



## Welcome from the State Health Commissioner



State Health Commissioner  
Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H.

The end of the year is often a season of reflection and anticipation, filled with friends, family and holiday traditions.

My family's favorite tradition is the Elf on the Shelf. My kids are 11, 10 and 6, and that elf (ours is named Elfie Jingles) helps keep them in line during the holiday season. Our elf tends to be very mischievous, so the kids crack

up at the trouble he gets into overnight and the notes he leaves. He has even gotten into a back-and-forth battle with the kids' grandpa! As our boys have gotten older, they have gotten in on the fun and are coming up with creative new places for Elfie to hide. But I have to warn you – be careful where your elf goes. Ours hid in a light fixture recently and almost got his bottom burned off because no one told me not to turn on the light!

Fire hazard aside, this is certainly a fun tradition. But some others – like gaining weight – don't have to be part of the holidays. Find out how you can avoid weight gain this holiday season on Page 2.

One tradition I've enjoyed since becoming health commissioner has been to tape a video with Indianapolis Colts quarterback Matt Hasselbeck through a partnership between the Colts and the Indiana State Department of Health. The first video promoted the importance of getting a flu shot. This year, we used the video to educate people about antibiotics and antibiotic resistance. Find out more on Page 3, or check out the video at [youtu.be/6BIew2pE4bg](http://youtu.be/6BIew2pE4bg).

If you haven't wrapped up your holiday shopping, I encourage you to check out Page 4 for tips on buying safe toys. December is Safe Toys Awareness Month. Know which toys are appropriate for which age groups.

The holidays can put added financial stress on families already struggling to make ends meet. On Page 6, you can learn about the State Health Department Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and whether you or a loved one could be eligible for the program.

As the year winds down, I'm looking ahead to 2016. Reducing infant mortality will continue to be a priority, and we will be extending our Labor of Love awareness campaign to help us reduce infant mortality. We will also build on the recommendations of Governor Pence's task force that's addressing drug abuse in Indiana by working to increase participation in the state's new naloxone registry. I also plan to work with the Chamber of Commerce and the business community to make the economic argument for healthy communities and workplace wellness. Let's commit to more physical activity and less smoking in the New Year.

Wishing you all happy holidays and a healthy 2016.

Regards,

Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H.,  
State Health Commissioner

*Stay Connected with the State Health Department...*



## Avoid weight gain over the holidays



**T**is the season for celebrations involving family, friends, festivities and food—lots and lots of food. But extra pounds don't have to be part of your annual traditions.

You can avoid the holidays without the weight gain that often comes with them. To avoid some common holiday eating pitfalls, try these tips:

**Don't skip meals.** Eat before you attend a party. Don't show up hungry. Grab fruit or a protein-filled snack such as nuts or cheese on your way out the door. While viewing food options, take your time and make smart choices. Plan your indulgences in advance.

**Add fruits and vegetables.** Double the amount of vegetables in your stuffing. Serve trays of fruits and vegetables, and if you must add a dip, try yogurt-based dips.

**Limit alcohol intake.** Alcoholic drinks are loaded with calories. Additionally, alcohol lowers inhibitions and increases the likelihood of overeating.

**Drink water.** Skip the sweet, calorie-laden drinks and choose water and unsweetened drinks like iced tea. Try to drink water 30 minutes before each meal to help curb your appetite. Make sure you stay hydrated throughout the day to keep your energy levels up.

**Get physical.** There are plenty of ways to burn off extra calories. Sign up for a holiday walk or run. Go ice skating. Walk around the neighborhood to see holiday decorations, especially after meals.

**Relieve stress.** Stress can lead people to make unhealthy food choices, and it wreaks havoc on your overall health. Take time every day to breathe deeply. Pick a low-key activity that helps you recharge, such as meditation, yoga or reading a book.

For more tips on eating better and moving more, visit INShape Indiana at [www.inshapeindiana.org](http://www.inshapeindiana.org).

## Help prevent lead poisoning

**A**ccording to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 4 million households have children living in them who are being exposed to high levels of lead. Major sources of lead exposure among U.S. children are lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust found in deteriorating structures and lead in soil.

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the Earth's crust. While it has some beneficial uses in industry, there is no safe level of lead in the body.

In 2014, approximately 41,000 Hoosier children were screened for elevated blood lead levels. On average, 61 per 1,000 children in Indiana tested for lead experienced a blood lead level at or above the level at which the CDC recommends public health

actions be initiated. Some simple things you can do to help protect your family from lead exposure are:

**Prevent Childhood Lead Poisoning**

Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health.

