

health matters

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things to know
We protect
your privacy

At Mercy Care Plan, we work hard to keep your health information private. We have created a Notice of Privacy Practices to tell you about your privacy rights.

It tells how Mercy Care Plan protects your privacy and how we use your information to improve your health care. It also explains your rights about your health record.

Would you like a copy?

At least every three years we must notify members covered by Mercy Care Plan about how to get this notice.

If you have any questions or wish to have a copy of the notice, please call **(602) 263-3000** or **(800) 624-3879**.

If you have trouble hearing, you can call our TDD/TTY number at **(602) 248-9273**.

You may also get a copy of the notice from our Web site, www.mercycareplan.com.

Or you can write to:

Mercy Care Plan
Attn: Privacy Coordinator
2800 N. Central Ave., Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Why checkups are good for kids

To help your child grow up healthy and happy, make regular doctor visits a priority.

During a checkup, your child's doctor may:

- Check on your child's growth and development
- Find health problems before they become serious
- Update shots
- Offer tips on how to keep your child safe

Regular visits will start as soon as your child is born. After that, see your child's doctor:

- Before your baby leaves the hospital
- When your child is 2 to 4 weeks old and also at 2, 4, 6, 9 and 12 months
- During the second year at 15, 18 and 24 months
- Once a year from ages 2 to 5
- At ages 6, 8 and 10
- Every year from ages 11 to 21



Southwest Catholic Health Network
2800 N. Central, Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85004-1036

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Folic acid helps prevent birth defects



For a healthy baby, remember two words: folic acid.

Folic acid is a B vitamin that helps prevent birth defects.

You need this vitamin during the first few weeks of pregnancy. But you can be pregnant for weeks and not know it.

So play it safe. Plan ahead. Start taking folic acid before you get pregnant. Most multivitamins have the amount you need.

When you are pregnant, you need more folic acid. It may help prevent early labor. Ask your doctor about how to get enough.

You may also want to eat foods with folic acid. Smart choices include cereal, nuts and oranges.

Talk to your doctor to learn more.

Source: The National Women's Health Information Center

Pregnant? See your dentist

Are you pregnant? You're probably focused on your tummy. But here's a part of your body that also needs attention: your teeth.

Now that you're expecting:

- Your gums are more likely to bleed. They may also swell or feel tender.
- A serious gum infection may cause your baby to be born too early or too small.

So take good care of your teeth.

Floss and brush regularly.

Dental services are covered for members younger than 21.

Source: American Academy of Periodontology

Turn to WIC for better nutrition

Eating well can help you and your kids stay healthy.

But that isn't always easy. Sometimes you need some extra help to get the foods that are good for your family and to learn more about proper nutrition. That's where WIC can help.

WIC stands for Women, Infants and Children. It's a government program that can help you and your kids eat better.

WIC may:

- Provide you with ways to get healthy foods
- Teach you about eating well
- Help you with breastfeeding

Everyone in your family can benefit when you take part in the program.

To qualify for WIC, you must meet certain income guidelines. You must also have a need for better nutrition. Those who may be eligible include:

- Pregnant women
- Women who are breastfeeding
- Children younger than 5

If you think WIC could help you or your family, talk to your doctor.

You may also visit this Web site, www.fns.usda.gov/wic, for more information.





Handling common childhood injuries

Bumps, burns and other things that hurt. They are all part of being a kid.

Part of being a parent is knowing how to handle common childhood injuries.

Poison

Small children like to put things in their mouths. But many household items can be poisonous, such as medicines, cleaners, plants and chemicals.

What to do: Remove anything left in your child's mouth. Call poison control at (800) 222-1222 or your doctor's office right away. Keep the container with you so you can answer any questions.

What to avoid: Don't make your child vomit unless you are told to do so. Don't follow any advice on the container unless someone tells you to.

Bumps to the head

Light bumps on the head usually aren't serious. But sometimes they can be.

