms, and condoms
- Spermicidal foams, suppositories, jellies, and creams
- STI testing as well as counseling and treatment if the results are positive
- Medical and lab exams, and imaging such as x-rays and ultrasounds
- Treatment of complications due to contraception use (including emergency treatment)
- Medications for medical conditions related to family planning

### Safer sex is dangerous

- Using birth control helps protect a person from getting pregnant.
- Using spermicidal foams, suppositories, jellies, or creams alone will not prevent pregnancy and some STIs.
- Condoms may prevent some STIs that people get from having sex.
- Some STIs have no symptoms.
- If they are having sex, be sure they get tested for all STIs.

### Talk with the health care provider during the 2nd or 3rd trimester or just after having a baby.

If the youth in your care is pregnant or just had a baby, then it is the perfect time for them to talk with their health care provider about contraception. It is important for the mother’s health to have enough time to recover between pregnancies. Talk with the health care provider about contraception methods including LARC (long-acting reversible contraceptives) and IPLARC (immediate postpartum long-acting reversible contraceptives). LARC and IPLARC are certain types of birth control. A couple examples are IUD’s or implants that are placed under the skin. These may have some risks, but they are very rare. A few risks are the IUD coming out of the uterus, an infection such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), and the possibility of pregnancy. Even with these risks, the benefit of getting the birth control is greater. LARC and IPLARC are great options because they are convenient, they work well, and they can help avoid unintended pregnancy. Make sure to talk with their provider before leaving the hospital. Their provider can usually give it to them before they leave.

### We’re here when you need help

Do you need help with scheduling a family planning visit or finding a ride to an appointment? You can call member services for help. Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY 711)**.

Source: <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2016/09/clinical-challenges-of-long-acting-reversible-contraceptive-methods>

Source: AHCCCS AMPM 420 – Family Planning Services and Supplies Policy

Source: DCS Program Policy Ch 3, Section 7.7, Medical and Behavioral Health Services – Sexual Development Education and Family Planning

## Women's wellness visits can keep you healthy

Female members, or members assigned female at birth usually get their first reproductive health visit around 13 to 15 years old. These visits should happen every year after that. These visits are commonly called a women's wellness visit. The services included in this visit can be done by a primary care provider (PCP). An Obstetrician/Gynecologist (OB/GYN) can also do them. This is a provider that focuses on women's care and pregnancy. A PCP referral is not needed to see an OB/GYN. Members can go directly to an OB/GYN, as long as they work with Mercy Care DCS CHP.

### Benefits of women's wellness visits

Getting regular check-ups and screenings every year is an important part of a woman's health. These visits include age-appropriate education, screenings, and tests. Screenings such as pap smear tests are important tests that can help save lives. Pap smears commonly begin at 21 years old. The doctor may decide it is medically necessary to do it at an earlier age. This screening checks for cervical cancer. Early diagnosis and treatment will generally result in a better outcome.

### What to expect at the visit

- A physical exam (well exam) to check their overall health.
- A breast exam and a pelvic exam.
- Getting vaccines, screenings, and tests that are appropriate for age and risk factors.
- Screening and counseling on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This can help to minimize health risks. The provider may discuss or provide testing on the following:
  - Good nutrition, physical activity, and age-appropriate weight gain.
  - Having good oral health care and when to see a dentist.
  - Avoiding risky behaviors such as drinking alcohol and using street drugs. This also includes smoking, vaping, and e-cigarettes.
  - Screenings for depression and anxiety.
  - Screenings for interpersonal and domestic violence.
  - Sexually transmitted infections (STI) testing.
  - Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) testing.
  - Family planning services and supplies.
  - Preconception counseling. This is a discussion on maintaining a healthy lifestyle before getting pregnant and between pregnancies.
- Annual syphilis testing beginning at age 15 years old.
- Counseling and treatment when the STI and HIV tests have a positive result.
- Referrals to specialists if there is a need for evaluations, diagnosis, and/or treatments.

There is no copayment or other charges for covered women's preventive care services.

### We're here when you need help

Do you need help with scheduling a women's wellness visit or finding a ride to an appointment? You can call member services for help. Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776** (TTY **711**).



