

# HEALTH MATTERS

Fall/Winter 2026

## Stay safe this flu season

The flu is a virus that spreads easily and can make you feel very sick. It can be very serious for older adults and people with a chronic condition like asthma, diabetes or heart disease. For them, the flu can lead to a hospital stay.

A flu shot is the best way to protect yourself. It helps your body fight off the flu virus. That means you're less likely to catch the flu, or less likely to get really sick if you do. It also means you're less likely to spread the flu.

The flu shot is custom-made each year to protect against that year's strain of flu. That's why it's so important to get a shot every

year. For the best protection, get your shot early in the fall, before flu season starts.

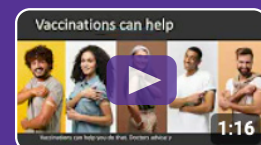
Flu shots and other routine vaccines are a covered service. Based on your age, your provider may suggest other vaccines. It's safe to get other vaccines with the flu shot.

Here are other ways to stay healthy this flu season:

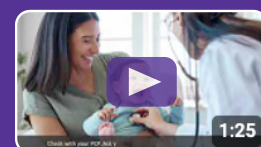
- Stay away from people who are sick
- Wear a mask in crowded places, especially if you are sick
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Stay healthy by eating well, getting enough sleep and staying active
- Clean things you touch often, like phones and doorknobs

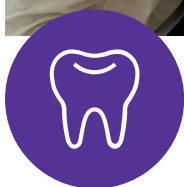
### WATCH:

What vaccines should adults get?



What vaccines should children get?





## Dental care tips

Your teeth and gums don't just give you a beautiful smile. They're vital to your overall health.

Follow these tips to maintain a healthy smile.

### 1 Brush and floss every day.

Brush twice every day using fluoride toothpaste. Dentists often recommend a toothbrush with soft bristles to prevent too much pressure against your teeth.

Use dental floss between your teeth. This prevents harmful bacteria from growing in your mouth.

### 2 Eat to support healthy teeth.

Eating well is key to a healthy mouth. Foods that are rich in calcium—

including milk and yogurt—help keep your teeth strong.

Limit foods that are high in sugar, such as soda. Sugar that stays on your teeth can lead to tooth decay.

### 3 Drink water with fluoride in it.

Fluoride helps keep your teeth strong. The best source of fluoridated water is the tap in most cities, right over your kitchen sink. Drinking water with fluoride may help prevent tooth decay.

A dentist is an important member of your care team. Visit [www.MercyCareAZ.org](http://www.MercyCareAZ.org) to find an in-network dentist. Click "Find a provider" at the top of the homepage. Select the "Find a dentist" option.

## Help with dental care

As of 1/1/2026, Liberty Dental is our new dental benefits administrator. If you need help with dental services, visit the Liberty Dental website or call **866-609-1529** (TTY: **711**), Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### Dental emergency?

Mercy Care members have access to a dentist 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year-round. Contact your current dentist for emergency dental services. They will perform an assessment by phone or video on your smart device.

A dental emergency can be a chipped or broken tooth, tooth pain, face swelling or bleeding. You can also search for a dental provider by clicking "Find a dentist". Any in-network dentist can help you with emergency dental services.

Need dental help after hours? Get help with teledentistry 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Need to renew your coverage?

You must renew your Medicaid coverage every year. Look for your renewal notice in the mail. Go to [healthearizonaplus.gov](http://healthearizonaplus.gov) to learn more.

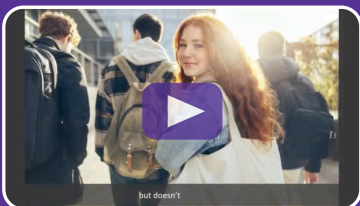


# How do I talk to someone about suicide?

Sometimes when someone is struggling in their life, they may be considering suicide. Suicide is when a person harms oneself to try to end their life. It's important to know the warning signs and to seek help.

## WATCH:

How to talk to someone about suicide



They may say they want to die or talk about feeling hopeless, having no purpose or being a burden to others. Listen to them carefully. Let them know you are there for them. Get them connected to resources.

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

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

Ask them if they are considering suicide. Let them know that suicide is a serious matter. Connect them to resources.

The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a no-cost, national service. Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They offer support in English and Spanish. Call or text the lifeline at **988** or visit **988lifeline.org** to chat.

## More resources:

- [save.org](https://www.save.org)
- [988lifeline.org/help-someone-else](https://988lifeline.org/help-someone-else)
- [bethethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence](https://bethethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence)
- [mercycaresaz.org/crisis-services](https://mercycaresaz.org/crisis-services)
- The Trevor Project LGBTQ+ 24-hour crisis line: call **1-866-488-7386**, text **678-678** or chat at [thetrevorproject.org](https://thetrevorproject.org)



## Measuring cultural competency

We're committed to our members and their care. It's very important to us. That's why we spend a lot of time and effort making sure cultural competency is part of everything we do. This means being respectful to your beliefs and your culture. It also means understanding your language needs.

