

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 and the youth in your care. 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:

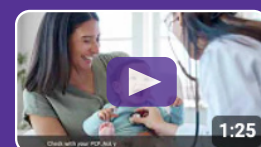
- Stay away from people who are sick
- Wear a mask in crowded places, especially if you are sick
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Stay healthy by eating well, getting enough sleep and staying active
- Clean things you touch often, like phones and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

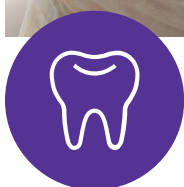
WATCH:

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.

Children and youth are required to have a dental visit within the first 30 days of entry into foster care.

Children and youth should visit a dentist twice a year (every six months) for regular checkups and cleanings. This is a covered service for members ages 18 and under.

A dentist is an important member of your care team. Visit 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.



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.

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.

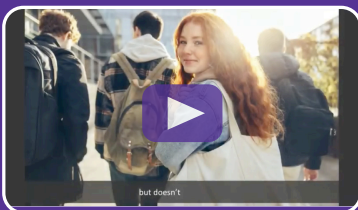
The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a no-cost, national service. Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They offer support in English and Spanish. Call or text the lifeline at **988** or visit **988lifeline.org** to chat.

More resources:

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

WATCH:

How to talk to someone about suicide





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 DCS CHP 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.

For no-cost language services, call **1-800-385-4104** (TTY: **711**).

Help for a behavioral health crisis

Mercy Care DCS CHP 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.

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.

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.*

Know the dangers of fentanyl and other opioids

Fentanyl is a man-made opioid used to treat severe pain. It's 50 to 100 times more potent than similarly used drugs such as morphine. Fentanyl use is a crisis in Arizona, accounting for most opioid overdoses, according to the Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona.

Toddlers and children have been poisoned by accidental exposure to fentanyl. Children and teens have died from fentanyl overdose.

Talk to the youth in your care about staying away from medicines or drugs that are not prescribed.

What to do in case of an overdose

If you suspect the youth in your care is overdosing, call **911** right away. You can also administer Naloxone, an overdose reversal drug, to provide life-saving treatment. Visit drugfree.org/article/overdose-response-treatment/ for more details on Naloxone.

Licensed Caregivers of youth 12 and older are required to have Naloxone to be able to use in case of an emergency. Naloxone is a covered benefit through the health plan and can be obtained with or without a prescription from the pharmacy.

Notify DCS within two hours after a child suffers serious illness or injury requiring hospitalization, urgent care or ER treatment.



Treating opioid addiction

Long term options may be needed to treat opioid addiction. It involves using approved medicines and behavioral therapies, like counseling, to treat substance use disorders. When people misuse opioids, their bodies can become addicted or dependent on them. If they don't have opioids in their system, they can feel opioid withdrawal. The symptoms of opioid withdrawal can include

diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, rapid heartbeat and intense cravings.

You do not need a referral from the child's primary care provider (PCP) for behavioral health or substance use services. Call the behavioral health or substance use provider directly to set up an appointment. You can also call Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776** (TTY: **711**) for help with finding a behavioral health provider.



Understanding your pharmacy benefits

Mercy Care's List of Covered Drugs ("the Drug List" or formulary) tells you which prescription and over-the-counter medicines 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, the prescriber must ask the plan to cover a drug via prior authorization process.

Visit [MercyCareAZ.org/dcschp/pharmacy.html](https://www.mercycareaz.org/dcschp/pharmacy.html) to find out about our pharmacy management and updates. 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 equity in focus

Mercy Care DCS CHP'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 their needs.

There are life factors that play a big part in their well-being too. Those factors may include access to healthy food, housing, education and work opportunities.

You can ask the child's DCS Specialist, a Mercy Care care manager or other member of their care team for help with these social needs.

HEALTH MATTERS is published for the members of Mercy Care DCS CHP.

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 Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM, at **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776** (TTY **711**). Or call the 24-hour nurse line: **602-212-4983** or **1-833-711-0776**.

MercyCareAZ.org

Member Handbook

You can get this year's Member Handbook from Mercy Care DCS CHP Member Services at no cost to you. We can also send you a copy of the Provider Directory at no cost to you.

Or go to **MercyCareAZ.org** to view both resources. Just select the child's plan and click on "Forms and Materials."

Nondiscrimination Notice

Mercy Care Department of Child Safety Comprehensive Health Plan (DCS CHP) 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 DCS CHP 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 DCS CHP:

- 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 DCS CHP 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@mercycareaz.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 DCS CHP website at www.mercycareaz.org/content/dam/mercycare/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 مجاناً. اتصل بالرقم الموجود في ظهر بطاقة التعريف أو **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

NAVAJO: Díí BAA NITSÁHÁKEES: Diné bizaad bishníníh nisin nídínííł, bizaad bee ákónínízinígíí t'áá jiik'ehgo nidaatkaah, doo bee náhizjį' da. Naa'áhi bikáá'gi bínáhasdláá'ígíí bikáá'gi bee hodíilnihígíí bich'į' hodíilnih, áádóó díí bee hodíilnih: **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:

אָדער: אַ מאָדעל פֿאַר אַ פֿאַרשפּאַרן אַזאַ פֿאַרשפּאַרן
 דאָס פֿאַרשפּאַרן פֿאַר אַ פֿאַרשפּאַרן פֿאַר אַ פֿאַרשפּאַרן
 דאָס פֿאַרשפּאַרן פֿאַר אַ פֿאַרשפּאַרן פֿאַר אַ פֿאַרשפּאַרן
 1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711).

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)**