



Fall/Winter 2016

Medicines

Know what you're taking

Many of the medications you take may contain acetaminophen, also known as APAP. It is in Tylenol as well as some common over-the-counter (OTC) medicines for fever, cold and flu, and sleeplessness. Too much acetaminophen can harm your liver.

To keep from harming your liver, watch how much acetaminophen you take.

- Follow the medicine's dose directions. Don't take more than what is listed.
- Don't take more than one medicine at a time that has acetaminophen.
- Don't take more than 4g (4,000mg*) in 24 hours.
- Always check to see if OTC or prescription

medicines contain acetaminophen.

It can be hard to tell how much acetaminophen is in your medicines. You can ask your doctor to help you figure out how much you're taking.

Make sure you tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medicines that you are taking, including OTC drugs.

It may help to make two lists: one of the drugs that you were asked to take by your doctor and one of the drugs that you buy from the store. Give both lists to your doctor or pharmacist.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to write down the amount of acetaminophen in all of your medicines.

Add up the amount that you take in 24 hours. This amount should not

be more than 4,000mg*. If you are getting close to 4,000mg, talk to your doctor right away.

It is important for you to know how much acetaminophen your child is taking too. Make sure you talk to your child's doctor about acetaminophen.

**For adults only. This amount is not recommended for children and could cause serious harm.*

HMH

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT NO. 173

Have a safe pregnancy

Using drugs can harm your baby

Using illegal drugs is bad for your health, and using them while you're pregnant could cause serious problems for your baby.

One of these problems is called neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). NAS is a group of conditions a baby can have when they are exposed to drugs before birth. The baby may even go into withdrawal after being born.

In addition to illegal drugs, some prescription painkillers (opioids), antidepressants, sleeping pills and other drugs can cause NAS. Ask your doctor about medications you are taking.

Using drugs during pregnancy can also cause:

- Premature birth
- Low birth weight
- Heart defects
- Other birth defects

Using illegal drugs can also put you and your baby at risk for infections like Hepatitis C or HIV.

Take steps to stop

If you use drugs regularly, a doctor can help you quit. It's even more important to quit if you're pregnant. Still, remember that some drugs can cause problems if you suddenly stop taking them. Your doctor can work with you to quit safely — for your sake and your baby's too.

For more information about NAS, visit www.marchofdimes.org.

Source: March of Dimes — [http://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/neonatal-abstinence-syndrome-\(nas\).aspx](http://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/neonatal-abstinence-syndrome-(nas).aspx)



HIV and pregnancy: Why testing matters

Are you thinking about having a baby? Are you pregnant now? Be sure to get tested for HIV. That's the virus that causes AIDS.

A woman who has HIV can pass the virus on to her child. This can happen while she is pregnant. It can also happen when she is giving birth.

If a woman knows she is infected, she can take steps to keep her baby — and herself — well. Special medicines can help her avoid passing the virus on to the baby.

These medicines work best if you start them early. But if you can't, they can still help if used before labor begins and the baby is born.

Testing is encouraged for all pregnant women, even those who don't think they have HIV. About 15 percent of women who have the virus don't know they have it.

Learning your HIV status will help ensure you and your baby are healthy.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Testing, Medication and Counseling. Every pregnant woman should get tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). Ask your doctor about how to get tested. If you test positive for any STD or HIV, your doctor can give you medication and help you find counseling. Testing, medication and counseling are provided at no cost to you.

Back to school: A checkup checklist

It's back-to-school time. That means it's time for you to do a little homework.

Don't panic! All you have to do is pick up the phone. There is no copayment or charge for these health and dental checkups. By making appointments for your child, you'll help start the school year right.

Be sure to schedule the following:

A well-child checkup.

A yearly exam is important, even when your child isn't sick. It may help you to spot problems early.

You can:

- Make sure immunizations are up-to-date
- Get answers to questions you or your child might have

- Schedule the physical that may be needed for your child to take part in school sports

An eye exam. Seeing well can be key to doing well in school. The sooner you find vision problems, the better.

A hearing screening.

Good hearing makes it easier to perform well in school. It also helps kids interact with others. Things like infections and high noise levels can affect hearing. A screening may help identify possible concerns.

A dental checkup.

Trouble with your child's teeth can make it hard to speak, eat and concentrate. A checkup may prevent serious problems and protect your child's smile.

If these visits reveal health concerns, you may have one more call to make — to your child's school. You should tell the staff about your child's health conditions and ask how they can help.

Sources: American Academy of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery; American Academy of Pediatrics

Need help making an appointment?

Mercy Care Plan Member Services is available to help you Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please call **602-263-3000**, or **1-800-624-3879**. If you are deaf or have difficulty hearing, call **711**.

If you do not have a way to get to your health care visit, we can help. Call Member Services three (3) days before your appointment to arrange a ride.



Member Handbook

You can get this year's Member Handbook from Mercy Care Plan Member Services at no cost to you. They can also provide you with a copy of the Provider Directory at no cost to you.

Talk to your doctor

It's important to your health

Is it hard for you to ask your doctor questions? Do you feel rushed at the doctor's office? You are not alone. A person's culture or their upbringing might make it hard for them to talk to their doctor. They might even think they are being rude if they ask questions.

Good communication involves both you and the doctor. You have the power to stay healthy, but you have to talk with your doctor and ask questions.

Here are a few steps you can take to help you talk to your doctor:

- At the start of your visit, let your doctor know that you would like to spend five minutes before you leave to talk about your health condition and treatment plan.
- If your doctor gives you a new medication, ask if there is anything you need to stop taking.
- Before leaving the office, make sure you ask what to do if you miss a dose of your medication.
- Ask your doctor if there is anything else you need to know about your health. Before you leave, make sure you have the facts and ask about anything that is not clear.



- Not all health problems require an emergency room (ER) visit. However, ask your doctor if there are symptoms you should watch for and when you should go to the ER.

Your culture (beliefs and values) play a big role in how you communicate and make choices. Have a clear understanding of your beliefs. Don't let your culture get in your way of good health care. Make sure those beliefs are also understood by your doctor. For example:

- Your doctor tells you to eat a certain kind of food, such as dairy products, but eating this food is against your religion or beliefs.

- Your doctor tells you that you need to schedule surgery, but you believe that you cannot make this decision without your spouse or partner.
- Your child's doctor tells you that your child needs to see a specialist, but you believe the family needs to help make the decision.

Sharing your beliefs, and communicating with your doctor, will help keep you healthy and informed.

Need language or interpretation services? Call Member Services Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

HEALTH MATTERS is published as a community service for the members of Mercy Care Plan, 4350 E. Cotton Center Blvd., Building D, Phoenix, AZ 85040.

Contract services are funded in part under contract with the state of Arizona.

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.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

Mercy Care Plan is administered by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC, an Aetna company.

Call Mercy Care Plan Member Services Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., at **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879**. If you are deaf or have difficulty hearing, call **711**.

www.MercyCarePlan.com

2016 © Coffey Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.

AZ-16-07-14-ENG