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Slowed growth and development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems

**This can cause:**

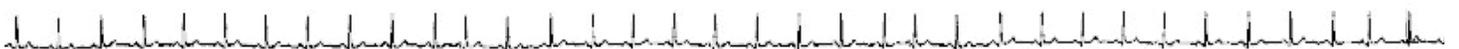
- Lower IQ
- Decreased ability to pay attention
- Underperformance at school

- Before you buy an older home, have it tested for lead.

- Have your young children tested for lead poisoning.

- Get the facts about preventing lead poisoning from your local health department. For contact information, visit the State Health Department Local Health Department outreach webpage at [www.in.gov/isdh/24822.htm](http://www.in.gov/isdh/24822.htm).

For more information, contact the Indiana Lead and Healthy Homes Program at 317-233-1250 or call 1-800-424-LEAD.

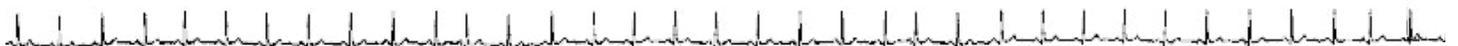


# What do you know about antibiotics and antibiotic resistance?

Take the CDC quiz below and find out. Circle the best choice to answer the question. Answers on page 7.

1. Antibiotics fight infections caused by \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Viruses                      b) Bacteria                      c) Viruses and Bacteria
  
2. Bacteria are germs that cause colds and flu.  
a) True                              b) False
  
3. Which of these illnesses should be treated with antibiotics?  
a) Runny Nose                      b) Flu                              c) Cold                              d) Strep Throat
  
4. Bacteria that cause infections can become resistant to antibiotics.  
a) True                              b) False
  
5. I can prevent antibiotic-resistant infections when I: (hint: more than one answer may apply)  
a) don't take an antibiotic for a viral infection  
b) don't save an antibiotic for the next time I am sick  
c) don't take an antibiotic prescribed for someone else  
d) take my antibiotic exactly as my healthcare provider tells me
  
6. What can happen if I get an antibiotic-resistant infection? (hint: more than one answer may apply)  
a) I may have a longer-lasting illness  
b) I may have to visit my doctor more  
c) I may require hospitalization  
d) I may need more costly medicine that may cause side effects
  
7. Alexander Fleming discovered the first antibiotic in 1928. What was the antibiotic named?  
a) Mold                      b) Penicillin                      c) Vancomycin                      d) Doxycycline
  
8. Antibiotic resistance has been called one of the world's most pressing public health problems.  
a) True                              b) False

**How many did you guess correctly?  
Share with the State Health Department  
on Facebook and Twitter!**



*December is*

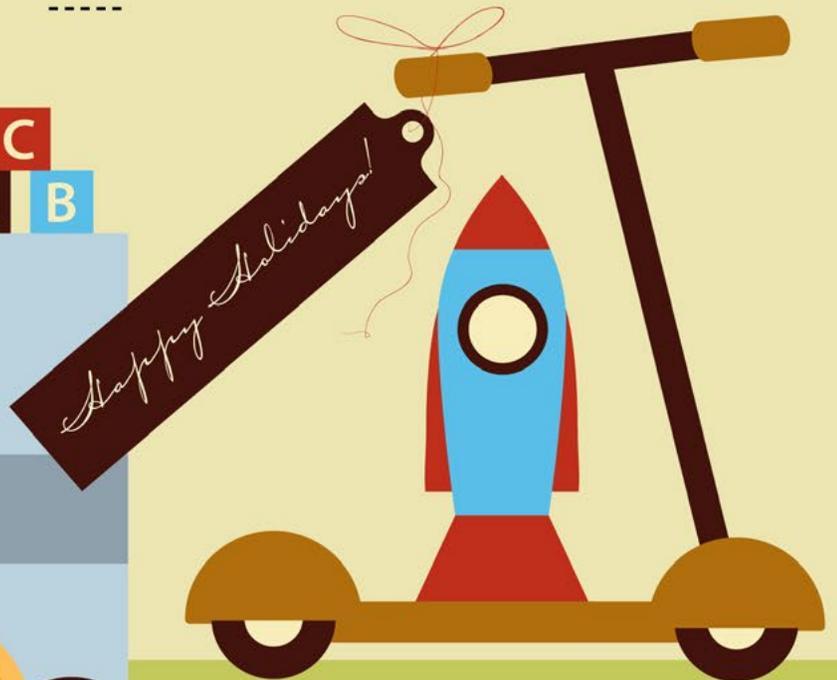
# SAFE TOYS & GIFTS

## AWARENESS MONTH

***When buying toys this holiday season...***

- \* be sure they are age appropriate
- \* inspect before purchasing
- \* keep small parts away from young children
- \* check that batteries are secure

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Indiana State  
Department of Health



## Indianapolis Colts

The State Health Department and the Indianapolis Colts have teamed up to promote flu vaccination and prevention through a campaign called “Join Blue, Prevent the Flu!”