## Dental care and dental homes

Poor dental health, cavities and gum disease can cause health problems such as:

- Illnesses including heart disease or diabetes.
- An infection in the blood, called sepsis.
- Tooth loss, which can affect a person's ability to eat and speak.

To prevent tooth decay:

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

### What is a dental home?

Mercy Care DCS CHP assigns all members under 21 years of age to a dental home. A dental home is where the member and a dentist work together to best meet any dental health needs. The dental home builds trust between the member and the dentist. It is a place to get regular and ongoing dental care, and not just a place to go when there is a dental problem. A dental home may be an office or facility where dental services are provided in one place. Members are assigned a dental home when they enroll with Mercy Care DCS CHP. The assigned dental home can be changed by calling Member Services.

### Dental care for members under 21 years of age

We cover two (2) routine preventive dental visits and two (2) cleanings/ fluoride treatments per year. Visits to the dentist must take place within six

*continued on page 4*

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months and one day after the previous visit. Children should have their first dental visit when their first tooth is visible. This is typically at 6 months old, but may be earlier, and the visit usually happens before a child turns one year old. A referral for dental care is not needed. There is no copayment or other charges for routine dental care.

Primary care providers (PCPs) should do oral health screenings at every well visit. They should also be referring members to the dentist by the time they are 1 year old. Their PCP will also do a dental referral if there are any concerns. For members between 6 months old, with at least one tooth present, and up to 5 years of age, the PCP can also apply fluoride varnish treatment once every three months. This fluoride treatment is in addition to the fluoride treatments they will get during their bi-annual dental visits.

#### **Dental care during pregnancy**

It's important to have good oral health when pregnant. Women that are pregnant are at a higher risk of having oral health problems. Cavities or infections in the mouth can cause bad bacteria to travel through the blood and can pass on to their unborn baby. Dental infections can cause a baby to be born early and at a low birth weight. In Arizona, only 37.4% of individuals had a dental cleaning while pregnant. If they are pregnant, be sure to talk to their provider about any oral health concerns and their dental care needs. When at the dentist, let them know the youth in your care is pregnant before getting any x-rays. They have a special apron to wear that will protect them.

#### **We're here when you need help**

Do you need help with finding or changing a dentist? Do you need help scheduling a dental appointment? Do you need a ride to the appointment? You can call member services for help. Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776** (TTY **711**).

If you need to change or cancel a dental appointment, call the dental provider 24-48 hours in advance.

Source: ADHS Arizona State Health Assessment 2024 -<https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/operations/strategic-initiatives/arizona-state-health-assessment-2024.pdf>



## **Keeping the child in your care and the baby healthy**

### **Pregnancy and Risky Behaviors**

Pregnant women should talk to their maternity care provider about the following:

- All of their physical and behavioral health conditions.
- Any medication use, including those prescribed by another provider and any over-the-counter vitamins and supplements.
- If they are currently in a medication assisted treatment program or a drug program.
- If they smoke (including e-cigarettes and vaping), drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.

### **Substance use during pregnancy**

Pregnant women should avoid taking opioids. This is a medication that helps take pain away. They are sometimes given to people by a provider after an injury or surgery. Tell your provider if you are taking any medicine for pain, even if it was given by another provider. Pregnant women should also avoid smoking (including e-cigarettes and vaping), drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs. All of these can cause problems during pregnancy such as premature birth, birth defects and infant death.

They can also cause the baby to be born with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). NAS happens when pregnant women use certain substances during pregnancy, causing the baby to go through withdrawals after birth. Babies born with NAS are more likely to have a low birth weight, breathing and feeding problems, and seizures. Talk to your provider before attempting to quit. You can also seek help from a local treatment center. If you do not feel comfortable talking to the provider about your problem, you can call Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services for help.

### **Nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight**

Eating healthy during pregnancy is important. It's also important to maintain a healthy weight while pregnant. Being overweight or underweight during pregnancy can cause health problems for the youth in your care and the baby. Here are some healthy tips you can follow:

- Do something physically active every day.
- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water each day.
- Eat healthy snacks and meals.
- Avoid foods with no or low nutritional value such as fried, fatty, and sugary foods.
- Avoid foods that could make you or your baby sick. Examples of these foods are raw fish, raw or undercooked meat and eggs, soft cheeses, unpasteurized milk and juices, and raw sprouts.

