



Fall/Winter 2014

Why blood pressure matters

High blood pressure (HBP) may not cause symptoms—but it is dangerous. It puts you at risk for heart disease and stroke.

But HBP can also be an opportunity. It's a chance to make healthy changes for a better, longer life.

Talk to your doc

Work with your doctor to make a plan to control blood pressure. He or she may recommend:

- A healthier diet
- More exercise
- Taking medicines as directed

As you make changes, check in with your doctor on a regular basis to talk about your progress. He or she can help you find ways to deal with any setbacks.

Take charge at home

Once you know what needs to change, set specific, realistic goals. And plan how you'll cope when problems come up.

For example, you might aim to eat less than one teaspoon of salt every day. Think about how to do this even if you're eating out.

Or you might plan to take a 20-minute walk three days a week. Plan a route for nice weather.

Though it's not always easy, know that you can do it—and it's worth it.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; National Institutes of Health

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Mercy Care Plan cares about your privacy. We consistently monitor our Facebook page and may remove potentially harmful information to protect your privacy.

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Member Handbook

You can get this year's Member Handbook from Mercy Care Member Services. They can also provide you with a copy of the provider directory.

Health care fraud hurts everyone

Health care fraud can damage your finances and your health.

Dishonest doctors and others can use facts about your health to steal from Mercy Care Plan and AHCCCS. They may file claims for services not given. They also may do tests or procedures you don't need. Some of these may harm your health.

In some cases, incorrect information may go in your health records. This may cause problems for you later.

Watch for these tip-offs of health care fraud:

- Services on your medical bill that you did not receive
- People other than your health care team asking for your Mercy Care Plan or AHCCCS ID
- A doctor who suggests a service you don't think you need

If you think a member or doctor is committing health care fraud, you should report it. Write the:

- Date of the suspected fraud
- Service or amount of money involved
- Name of the person involved

Call Mercy Care Plan Special Investigations Unit hotline at **1-800-338-6361** or the AHCCCS Member Fraud Investigation Hotline at **602-417-4193**.

You do not have to give your name or ID number.

Sources: National Health Care Anti-Fraud Association; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Before baby: Get tested for HIV and STI

Pregnant? Thinking about it? Either way, you should be tested for HIV.

If you have HIV, you could pass it to your baby. It can happen:

- While you are pregnant
- When you give birth
- When breastfeeding

That's one reason why the HIV test is so important. If you find out you have HIV, you can take medicine to keep from passing the disease to your baby.

Without medicine, your baby has a 25 percent chance of getting HIV from you. But if you take medicine, along with other steps, that risk drops to less than 2 percent.



If you have HIV, learning that you have it also helps you. It gives you the chance to take care of your own health. And you will be able to take steps to keep from passing HIV to your partner.

Remember that screening and treatment of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are covered benefits for members. Call Member Services for more information.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Prenatal and postpartum care

Keeping you and your baby healthy

It doesn't matter if it's your first pregnancy or your third. You need prenatal care—for every pregnancy.

Prenatal care is the medical care women get when they're pregnant. The best prenatal care is:

Early. See a doctor as soon as you know you're pregnant—or think you might be.

Keep you and your baby healthy by eating a healthy diet. It is important to your baby's health and weight that you do not smoke,

take street drugs or drink alcohol. Talk to your doctor about activities that are good for you and will help your baby grow and stay inside your womb.

Regular. You'll have checkups throughout your pregnancy. Show up for each one. They all count.

Early, regular checkups are very important for you and your baby. If either of you has a problem, your doctor can find it quickly and treat it. Your doctor can also tell you what to do—or not do—to take good care of yourself and your baby. Be sure to follow your doctor's advice.

Do not deliver early

Do not elect to deliver your baby early. It is important for your baby's growth and development that you keep your baby inside of you to full term. This is 39 to 40 weeks.

Postpartum doctor visits

After you have your baby, it is normal to feel sore and tired. Do not push yourself too hard. Call to make this appointment the first week after you have your baby. If you had a C-section, you may need to see the doctor more than one time after the first visit.

Source: Office on Women's Health

The benefits of WIC

Arizona Women, Infants & Children (WIC) is a federally funded program providing nutritious foods, nutrition education, referrals, and breastfeeding resources and assistance.

Women who take part in the WIC program have children with improved birth weight and fewer preterm deliveries.

To enroll, call Arizona WIC at **1-800-252-5942**.



Health care across cultures

Beliefs. Customs. Values. They are key parts of your culture, religion or ethnic background. They help make you who you are.

But what if your doctor comes from a different background? You may not

share the same ideas about health, illness or medical treatment.

That doesn't mean you won't get great care. But to do so, you and your doctor should talk.

For instance, be sure your doctor respects your views about:

- How you want to talk about your symptoms and other health issues
- Who should provide your treatment
- What treatments you may not want

Once your doctor knows and values your background and beliefs, it will be easier for you to stay healthy—and to get well if you get sick.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health; National Institutes of Health

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PCMH corner Get to know your doctor

Think of your health care team as your special gateway to the world of health care.

It's likely that your team will be your first stop when you're sick and when you need advice about staying well.

This team is called a patient-centered medical home (PCMH). You and your doctor lead the team to focus on your health.

Your PCMH team can:

- Guide your total health care

- Treat a wide range of health issues
- Help prevent health problems
- Refer you to other experts as needed

Over time, they get to know your health history and help you make good choices so you can stay well.

Call Member Services today and ask for help in selecting a PCMH near you.

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Language and interpretation services

Mercy Care Plan can help you get a telephone or sign language interpreter for your health care visits at no cost to you. If you need help in your language or if you are deaf or have difficulty hearing, call Member Services for an interpreter at **602-263-3000**, **1-800-624-3879** or **711**.

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Don't let a language barrier block your road to good health. Ask for a translator.

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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.

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

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