

health matters

Mercy Care
Plan

Spring 2008

Things to Know

Keep children safe from lead

There are many dangers for kids. Lead poisoning is one of them.

Lead poisoning occurs when lead builds up in the blood. It can lead to health problems. It can also make it hard for kids to learn.

Often, lead is found in paint chips and dust. Kids may breathe in the dust. They also might get it on their hands and then put their hands in their mouths.

To help protect your child:

- Clean and cover any chipped paint with new paint or duct tape.
- Have kids wash their hands often, especially before eating.
- If you have lead pipes, run the water for two minutes before drinking it or cooking with it. Don't use hot tap water for making baby formula, drinking or cooking.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

» hospital to close

As of June 1, 2008, Mesa General Hospital (Maricopa County) is closing. You must use another facility for hospital services after that date.

Thrifty ways to get fit



You don't have to spend a lot of money to get fit.

There are things you can do within a budget that can improve your fitness.

Walking more is a good way to get moving. If it's safe to do so, walk your kids to school. Or walk to your nearby market instead of driving or taking the bus.

Bike riding is also good exercise. And it's something the whole family can do together.

If not everyone has a bike, shop yard sales or secondhand stores. You might find good bargains. Remember to always wear helmets while riding bikes.

You can also try these other thrifty ways to exercise:

» Jump rope. » Use household items for weights. Lifting small cans of food while watching TV can help build strength. » Play with your children. It will get you moving and give you time together.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Southwest Catholic Health Network
4350 E. Cotton Center Blvd., Bldg. D
Phoenix, AZ 85040

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX AZ
PERMIT NO 173



It's one test you don't want to skip. In fact, having a regular Pap test can be a real lifesaver.

The Pap test checks for cancer of the cervix. Since you can have cervical cancer and not have any signs, the Pap test is an important tool.

The test can also help find changes in cells that could become cancer. If changes are found, treatment may prevent cancer from happening.

The test usually is done during your pelvic exam. Your doctor takes some cells from the cervix. These

cells are sent to a lab for testing.

It's best to get the Pap test several days after your period ends. For two days before you have the test, don't use:

- Vaginal medicines
- Spermicidal foams, creams or jellies
- Douches

You should start having the Pap test at age 21 or three years after you start having sex, whichever comes first. Ask your doctor about how often to have the test.

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; National Cancer Institute

Safety rules protect children in shopping carts

A shopping cart might seem like a safe place to put your child. But shopping cart injuries are more common than you might think. To keep kids safe:

- Fasten the safety belt.
- Don't leave children alone in the cart.
- Don't let kids stand up in the cart.
- Don't place a car seat on top of the cart.
- Only put children in the seat, not in the basket.
- Don't let children ride on the outside of a cart.
- Don't let older kids climb on the cart or push a younger child in the cart.
- Leave children at home with an adult you trust.
- Encourage older children to walk.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

You can improve your health literacy with Ask Me 3™

Have you ever felt shy about asking your doctor questions? You are not alone. The Ask Me 3™ campaign was created to help members talk to their doctors.

Ask Me 3™ is three questions you should ask your doctors

about concerns or questions related to your health. The questions are:

- 1. What is my main problem?**
- 2. What do I need to do?**
- 3. Why is it important for me to do this?**

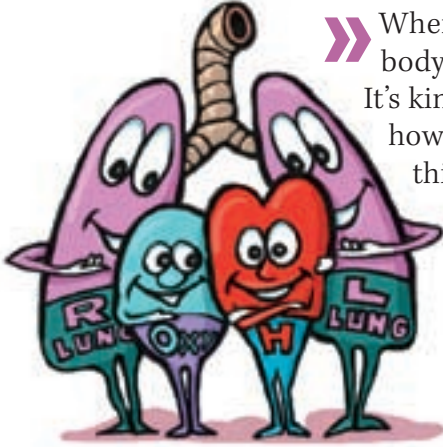
These questions can help you

get important details about your medical needs. The next time you visit your doctor, don't forget to use the Ask Me 3™ questions.