### **Prenatal vitamins**

When your baby gets the right vitamins and minerals, they are more likely to be born healthy. The body needs extra help from vitamins and minerals while pregnant. Some examples are folic acid, iron, calcium, vitamin D, choline, B vitamins, and vitamin C. These can be found in prenatal multivitamins. One of the important vitamins the baby needs is folic acid (a B vitamin). At least 400 micrograms of folic acid should be taken every day before and during pregnancy to help prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord.

### **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)/ Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID)**

SIDS/SUID is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant. Babies that sleep on their backs have less chance of dying from SIDS/SUID. The baby can also be placed on a firm surface to sleep. Other ways to prevent this is to *not* use fluffy blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, waterbeds, sheepskins, or other soft bedding in the crib.

### **Safe sleep for babies**

Safe sleeping practices can help reduce the risk of the baby dying from SIDS/SUID and other sleep related causes of infant death. These are some safety tips on newborn safe sleeping habits:

- Always place the baby on their back for safe sleeping.

continued on page 5

## 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 home repairs
- Candy, makeup, toys, jewelry, pottery, utensils, and traditional medicines made in Mexico, Asia, India, and Africa
- Work like auto repair, construction, and plumbing
- Soil, dirt, dust, and tap water from lead pipes
- Spices, herbal remedies, and ceremonial powders

### Lead poisoning symptoms

The earliest symptoms are tiredness, headaches, moodiness, constipation, trouble sleeping, and stomach problems. It's hard to tell if a child has been exposed to lead because they cannot tell you what they are feeling, or there are no symptoms present. The best way to check for lead poisoning is to get a blood lead test. Check with their provider about available testing.

### Blood lead testing

At Mercy Care DCS CHP, **we require that children be tested when they turn 12 months old and 24 months old.** If they miss one of those tests then they need to get tested before they turn six (6) years old. We offer blood lead testing and treatment at no cost.

### Lead exposure during pregnancy

If the youth in your care is pregnant, it's especially important to avoid exposure to lead. Lead can pass to the unborn baby. Too much lead in the body can:

- Put them 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

### Lead exposure in children

Children can be exposed to lead where they live, learn, and play. Even if exposed at low levels, it can cause:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Slowed growth and development
- Reading, learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems
- In severe cases, coma, seizures and even death can occur

### Ways to help prevent lead poisoning

- Ask the provider to check if you live in a high-risk zip code.
- Check for lead in the paint on the home and in items found in the home.
- Keep the areas where children play clean and dust free.
- Wash hands often, especially after playing outside and before eating.
- Mop hard floors and use wet-wipes on surfaces, instead of sweeping or dry dusting.
- When vacuuming carpets and rugs, use a HEPA filter.
- Avoid candy, spices, makeup, toys, jewelry, pottery, utensils, and traditional medicines imported from Mexico and other countries.
- Eat foods rich in calcium, iron, and vitamin C such as milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs, dried beans, red meats, citrus fruit, green peppers, and tomatoes.

Lead poisoning can be prevented. The key is to keep people from coming in contact with it. If someone is poisoned by lead, they must be treated. More information about lead poisoning can be found on the CDC website - *Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning* or the ADHS website - *Lead Poisoning*.



Source - CDC: [cdc.gov/lead-prevention/about/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/about/index.html)

Source - ADHS: <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/lead-poisoning/index.php>

- Use a safety-approved crib, covered by a fitted sheet.
- No pillows, blankets, sheepskins, or crib bumpers.
- No soft objects, toys, or loose bedding near the baby's sleeping area.
- No smoking around the baby.
- Babies should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or on a chair alone or with someone.
- Nothing should cover or be near the baby's head.

### Breastfeeding

Breast milk is the best source of food that a baby can get during their first six months to 1 year of life. Breast milk can help support the baby's immune system. A breast pump is great to use so milk will be ready for the baby when breastfeeding isn't possible. Ask the provider for information on how to receive a breast pump. Mercy Care Member Services can also help. Breast pumps are available at no cost. Questions? Call the ADHS 24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline at **1-800-833-4642**, available 24 hours a day.

