

Spring 2014

Support groups for seniors and people with disabilities

Everyone needs support at times. That includes older adults and people with disabilities. But sometimes it can be hard to know where to turn.

Many people find aid and comfort by joining a support group. A lot of people enjoy being a part of these groups and consider them helpful.

Are you looking for a group to join? You can find them in hospitals, community centers and online.

You may have to do some searching. But there are many resources out there. Here are a couple of places to get you started:

Eldercare locator. Visit www.eldercare.gov.

Or you can call **1-800-677-1116** from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time. If you call, you'll speak with someone who knows all about programs for seniors. You can learn about your local Area Agency on Aging or the Aging and Disability Resource Center. These agencies can tell you about

programs, services and support groups in your area.

Disability.gov. At www.disability.gov, you'll find links to many national, state and local resources. You can also join online groups through the site. And you'll have access to other social media. Plus, you'll be directed to hundreds of groups serving people with specific disabilities.

Sources: American Psychological Association; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Department of Labor

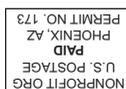
Local resources

ALZ Association:
602-528-0545

ALZ Association
(Tucson):
1-800-272-3900
or **520-322-6601**

Caregiver Resource Line:
1-888-737-7494

Pima Council on Aging:
520-790-0504 (offers support groups for caregivers)



Break out of the 'diabetes/depression' cycle

Diabetes and depression. They have more in common than both starting with the letter "D."

They may occur together. And it can be hard to separate the two conditions.

For example:

- If you have diabetes, you are at risk for depression. Your risk is higher than that of someone who doesn't have diabetes.
- Depression can rob your energy. As a result, you might test your blood sugar less often than you should. Or you might spend less time choosing healthy foods.
- Your blood sugar could get out of control. But you might not know it until you start feeling bad. And feeling sick makes you feel more depressed.

Depression can rob your energy. You might not feel like testing your blood sugar. Or you might spend less time choosing healthy foods.

It's as if your depression and diabetes are feeding on each other. And you're trapped in the middle.

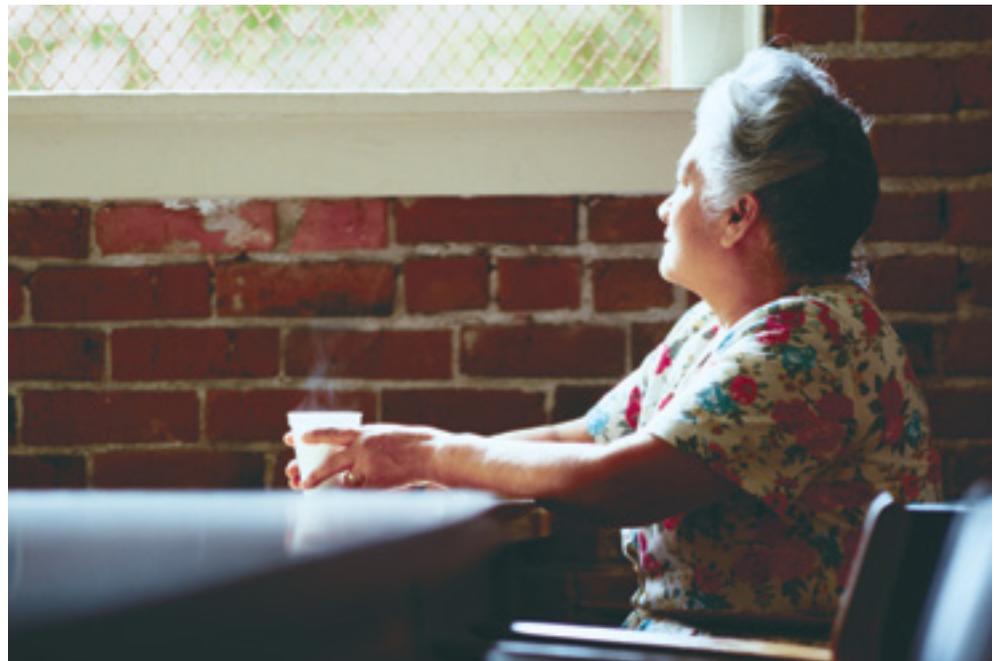
So, how do you break out of this cycle?