What to do: Put a cold pack (a bag of frozen peas will do) on

the bump. Call your doctor if you are worried or if your child:

- Has a headache that gets worse
- Has slurred speech
- Gets dizzy
- Vomits
- Becomes sleepy

What to avoid: Don't leave a child alone for the first 24 hours after a bad head bump.

Animal bites

Most bites come from an animal the child knows.

What to do: Press firmly on the area to stop any bleeding. Then wash the bite gently with soap and water.

Take your child to the doctor if the bite is big or the bleeding won't stop.

Always: Call your doctor after an animal bite. Your child might need further treatment.

Burns

Mild burns can cause swelling and redness. More serious burns can blister and get infected.

Be prepared for emergencies

You want to stay calm in an emergency. That's easier said than done. Especially when it involves your child.

One thing that can help is being prepared.

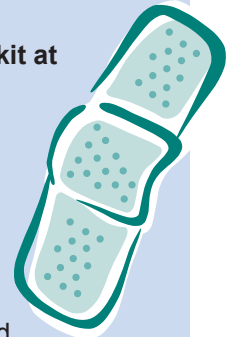
Here's what you can do:

Keep important phone numbers handy. This includes the numbers for your doctor, hospital and poison control center—(800) 222-1222. Call 911 if there's a medical emergency.

Know your health facts. Make a list of allergies and medications for all family members. Keep this list with you at all times.

Have a first aid kit at home. Ask your doctor what a good first aid kit includes.

Take a class, if you can. The American Red Cross offers first aid classes. You can learn how to treat burns, cuts and other injuries.



Source: American College of Emergency Physicians

What to do: Immediately soak the burned area in cool water. Unless the burn is oozing, cover it with sterile gauze or a clean towel. Call your doctor right away if the burn is oozing or looks serious.

What to avoid: Don't put butter, powder or grease on a burn.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



To learn more about protecting children from injuries, go to Safe Kids Worldwide at www.safekids.org.

staying healthy

Help your teen stay healthy

To stay healthy, your teen needs to see a doctor even when nothing is wrong.

That's why well-child visits are still important. They help prevent problems before they start. Your teen's doctor can:

- Screen for any signs of disease or injury
- Check your teen's vision
- Be sure vaccines are current
- Make sure your teen is growing properly
- Answer questions your teen may have about dating, eating right, or other topics

Ask your teen's doctor when to make an appointment.

Snack attack: Make it healthy

Between-meal snacking isn't a bad thing when it's done right.

To make sure your kids snack wisely, keep foods around that are good for them. Healthy choices include:

- Fruit
- Fresh vegetables, such as baby carrots or cucumbers
- Low-fat cheese
- Peanut butter on crackers
- Low-fat yogurt
- Low-fat pudding
- Fig bars
- Whole-wheat toast with peanut butter



10 tips for a fit family

Here's a great family project to work on: Get active and fit!

Being fit can help each of you:

- Build strong bones and muscles
- Ease stress
- Sleep better
- Prevent weight gain

And those are just a few of the benefits. So aim to be a fit family. Here's how to get started:

1. Encourage your kids to be active. And set an example by being active yourself.
2. Schedule family time for exercise at least a few times each week.
3. Turn off the TV, video games and computer more often.
4. Give "active" gifts—a new pair of running shoes, in-line skates or a basketball, for example.
5. Combine exercise with TV time. Challenge your kids to a

contest. See who can do the most push-ups, sit-ups or jumping jacks during a commercial.

6. Celebrate special events with a hike or a game of volleyball.

Parents set a good example by being active themselves.

7. Do household chores together. Try washing and waxing the car by hand, walking the dog or weeding the garden.
8. Find free places nearby to enjoy, like the local park or bike trails.
9. When weather is bad, head indoors. Go mall walking. Or try an exercise video.
10. Instead of rewarding your kids with food, find a fun activity. For example, offer to play their favorite outdoor game.

Source: National Association for Sport and Physical Education