### Testing for Infections

The provider will check for sexually transmitted infections (STI) such as chlamydia, HIV, and syphilis at their first prenatal visit. They will also offer voluntary HIV testing. If the test is positive for HIV or any STI, the provider can help with treatment and counseling services at no cost to you. Early treatment can help prevent passing these infections to the baby. The sooner these are diagnosed and treated, the better the medicine will work. For babies born with HIV, providing medicines early can help them live longer, healthier lives.

### Syphilis and pregnancy

Syphilis in pregnant women can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant death. Syphilis can cause major health problems for babies. It can cause damage to the baby's skin, bones, joints, eyes, ears, and brain. Testing for syphilis is important because in the early stages the symptoms can be mild, so people may not know that they have the infection. The best way to protect the baby from syphilis is by getting a simple blood test and antibiotics to cure the disease. Their provider will test for syphilis at the first prenatal visit, early in the third trimester, and at delivery.

### We're here when you need help

Do you need help finding a maternity care provider? Do you need help with scheduling your appointment or finding a ride to your appointment? You can call member services for help. Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776** (TTY **711**).

Source - ADHS: [azdhs.gov/prevention/womens-childrens-health/index.php](https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/womens-childrens-health/index.php)

Source - ACOG: [acog.org/womens-health/resources-for-you](https://www.acog.org/womens-health/resources-for-you)

## Limiting interventions during labor and birth

### Avoid scheduling a C-section or induction before pregnancy week 39

Scheduling a delivery (also known as a C-section) or an induction before 39 weeks without a medical need can be dangerous for the youth in your care and the baby. A C-section birth is the delivery of the baby through surgical cuts in the belly and uterus. Induction is a procedure to start labor before it begins naturally.

Waiting 39 weeks gives the baby the time they need to grow before being born. Major organs, like the brain, lungs and liver are still growing. Their eyes and ears are still developing, and they are learning to suck and swallow. If a baby is born too early, they might miss an important stage of development. For the baby, there are some risks with inductions such as breathing problems, trouble eating, learning and behavior problems, and jaundice. For the youth in your care, some risks with having a C-section are infection and tearing in the uterus causing severe bleeding. Their provider will talk to them if there is a medical need for them to have their baby early.

### Create a birth plan

Another way to prepare is to create a birth plan. A birth plan is how a person shares what they want to happen during labor and delivery. A birth plan makes it easier for the provider to show support. Try to be flexible because things may change, and they may not get everything that is listed in their birth plan during labor. Also, be sure to note what is covered by Mercy Care DCS CHP and what isn't. You can view the Mercy Care DCS CHP handbook at [https://www.mercycareaz.org/content/dam/mercycare/pdf/dcs\\_chp\\_member\\_handbook\\_eng\\_ua.pdf](https://www.mercycareaz.org/content/dam/mercycare/pdf/dcs_chp_member_handbook_eng_ua.pdf).

A birth plan can include details about:

- The birthing room
- Labor and birth
- Self-care activities and coping techniques
- Pain relief during labor
- What happens right after birth
- Postpartum care (care for the youth in your care and the baby after birth)

### Low-impact labor practices

It is recommended that if a pregnant member is low risk, then they may benefit from:

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

### Go to childbirth classes

Another way to help prepare a person for the labor and delivery process is going to birthing classes. The youth in your care can sign up for birthing classes around week 28 of the pregnancy. Just call the hospital where they will have the baby to find out when classes are, and to sign up. Classes are available at no cost. Mercy Care DCS CHP can help schedule a ride to the classes if they cannot find one.

Source – ACOG 2025 Article: “Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth”

## Staying healthy between pregnancies

It is important to stay healthy between pregnancies. If the youth in your care recently had a baby, they may want to think about birth spacing. That is the time between pregnancies. After having a baby, it is good to wait at least 18 months before the next pregnancy. It is important for the mother's health to have enough time to recover between pregnancies. Waiting 18 months can reduce the risk of having the baby being born too early, or the baby being born with a low birth weight. Babies who have a low birth weight or born too early may have other health problems. Some examples are asthma, developmental delay, or hearing and vision loss. Talk to their provider about their family planning options.