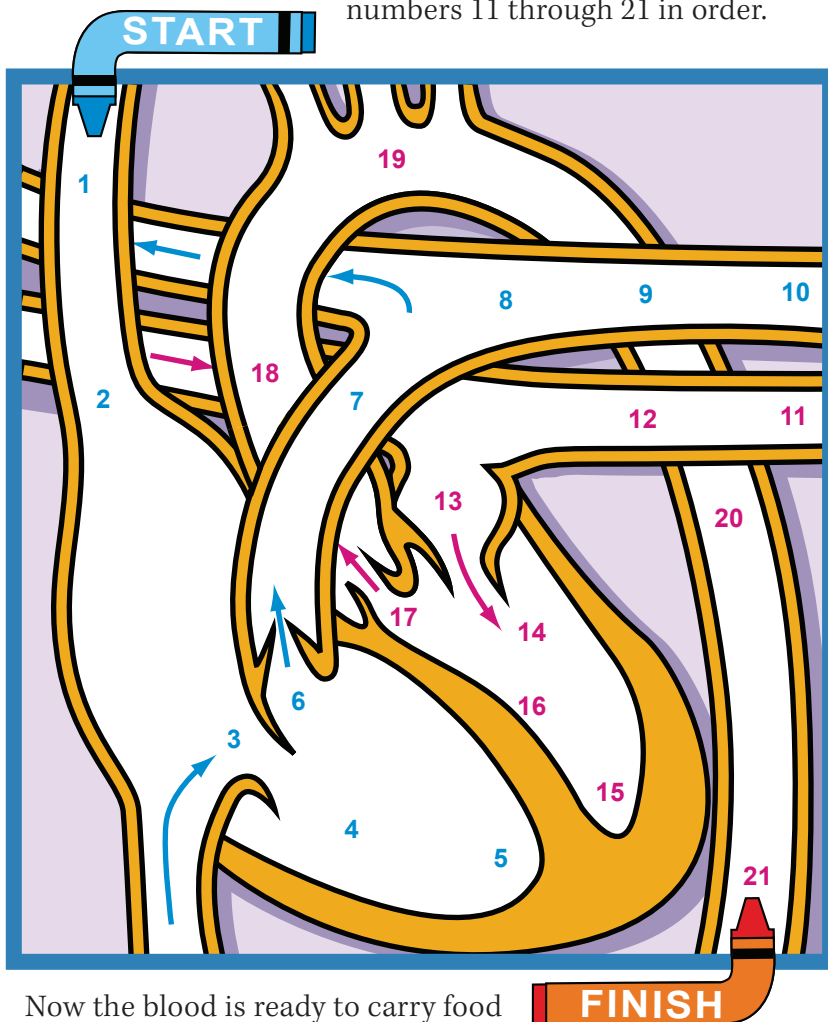
For more information about health literacy and better communication with your doctor, visit www.AskMe3.org.

HEALTHY HEART

Your amazing heart



» When your heart pumps blood through your body, blood also flows through your heart. It's kind of like going through a maze. Here's how you can help the blood flow through this heart. Blood that the body has "used" is a blue-red color. This is because the oxygen in the blood has been used up. Use a blue crayon and connect numbers 1 to 10 in order. The lungs put oxygen into the blood. That's why blood is bright red after it comes back from the lungs. Use a red crayon to connect numbers 11 through 21 in order.

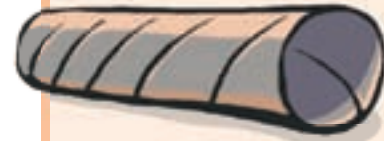
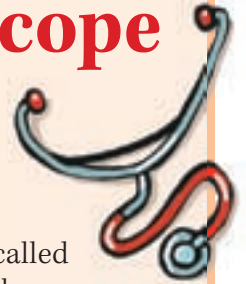


Now the blood is ready to carry food and oxygen to the rest of the body.

Source: American Heart Association

Make your own stethoscope

» When you go to the doctor, he or she might listen to your heart with an instrument called a stethoscope. A stethoscope helps your doctor hear your heartbeat. You can make and use your own stethoscope with a friend. Here's how:



1. Ask a parent for the cardboard tube from a roll of paper towels.

2. Place the tube on your friend's chest and listen. Move the tube until you hear the person's heartbeat.



3. Switch and have your friend listen to your heart.

4. Try running or jumping in place, and then listen to the heartbeat again. Your heart will beat faster after exercise. When you rest, it will beat more slowly.

New moms

Take care of yourself

Bathing, rocking and round-the-clock feedings—new babies need a lot of care.

But if you're a new mother, you need care too.

After all, your body is still recovering from pregnancy and birth. You are probably very tired. Maybe you have cramps and bleeding. Your legs and feet may be swollen. And your breasts may be tender or leak milk.

You may also have a lot of thoughts and feelings to sort through. At times you might feel happy or excited. At other times you may feel stressed or sad.

These are normal changes after



having a baby. And they are good reasons to take extra care of yourself.

Here are some things you can do.

- Get as much rest as you can. Try to lie down or sleep when your baby sleeps. And only do what must be

Visit your doctor. Checkups aren't just for your baby.

done—now isn't the time to try to keep a spotless house or take on big projects.

- Prop your feet up when you can. This may help keep swelling down.

- Use pads, not tampons, to soak up leaking blood.

- Drink lots of water.

- Eat healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Let friends and family pitch in. It's OK to ask for help with cleaning, laundry, meals or baby care.

- Visit your doctor. Checkups aren't just for your baby. Your doctor will probably schedule a checkup for you within four to six weeks after your baby's birth.

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; National Women's Health Information Center

Depression and pregnancy

For many women, pregnancy is a happy time. But for others, the weeks and months leading up to a baby's birth are filled with sadness.

These women don't just have a "blue mood." They have an illness called depression.

Watch for these clues

Pregnancy has ups and downs, of course. Mood swings are normal.

But the following signs may

mean depression, especially if they last longer than two weeks:

- A sad mood most of the day nearly every day
- Loss of interest in things you like to do
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- Thinking about death or harming yourself
- Feeling very tired or not having energy
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Trouble thinking and making choices

- Aches and pains that don't get better with treatment

What to do

If you think you might be depressed, talk with your doctor. You may need to take medicine or see a counselor.

On the bright side, treatment can help you feel better now and later. It might even help keep depression away after you have your baby.

Remember, you don't have to handle depression on your own.

