



Fall/Winter 2014

4 steps to living well with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

You've been told you have COPD. You know this common lung disease can make everything you do more difficult. But that doesn't mean you have to give up on having a good life.

Many people with COPD live happy, productive lives. They do it by taking an active role in their health care. You can start to take control of your life and health with these four steps:

- 1. Make an action plan.** With your doctor, write down all the steps you need to take to stay healthy.
- 2. Understand your COPD medicines.** Learn as much as you can about when to take them and why.
- 3. Protect your health.** Be sure to get flu and pneumonia shots and all other preventive care.

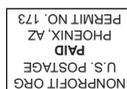
4. Eat right, exercise and reduce stress.

Talk with your doctor to find out what is best for you.

Want to know more ways to take control of your health and well-being? Visit www.morehealth.org/COPDlivingwell.

Source: American College of Chest Physicians

Steer clear of fumes, smoke and strong odors. These can set off breathing problems for people with COPD.





Have diabetes? Set your sights on healthy vision

Vision loss: Anyone with diabetes is at risk for it. But there are steps you can take to help save your sight.

First, get regular eye exams at least once a year. Don't wait until you notice vision loss. That's because diabetes can cause harm without any early warning signs.

During your exam, your eye doctor will look for:

- Leaking blood vessels. Blood in the eye can cloud your vision.

- Swelling. It may be a sign of fluid leaking into the eye. That can cause blurring.
- Changes in blood vessels or nerve tissue.
- Any other eye issues.

If there's a problem, your doctor can suggest solutions. Laser treatment or surgery may be needed.

To protect your sight, you also need to manage your diabetes. Follow your treatment plan to keep blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol under control.

Source: National Eye Institute

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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.

Advance directives: A document that speaks for you

We all want to be in control of our own lives. But if you become very ill, you may not be able to speak for yourself. That's why you should have an advance directive.

An advance directive is a legal document. It tells doctors and others what kind of care you want if you are ill or dying and cannot make decisions for yourself.

There are two kinds of advance directives. You can have either one or both of these:

- **A living will.** This tells which medical treatments you want if you are seriously ill. It also tells which treatments you don't want. For example, it could say whether you want to be on artificial life support. Or use a living will to name the person you want to make end-of-life care decisions for you.
- **A durable power of attorney for health care.** This lets you choose someone to decide about your care. That could be a friend or family member. Some people choose a lawyer or someone from their faith community. You should make sure this person knows just what care you want and don't want.

It's not hard to make an advance directive. Your doctor or your state health department may have a form you can use. Or look for one at www.caringinfo.org. You can also write down your wishes. If so, show them to your doctor or a lawyer. They can make sure what you want is clearly stated.

Someone you aren't related to may need to watch as you sign and date your advance directive. This witness then signs and dates the paper too. If possible, have your advance directive notarized.

Be sure to tell your family that you have an advance directive. Give a copy to your doctor. You can make changes at any time. If you do, let your doctor and your family know.

Sources: Alzheimer's Association; American Academy of Family Physicians; National Institute on Aging

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 the 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



Get tested for STIs

Remember that screening and treatment of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are covered benefits for members.

If you are pregnant, you should get tested for HIV and STIs in order to protect yourself and your baby. You can take medicines to keep from passing HIV to your baby.

Call Member Services for more information.



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

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

LONG TERM CARE CONNECTION is published as a community service for the friends 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**.

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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.

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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