### Ways to get healthy before getting pregnant

1. Develop a plan on when to have a baby
2. Visit the doctor regularly for a checkup
3. Be sure all vaccines are up to date
4. Learn about any health problems that run in the family
5. Be sure all health conditions such as asthma and diabetes are being managed
6. Use birth control until ready to get pregnant
7. Use protection to avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
8. Take a multivitamin that contains 400 micrograms of folic acid every day
9. Get help to stop drinking alcohol and using drugs
10. Get help to stop smoking (including e-cigarettes and vaping)
11. Adopt a healthy lifestyle, eat healthy, and get to a healthy weight
12. Do something physically active every day
13. Avoid harmful chemicals, metals, and other toxic substances at work and at home
14. Learn ways to lower stress levels and get mentally healthy
15. Provide a safe environment, away from abuse and violence



Source CDC 2025 Pregnancy Planner: [cdc.gov/pregnancy/media/pdfs/Pregnancy\\_Planner\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/media/pdfs/Pregnancy_Planner_508.pdf)

## Provider and treatment options when pregnant

Mercy Care DCS CHP allows our members the freedom of choice when choosing a provider. If the youth in your care is receiving prenatal care from an AHCCCS Obstetrician/Gynecologist (OB/GYN), and they transition to Mercy Care DCS CHP from another health plan or they become enrolled with Mercy Care DCS CHP during their third trimester, then they have the opportunity of staying with that OB/GYN. That provider has to accept AHCCCS, but does not have to be in the Mercy Care DCS CHP network. If they want to stay with that OB/GYN, call Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services as soon as possible to avoid being assigned to a different OB/GYN. This is to ensure there is no interruption to their prenatal care.

Members do not need a referral from their primary care provider (PCP). They can go directly to an OB/GYN. The OB/GYN has to be in the Mercy Care DCS CHP network. The OB/GYN will oversee all pregnancy care. The PCP will oversee all routine health care. Members can also choose to have their OB/GYN as their PCP during their pregnancy. If they decide to choose this option, please call Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services right away.



## Regular well visits are important

It's important for everyone, not just children or babies, to have regular well visits with their primary care provider (PCP). These well visits allow the PCP to address any physical and behavioral needs. Well visits help keep people healthy.

### What is the EPSDT program?

Members under 21 years of age are covered under the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) Program. This is a complete health program. The program covers services that are medically necessary and cost-effective, and they are also at no cost to you. The program does not cover experimental or cosmetic services.

### What is covered under the EPSDT Program?

- Services done by physicians, nurse practitioners, and specialists.
- Hospital visits, well visits, sick visits, and visits with specialists.
- Therapies, vaccines, medications, labs, and x-rays.
- Medical, dental, and behavioral health services.
- Medical equipment, appliances, and supplies, includes orthotics and prosthetics.
- Vision and hearing services
- Eyeglasses and frames. This includes repairing and replacing frames.
- Help with scheduling appointments and medically necessary transportation.
- Family planning services and supplies.
- Women's preventive services and maternity services.

### When should a well visit occur?

Visits with a PCP should happen when a person is sick **AND** when they are healthy.

### Important well visit dates:

- Newborn and 3-5 days old
- Under 1 year old (During months: 1, 2, 4, 6, and 9)
- Between 1 and 3 years of age (During months: 12, 15, 18, 24, and 30)
- Between 3 and 20 years of age (Every year)

### What happens during an EPSDT well visit?

- Physical exam (gowns can be used to cover the body).
- Talk about any personal or family history of health problems.
- Do screenings on growth and development, autism, depression, and more.
- Check hearing, vision, and oral health (teeth and gums).
- Check height, weight, and age-appropriate weight gain.
- Ask about eating habits, nutrition, and healthy eating.
- Get vaccines and make sure they are up to date.
- Order labs (blood tests), imaging, or other testing if needed. Some examples of age-specific labs are anemia, sickle cell, heart health, lead, TB, and syphilis.
- Get education on how to manage a chronic condition such as asthma or heart disease.
- Get education on age-appropriate topics such as safety and lead exposure.
- Get information on available community resources such as AzEIP, CRS, Head Start/Early Head Start, Home Visitation programs, Encircle Families, and the Birth to Five Hotline.