Only 40 percent of Hoosiers get vaccinated against the flu each year, according to the CDC. Flu vaccination rates vary by age group. Among 18 to 64-year-olds, the vaccination rate drops to 32.3 percent. People ages 13 to 17 have the lowest rate, at 27.9 percent. The campaign encourages people to get their flu vaccine, which is safe, effective and offers the best protection from becoming infected with the flu virus. This year’s vaccine is proving to be a good match for the types of flu that are circulating.

The campaign also encourages people to stop the spread of the flu by using the “three C’s”: Clean-wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water. Cover-cover your cough or



(L-R): Matt Hasselbeck, Indianapolis Colts quarterback, Blue, the Indianapolis Colts mascot and State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams.

sneeze into your arm or a disposable tissue. Contain-stay home from school/work when you are sick to keep your germs from spreading.

The CDC and the State Health Department recommend everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine annually. To find a location that provides flu shots in your community, check with your local health department or visit the flu shot locator at [www.StateHealth.in.gov](http://www.StateHealth.in.gov).



Getting regular prenatal care is critical for your baby’s health. And yours. If you lack resources, you have options.

Visit [www.LaborofLove.in.gov](http://www.LaborofLove.in.gov)

or call the MCH MOMS Helpline at 1-844-MCH-MOMS to learn more.



Labor of Love  
Helping Indiana Reduce Infant Death





# Spotlight on...

## WIC Program

The Marion County Public Health Department and the Indiana Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program are continuing their awareness campaign about the WIC program and its benefits. The WIC program serves pregnant women, breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5. It provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education and counseling, and screening and referrals to other health and social services.



The awareness campaign features information about the most important aspects of WIC in a fun and playful way through the use of food art, brand messaging and WIC participant quotes. Currently, there is a display at the Castleton Mall food court in Indianapolis. This area has been recently renovated using a new material that is dent-, scratch-and-fade resistant. Additional signage displaying current eligibility income guidelines has also been installed.

than the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medicaid. Both malls also feature WIC parking for moms-to-be and parents with young children.

The awareness campaign has been expanded this year to Greenwood Mall in Indianapolis, in their family restroom area and the creation of a nursing nook. Signs feature program ads letting people know that WIC offers higher income guidelines

The Indiana WIC Program currently serves an average of 167,877 women, infants and children each month through a statewide network of 145 WIC clinics. For more information and to see if you might be eligible for the program, visit [www.wic.isdh.in.gov](http://www.wic.isdh.in.gov)



# Public Health Happenings

*(For more information about a specific event, please use the specific email address listed).*

## December

- 24 State Health Department closed in observance of holiday
- 25 State Health Department closed in observance of holiday

## January

- 1 State Health Department closed in observance of holiday
- 13 State Health Department Executive Board Meeting, [tbarrett@isdh.IN.gov](mailto:tbarrett@isdh.IN.gov)
- 19 State Health Department closed in observance of holiday

## February

- 10 Indiana Academy of Family Physicians SAM Study Group on Health Behavior and Annual Legislative Reception  
[cbarry@in-afp.org](mailto:cbarry@in-afp.org)
- 8 Innovations in Breastfeeding Research and Practice, Office of Women's Breastfeeding Conference  
[lchavez@isdh.in.gov](mailto:lchavez@isdh.in.gov)
- 19 Indiana State Trauma Care Committee, [tbarrett@isdh.IN.gov](mailto:tbarrett@isdh.IN.gov)

## March

- 16 Local Public Health Leadership Symposium, [mbrodey@isdh.in.gov](mailto:mbrodey@isdh.in.gov)

**For more information on these and other state events, visit the State of Indiana events calendar at <http://www.in.gov/core/calendar.html>**

Answers to quiz on page 3. 1. B 2. B 3. D 4. A 5. A, B, C, D 6. A, B, C, D 7. B 8. A

*The Indiana State Department of Health promotes and provides essential public health services.*



**Indiana State  
Department of Health**

*Public Health Matters is a free publication that is published electronically every quarter by the State Health Department Office of Public Affairs. For questions, to submit an article or topic, contact Amanda Turney at [aturney@isdh.in.gov](mailto:aturney@isdh.in.gov).*

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