We require our providers to support members with culturally sensitive services. They use the **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards** as a guide. These standards make sure that services are respectful to your culture and language needs.

We have two departments at Mercy Care that keep an eye on how providers are doing. They are Cultural Competency and Quality Management.

They offer support to providers. They make sure members are getting services in the right way. And that helps to make sure we are always improving services that are sensitive to your culture and way of life.

## Help for a behavioral health crisis

Mercy Care members can call the **Arizona Behavioral Health Crisis Line** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **1-844-534-HOPE (4673)** or text HOPE to **4HOPE (44673)**. Chat support is available at [crisis.solari-inc.org/start-a-chat](https://crisis.solari-inc.org/start-a-chat).

The Crisis Line staff can help:

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

### Tribal crisis lines:

- San Carlos Apache Reservation: **1-866-495-6735**
- Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities: **1-800-259-3449**
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: **480-850-9230**
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: **480-461-8888**
- San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation: **480-461-8888**
- Tohono O'odham Nation: **1-844-423-8759**
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe: Tucson **520-591-7206**; Guadalupe **480-736-4943**
- White Mountain Apache Tribe: **928-338-4811**
- Navajo Nation: **928-551-0508**

**Veterans Crisis Line:** 988, press 1

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** 988

**National crisis text line:** Text HOME to **741741**. Chat support is available at [crisistextline.org/text-us](https://crisistextline.org/text-us).

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

If you need someone to talk to, call the Warm Line at **602-347-1100**. Get 24/7 support from trained Peer Support Specialists.

*Always call **911** in life-threatening situations.*

# Health equity in focus

Mercy Care's mission is to help our members live a healthier life and achieve their fullest potential. One way we do that is by focusing on health equity which ensures fair health care access that is person-centered to fit your needs.

There are life factors that play a big part in your well-being too. Those factors may include access to healthy food, housing, education and work opportunities. These are some health and wellness resources you can reach out to for support:

## 2-1-1 Arizona

You can find information about employment and family services, food, clothing and shelter, and how to get help if you're experiencing domestic violence.

Go to **[211arizona.org/mercycrg](https://211arizona.org/mercycrg)** or call **211**.

## Health-e-Arizona

You can renew your AHCCCS benefits, check coverage and update your information.

Go to **[healthearizonaplus.gov](https://healthearizonaplus.gov)**

## Substance abuse and mental health

You can locate sites for mental health and substance use treatment.

Find a provider at **[mercycareaz.org/find-a-provider](https://mercycareaz.org/find-a-provider)** and get access to physical and mental health services when and where you need it.

More resources are available at **[mercycareaz.org/community-resource-guide](https://mercycareaz.org/community-resource-guide)**

## Resources to help you manage your care

We have special programs that may help you successfully manage chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease or other health needs.

Contact Mercy Care Member Services to find out about Care Management and other wellness programs. Or go to **[mercycareaz.org/acc-rbha/care-management.html](https://mercycareaz.org/acc-rbha/care-management.html)**.

Already on a Care Management program? You can find videos and newsletters with health advice to help you manage your condition. You can also decline or leave a special program by calling Member Services or your care manager.





# Grant-funded programs to aid in recovery and mental health

Did you know that Mercy Care helps manage recovery and mental health grant funding to behavioral health and substance use treatment providers? The funding is made possible by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Even if your AHCCCS benefits don't cover some of these services, you may still be able to get treatment through these grant-funded programs. These programs also help people who are uninsured or underinsured.

## Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)

The MHBG provides mental health treatment services to:

- Adults with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) designation
- Children identified with **Serious Emotional Disturbance**
- People aged 16–25 experiencing a First Episode of Psychosis (FEP)

For information on MHBG funding,

visit [mercycares.org/mental-health-block-grant.html](https://mercycares.org/mental-health-block-grant.html)

## Substance Use Block Grant (SUBG)

The SUBG provides substance use treatment services to adults and youth who are uninsured or underinsured. For information on SUBG funding, visit [mercycares.org/substance-use-block-grant.html](https://mercycares.org/substance-use-block-grant.html)

## State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant

The SOR grant helps give access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), integrated care and opioid and stimulant use addiction recovery services. For information about treating an opioid addiction, visit [mercycares.org/opioids-substance-use.html](https://mercycares.org/opioids-substance-use.html)

Call Member Services Monday through Friday between 7 AM and 6 PM at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879** (TTY **711**) to get connected to care. ACC-RBHA members with a SMI designation can call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465** (TTY **711**) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# What are opioids and how can you get help

Opioids are strong drugs that help with pain. Some are given by doctors, like oxycodone, morphine or fentanyl. Others, like heroin, are illegal. Many people don't know that common medicines like Vicodin and Percocet are also opioids.