For anyone between 10 and 18 years old, their visit will **also** include:

- Screening for depression, suicide, and other mood disorders.
- Screening for substance use, such as drinking alcohol, using drugs, or smoking.
- Talking about reproductive health, birth control, and safe sex.
- Screening for pregnancy. This may include counseling, treatment, and a referral.
- Screening, treatment, and counseling for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Talking about avoiding risky behaviors. Subjects such as using caution on social media and not engaging bullying or violence.

If the provider has concerns or if any screenings have a positive result, then a referral will be made to see a specialist.

### We're here when you need help

Do you need help with scheduling a well visit or finding a ride to an appointment? You can call member services for help. Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776** (TTY **711**).

## Signs of active labor

If you think the youth in your care is in labor or think they may have a problem with their pregnancy, call their provider immediately. If it is an emergency, their provider should see them right away or within three (3) business days of the call. Call the provider immediately if they have any of these symptoms. Don't wait for them to go away.

Important symptoms to pay attention to:

- Discharge, blood or water leaking from the vagina
- Low, dull backache
- Feel like they are going to start their period (period-like cramping)
- Pelvic pressure (like the baby is pushing down)
- Stomach cramps (they may or may not have diarrhea with this)
- Regular contractions that last for over an hour

If they are in labor and need a ride to the hospital, call **911**.

### Call the provider or go to the hospital?

You should take them to the hospital if they have any of these warning signs:

- Their water broke but there are no contractions
- They are bleeding heavily from the vagina
- They have constant, severe pain with no relief in between contractions
- They feel less movement from the fetus



Source: <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/how-to-tell-when-labor-begins>

## Managing asthma

About 28 million Americans have asthma, and over 4.6 million of them are under 18 years of age.

Asthma is a chronic lung condition that affects people of all ages. It causes wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness. It can also cause coughing at night, early in the morning, or during exercise. If unmanaged, these symptoms can lead to asthma attacks and ER visits.

People with asthma also may need to be careful when doing physical activities. Sometimes exercise can trigger an asthma attack. Illnesses such as colds, flu, bronchitis, and pneumonia can also make asthma symptoms worse. They may require urgent care or emergency treatment.

If the child or youth in your care regularly has breathing discomfort, do a checkup with a primary care provider (PCP). They can perform breathing tests to see if asthma is present. If it is present, they can provide treatments to help. Some examples are short-term medications like inhalers and long-term treatments such as pills, shots, or inhalers.

The best way to manage asthma is to have medication on hand and to avoid triggers. Some triggers can be smoke, mold, pests and insects, pet hair and dander, dust mites and air pollution.

To help prevent symptoms from getting worse, you can check your home for issues that may trigger symptoms and remove them. You can also check weather apps for poor outdoor air quality alerts. Stay inside or wear a mask on those days.



Source: [cdc.gov/asthma/](https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/)

## Community resources

### 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/>

### Affirm (formerly Arizona Family Health Partnership)

This federally funded program offers family planning, women's health services and education to Arizonans, regardless of their ability to pay. Call or go online to find a qualified health center near you. Call **602-258-5777** or <https://www.affirmaz.org/>

### Arizona Early Intervention Program (AZEIP)

AZEIP helps families of children with disabilities or developmental delays age birth to three years old. They provide support and can work with their natural ability to learn. To get help call Mercy Care Member Services, AzEIP Information Line: **1-800-592-0140** or [www.azdes.gov/azeip](http://www.azdes.gov/azeip)

### Arizona Head Start

Early Head Start/Head Start is a great program that gets preschoolers ready for kindergarten. They offer services at no cost to you. Call **602-262-4040** or visit [www.azheadstart.org](http://www.azheadstart.org).

### ADHS Health Start

Uses community health workers to provide education, support and advocacy services to pregnant and postpartum women and their families.