1. Know the signs of depression.

Are you often sad? Do you cry for no reason? Do you just want to stay in bed all day? Do you have trouble sleeping? Do you feel hopeless? Have you lost interest in things you used to enjoy?

2. **Ask your doctor for help.** Tell him or her how you have been feeling. He or she may refer you to a therapist. If so, go! Just talking to someone can help you feel better. Your doctor or therapist may prescribe medication, as well. They may also create a crisis plan for you. Your primary care physician should also coordinate your care and arrange for follow-up care.

Source: American Diabetes Association



Older adults: Walk safely for better health

Walking—it's a smart move for older adults.

It can help you stay strong and even help you avoid a heart attack or stroke.

Even so, you need to take steps to walk safely. The most important one is to get your doctor's OK before you start walking. And if you have any pain or

problems when you walk, let your doctor know.

Has it been a long time since you exercised? Then go slowly. You might start by walking only for one or two blocks at first. Then you can gradually work up to 20 or 30 minutes of

exercise every day. Your doctor can help you come up with a plan. Also:

- If you have a cane or walker, use it.
- Don't overdo it. You should be able to chat while walking.

Source: AGS Foundation for Health in Aging

Health tip: Get a walking buddy. You're more likely to stick with exercise with a friend by your side.

PCMH corner: A medical home puts you first

It's true: There's no place like home.

And when you need health care, there's no place like a patient-centered medical home (PCMH).

Care you can count on

A PCMH is a newer type of doctor's office. But it's not the office itself that makes it special. It's how your doctor delivers your care.

PCMHs focus on you—both when you're sick and when you're trying to stay well.

At a PCMH:

- **Your doctor partners with you to head a team.** You are a core member of that team.

Your medical home supports you in learning to manage and organize your care as much as you choose to. You build a strong relationship and turn to your doctor first for health care. But the doctor will bring in others to help you as needed.

- **Your doctor keeps everyone working together.** This improves your care.
- **What's important to you matters.** Your care focuses on your needs, values and wishes.
- **It's often easier to get care.** There are usually short wait times

for appointments. And there's a place to turn if you have questions or concerns.

- **The best, safest care is always the goal.** Your doctor will constantly look for ways to provide better care.

Sound good?

You may want to consider a PCMH. There is a listing of PCMHs contracted with Mercy Care Plan on the website: **www.MercyCarePlan.com/assets/pdf/PCMHLocations.pdf**.

Sources: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; National Committee for Quality Assurance

LONG TERM CARE CONNECTION

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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.

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

Call Mercy Care Plan Member Services Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879**, TTY/TTD **711** **www.MercyCarePlan.com**

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Got asthma? Don't smoke!

Asthma and smoking just don't mix. Yet too many people with the disease continue to light up.

Worse, many adults smoke around their kids or grandkids who have asthma. Because children breathe more rapidly than adults do, they breathe in more secondhand smoke.

As a result, even kids without asthma who breathe that smoke have more:

- Wheezing
- Airway infections
- Ear infections

Smoke also can cause asthma in kids who might not otherwise have gotten it.

No matter the person's age, it's just bad news when someone with asthma breathes in cigarette smoke. It can trigger asthma attacks, cause more flare-ups and make attacks more severe.

Ready to quit?

If you do, you and those around you can look forward to:

- Fewer flare-ups
- Fewer trips to the ER
- Better overall health

Many people have quit smoking and stopped tobacco use through programs offered by the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine). The ASHLine has several valuable and free resources. If you want more information to help quit tobacco, please call the ASHLine at **1-800-556-6222**, visit **www.ashline.org** or talk to your PCP. You do not need a referral from your doctor to call ASHLine. ASHLine also offers information to help protect you and your loved ones from secondhand smoke.

Source: American Association for Respiratory Care