Using opioids for a long time can lead to addiction. This means your body feels like it needs the drug to feel okay. This can happen to anyone—young or old, no matter where they live or what they do.

Roughly 1 out of every 50 people have opioid use disorder (OUD). Learning about opioids can help break the stigma and make it easier for people to ask for help.

When someone stops using opioids, they might feel sick. This is called withdrawal. Symptoms can include:

- Upset stomach
- Throwing up
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling very tired or craving the drug

## What Is MAT/MOUD?

MAT means Medication Assisted Treatment. MOUD means Medication for Opioid Use Disorder. It's a way to treat opioid addiction using medicine and counseling. This helps people feel better and stay healthy.

Sometimes MAT/MOUD gets a bad rap. People may think MAT/MOUD is just about trading one drug

for another. But that's not true.

When someone stops using opioids or alcohol, their brain may go into withdrawal. Sometimes people can't, or won't, stop using just to avoid those feelings of withdrawal. MAT/MOUD helps reduce withdrawal symptoms and helps people feel stable and live their lives just like anyone else.

## Medicines that help

Doctors can give medicines to help with withdrawal and cravings:

- **Methadone:** Helps with cravings and withdrawal. It's taken as a liquid or pill.

- **Buprenorphine:** Lowers cravings. It comes as a pill, film, or shot.
- **Naltrexone:** Blocks the "high" from opioids. It's a pill or monthly shot.

These medicines work best when used with counseling or talking to someone who can help.

## Where to get help

Mercy Care has places called 24/7 Access Points where you can get help anytime. To learn more:

- **Mercy Care Opioid Help**
- **AHCCCS Service Locator**

*Continued on next page*



Continued from previous page

## Stay safe

- **Don't share needles.**
- **Don't mix drugs.**
- **Get help if you feel sick or sad.**

## What to do if someone overdoses

- 1 Call 911 right away.
- 2 Check for signs:
  - Can't wake up
  - Slow or no breathing
  - Blue lips or nails
  - Tiny pupils (a pupil is the black dot in the middle of the eye)
- 3 Help them breathe if you can. If oxygen isn't available, use rescue breathing (mouth-to-mouth).
- 4 Stay with them until help comes.
- 5 Give Naloxone (NARCAN) if you have it. It can stop an overdose. You can get it at a pharmacy or clinic.

# Improving your care

Mercy Care has a Quality Improvement (QI) program. This program sets goals to improve the health of our members and improve the quality of their care. Mercy Care uses data to see if we have met the goals. It is also important to us that members can access care easily. If you are having trouble with your health care, please call and let us know. We want to make sure our members get the highest quality health care possible!

## 2025 Strengths:

- Helping members who have diabetes with their blood sugar levels.
- Helping members who have high blood pressure to keep it in the right range.
- Getting children a well visit at least once a year.
- Making sure that members are satisfied with Mercy Care.
- Making sure that adolescents have all required vaccines before their thirteenth birthday.

## 2026 Opportunities:

- Making sure that children have all required vaccines before their second birthday.
- Helping female members have well woman exams including Pap tests and mammograms.
- Making sure that members who delivered a baby complete postpartum care.

You can call the phone number on the back of your ID card to learn more. We can also help you get a copy of this information in writing.

Log in to Mercy Care Health Assistant to help manage your care and complete healthy activities at [mercycar.es/healthasst](https://mercycar.es/healthasst).





## Understanding your pharmacy benefits

Mercy Care's List of Covered Drugs ("the Drug List" or formulary) tells you which prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs and items are covered at participating network pharmacies.

The Drug List will tell you if there are any special rules or restrictions on any covered drugs. In these cases, you or your doctor or other prescriber must ask the plan to cover a drug.

Visit **[MercyCareAZ.org/acc-rbha/pharmacy.html](https://www.mercycareaz.org/acc-rbha/pharmacy.html)** to find out about our pharmacy management and updates. (For members with a Serious Mental Illness designation, visit **[MercyCareAZ.org/acc-rbha-smi/pharmacy.html](https://www.mercycareaz.org/acc-rbha-smi/pharmacy.html)**.) You can see which drugs are covered and any requirements for getting them. You can also see what your doctor needs to do if you need a medication that isn't covered.

**HEALTH MATTERS** is published for the members of Mercy Care.

4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150, Phoenix, AZ 85040.

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.

Call for Mercy Care Member Services Monday to Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM, **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY 711)**.

For ACC-RBHA members with an SMI designation, call **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465 (TTY 711)**.

To reach the 24-hour nurse line, call Member Services and select "Speak with a nurse."

**[MercyCareAZ.org](https://www.mercycareaz.org)**

### Member Handbook

You can get this year's Member Handbook from Mercy Care Member Services at no cost to you. They can also send you the Provider Directory at no cost to you.