**602-542-1025**

<https://strongfamiliesaz.com/program/arizona-health-start/>

### ADHS 24-Hour Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Hotline

A 24-hour, 7 days a week hotline answered by an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant. Call **1-800-833-4642** or <https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/nutrition-physical-activity/breastfeeding/index.php>

### Arizona and Drug Information Center

No-cost, confidential, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**1-800-222-1222** or visit

<http://www.azpoison.com/>

### Arizona Opioid Assistance & Referral (OAR) Line

A no-cost, confidential hotline offers opioid advice, resources and referrals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This Hotline is staffed with local medical experts at the Arizona and Banner Poison & Drug Information Centers who offer patients, family members or providers valuable opioid information. Call **1-888-688-4222** or visit <https://www.azdhs.gov/oarline>.

### Arizona Chapter - Postpartum Support International Warm Line

Offer's support for families dealing with postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety and other mood disorders associated with pregnancy and postpartum. This is a volunteer, peer support warm line. They help families

dealing with postpartum. Call or text 24 hours a day/7 days a week: **1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)** or [www.psiarizona.org](http://www.psiarizona.org)

### Arizona Diaper Bank

The Arizona Diaper Bank provides Children's Diapers, Adult Incontinence Briefs, and Menstruation (period) products to those in need. They are committed to ensuring that every child, adolescent, and adult has access to clean, dry products to help improve their health, dignity, and well-being. Call in Tucson: **520-325-1400**, Call in Phoenix: **602-715-2629**, or <https://diaperbank.org/need-assistance/>

### ARIZONA@WORK

ARIZONA@WORK provides comprehensive statewide and locally-based workforce solutions for job seekers and employers. <https://arizonaatwork.com>

### Arizona Smokers Helpline ASHLine

This program is available to help people quit smoking and to get coaching to help them through the process. It also gives information on how to protect people from secondhand smoke. There are several no cost resources available, including Quit Coaching. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** or **1-855-DEJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569)** or visit <https://www.azdhs.gov/ashline/>

### 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 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. **877-705-KIDS**

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

### Child Care Resource and Referral

Statewide program that helps families find childcare. Call **1-800-308-9000** or <https://www.azccrr.com>.

### Count the Kicks App

A no-cost pregnancy app available to individuals who are in their third trimester of pregnancy. The app helps expectant parents learn about the importance of tracking fetal movements. Tracking these movements, in addition to regular prenatal visits, helps monitor the baby's well-being. You can download the app at <https://www.countthekicks.org>.

### CPLC Parenting Arizona

Offers positive parenting education to all Arizona families by empowering parents with the skills to raise healthy and successful children. More information, call **602-248-0428** or <https://www.cplc.org>.

### Dump the Drugs

Find drop box locations to dispose of unused or unwanted prescription drugs. This application displays all drop off locations in Arizona and enables the user to enter their address to receive directions to the location closest to them.

*continued on page 9*

General and Public information: **602-542-1025** or <https://azdhs.gov/gis/dump-the-drugs-az>

### Family Spirit

For Native American families with children under 3 years old. This is a culturally tailored home visitation program to support young Native parents from pregnancy to 3 years postpartum. Parents gain knowledge and skills to achieve optimum development for their preschool age children.

<https://strongfamiliesaz.com/program/family-spirit-home-visiting-program>

### First Things First

Partners with families and communities to help our state's young children be ready for success in kindergarten and beyond.

**602-771-5100** or **877-803-7234** or <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/>

### Fussy Baby Program

Fussy Baby program is a component of the Birth to Five Helpline and gives support for parents who are concerned about their baby's temperament or behavior during the first year of life.

**877-705-KIDS** or <https://www.swhd.org/programs/health-and-development/fussy-baby>

### Healthy Families Arizona

A no-cost home visitation program where a community health worker will go to the pregnant member's home to help with any concerns and to give information. The program starts while the member is pregnant and can continue through the time that the baby is 2 years old!

<https://strongfamiliesaz.com/program/healthy-families-arizona>

### 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](http://www.hushabyenursery.org)

### Jacob's Hope

Jacob's Hope is a clinic for newborns who are suffering with withdrawals from prenatal exposure to drugs. Their medically nurturing facility cares for these infants in a home-like environment until they are ready for discharge.

**480-398-7373** or <https://jacobshopeaz.org/>

### La Leche League of Arizona

La Leche League gives free support for women who choose to breastfeed through the Valley Help Line and support groups. Call **602-234-1956** or **1-800-525-3243**, or [www.llofaz.org](http://www.llofaz.org)

### Lead Safe Phoenix Program

This is a no-cost home visitation program that provides community outreach and education to people who live in the city of Phoenix. Home visitors will provide blood lead testing to children under 6 years old, they will check your home for lead, educate you on lead poisoning and refer you to community resources if needed.

**602-525-3162** or <https://www.phoenix.gov/administration/departments/nsd/housing-repairs/lead-safe-phx.html>

### Nurse-Family Partnership

A no-cost home visitation program that offers help for first-time mothers who are less than 28-weeks pregnant 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. Call **602-224-1740** or <https://strongfamiliesaz.com/program/arizona-health-start/>

### Parents Partners Plus

A no-cost home visitation program that offers individualized support around every day parenting experiences and family well-being. They help with breastfeeding, fighting postpartum depression, child-rearing or otherwise transitioning into life as a parent, and more. Call **602-633-0732** or <https://parentpartnersplus.com/>

### 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.azdhs.gov/powermea2z/>

### Encircle Families

Encircle Families exists to improve the lives of children with the full range of disabilities, from birth to age 26, by providing support, training, information, and individual assistance so families can become effective advocates for their children.

<https://encirclefamilies.org/>

Phoenix - **602-242-4366** or **1-800-237-3007**

Southern Arizona - Tucson **520-441-4007**

Southern Arizona - Yuma **928-444-8803**

### SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

This food assistance program provides eligible households with monthly benefits they can use to purchase nutritious foods. They help families meet their fundamental needs by helping to fight food insecurities and allow people to overcome barriers and allowing for self-sufficiency. This program is also known as Food Stamps. Call **1-855-432-7587** or <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/food-assistance>

### Strong Families AZ

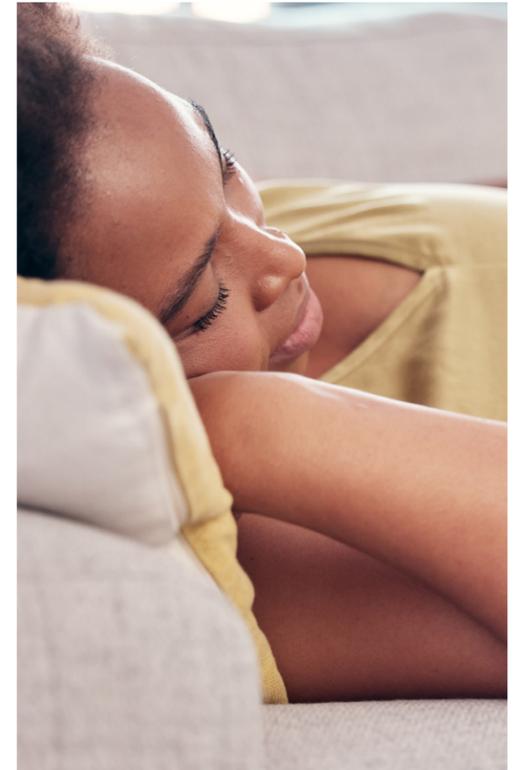
A network of no-cost home visitation programs that helps families raise healthy children ready to succeed in school and life. The programs focus on pregnant woman and families with children birth to age 5. Visit <https://strongfamiliesaz.com/> or call **602-345-0471** to find programs in your area.

### WIC

WIC (Women, Infants, & Children) offers healthy foods for moms and their babies. WIC helps families meet their fundamental needs by helping to fight food insecurities and allow people to overcome barriers and allowing for self-sufficiency. They can also help with breastfeeding. Call **1-800-252-5942** to apply or visit [www.azdhs.gov/azwic](http://www.azdhs.gov/azwic).

## Tips for better sleep

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



## Mercy Care DCS CHP

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.

@MercyCareAZ



Call DCS CHP Mercy Care Member Services at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776 (TTY 711)**, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[www.mercycareaz.org](http://www.mercycareaz.org)