Or go to **[MercyCareAZ.org](https://www.mercycareaz.org)** to view both resources. Just select your plan and click on "Forms and Materials."

### Nondiscrimination Notice

Mercy Care complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Mercy Care does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, health status or need for health care services.

Mercy Care:

- Provides no-cost aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as qualified sign language interpreters and written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats).
- Provides no-cost language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages.

If you need a qualified interpreter, written information in other formats, translation or other services, call the number on your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

If you believe that Mercy Care has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with our Civil Rights

Coordinator at:

Address: Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator  
4750 S. 44th Place, Ste. 150, Phoenix, AZ 85040  
Telephone: **1-888-234-7358 (TTY 711)**  
Email: [MedicaidCRCoordinator@mercycaresaz.org](mailto:MedicaidCRCoordinator@mercycaresaz.org)

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you. You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD).

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>. This notice is available on the Mercy Care website at [www.mercycareaz.org/content/dam/mercycaresaz/pdf/MercyCare-1557-Notice-16Tags-020421-ua1.pdf](http://www.mercycareaz.org/content/dam/mercycaresaz/pdf/MercyCare-1557-Notice-16Tags-020421-ua1.pdf).

### Multi-language Interpreter Services

**ENGLISH: ATTENTION:** If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call the number on the back of your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

**SPANISH: ATENCIÓN:** Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número que aparece en el reverso de su tarjeta de identificación o al **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

**VIETNAMESE: CHÚ Ý:** Nếu quý vị nói tiếng Việt, chúng tôi có sẵn các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho quý vị. Hãy gọi số có ở mặt sau thẻ ID của quý vị hoặc **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

**ARABIC:** ملاحظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، ستكون خدمات المساعدة اللغوية متوفرة لك مجانًا. اتصل بالرقم الموجود في ظهر بطاقة التعريف أو **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

**NAVAJO:** Díí BAA NITSÁHÁKEES: Diné bizaad bishniih nisin nídínííł, bizaad bee ákónínízinígíí t'áá jiik'ehgo nidaatkaah, doo bee náhizj' da. Naa'áhi bikáá'gi bínáhásdláá'ígíí bikáá'gi bee hodíílnihígíí bich'j' hodíílnih, áádóó díí bee hodíílnih: **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

**CHINESE:** 注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電您的 ID 卡背面的電話號碼或**1-800-385-4104** (TTY: 711)

**TAGALOG:** PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng wikang Tagalog, mayroon kang magagamit na mga libreng serbisyo para sa tulong sa wika. Tumawag sa numero na nasa likod ng iyong ID card o sa **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

**KOREAN:** 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 귀하의 ID 카드 뒷면에 있는 번호로나 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** 번으로 연락해 주십시오.

**FRENCH:** ATTENTION: si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le numéro indiqué au verso de votre carte d'identité ou le **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

**GERMAN:** ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, können Sie unseren kostenlosen Sprachservice nutzen. Rufen Sie die Nummer auf der Rückseite Ihrer ID-Karte oder **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**) an.

**RUSSIAN:** ВНИМАНИЕ: если вы говорите на русском языке, отличном от английского, вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Позвоните по номеру, указанному на обратной стороне вашей идентификационной карты, или по номеру **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

**JAPANESE:** 注意事項：日本語を話せる方は、無料の言語支援サービスをご利用いただけます。IDカード裏面に記載されている電話番号、または **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** までご連絡ください。

**PERSIAN:** توجه: اگر فارسی صحبت می‌کنید، خدمات کمک زبانی بدون هیچ هزینه‌ای در دسترس شما است. با شماره مندرج در پشت کارت ID خود یا (TTY: 711) 1-800-385-4104 تماس بگیرید

## SYRIAC:

אֲחֵרִים: וּמִזֵּדִים: אֶל מַעֲרִיכָה לִנְתָּן אֲחֵרִים אֵל חֵדֶר  
הַיְיִבִּיחָה לִנְתָּן מִן הַלֵּל. מִן, לִנְתָּן הַיְיִבִּיחָה שֵׁנָה הַיְיִבִּיחָה  
הַיְיִבִּיחָה הַיְיִבִּיחָה מִן, לִנְתָּן: (TTY: 711) 1-800-385-4104.

**SERBO-CROATIAN:** OBAVEŠTENJE: Ako govorite srpski, usluge jezičke pomoći dostupne su vam besplatno. Pozovite broj na poledini vaše identifikacione kartice ili broj **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

**THAI:** ข้อควรทราบ: หากคุณพูดภาษาไทย เรามีบริการช่วยเหลือด้านภาษาให้ฟรี โทรไปที่หมายเลขด้านหลังบัตรประจำตัวของคุณ หรือ **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**