

WELLNESS WATCH

Across the Lifespan, Across Indiana



MARCH

[National Women's and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)
3/10

[National Poison Prevention Week](#)
3/15-3/21

[National Native American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)
3/20

[National Youth Violence Prevention Week](#)
3/23-3/27

[World Tuberculosis Day](#)
3/24

[American Diabetes Alert Day](#)
3/24

[Bleeding Disorder Awareness Month](#)

[National Nutrition Month](#)

[National Kidney Month](#)

[National Endometriosis Awareness Month](#)

[National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month](#)

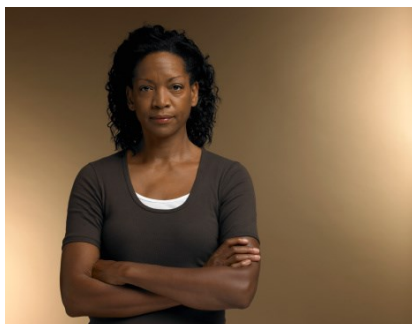
[Trisomy Awareness Month](#)

March Spotlight - Endometriosis Awareness Month

An estimated 11% of women in the U.S. have been diagnosed with endometriosis. Endometriosis is a condition that happens when the endometrium, the tissue that lines the uterus, grows outside of the uterus. Endometrium may grow on the ovaries, fallopian tubes or tissue that holds the uterus in place on the outer surface of the uterus such as the bladder, ureters, intestines and rectum.² In rare cases, the endometrium may grow in other areas of the body as well.

Women with endometriosis may have no symptoms, but in most cases experience a great deal of pain. The symptoms of endometriosis include:

- Painful and heavy menstrual cycles,
- Chronic pain in the lower back and pelvis,
- Pain during or after sexual intercourse,
- Intestinal pain,
- Painful bowel movements or pain when urinating during menstrual periods,
- Blood in the stool or urine,
- Bleeding or spotting between menstrual periods,
- Infertility and
- Digestive problems (diarrhea, constipation, bloating, or nausea).^{2,3}



Endometriosis is considerably painful because the growths of endometrium bleed in the same way the lining in the uterus does every month. This bleeding can cause swelling and pain because the tissue growths are in areas where they cannot easily get out of the body.² Many women ignore the pain that endometriosis causes, thinking it is normal; however, they discover that they have endometriosis only after experiencing infertility. Other complica-

tions caused by endometriosis are:

- Blocking of the fallopian tubes, which traps blood in the ovaries, forming cysts
- Inflammation
- Forming of scar tissue and adhesions that can cause pelvic pain and make pregnancy difficult
- Problems in the intestines and bladder²

Currently, there is no cure for endometriosis. Treatment options vary depending on symptoms and location. For mild symptoms, over-the-counter painkillers or hormone therapy can be used.³ For more severe cases, surgery may be needed.

Diagnosis of endometriosis usually starts with a pelvic exam to look for cysts or scar tissue behind the uterus. Imaging such as an ultrasound or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may also be used in the diagnosis process; however, laparoscopy surgery is the only way to be sure of endometriosis. During this surgery, a biopsy or sample of tissue may be tested to confirm the diagnosis.^{2,3}

Endometriosis can affect girls from their first period and may or may not present any symptoms. If you believe that you may be experiencing endometriosis, speak with your doctor about your symptoms to find out more about diagnosis and treatment. If you are experiencing infertility, you may also want to speak with your doctor about the possibility of endometriosis and treatment options to increase your chances of becoming pregnant. For more information about endometriosis, visit the section on endometriosis at [the national Office of Women's Health Website](#).

Making Healthy Food Choices

Whether women like it or not, food choices of every kind surround us. There are sugary treats and vegetables, proteins and fruits and more kinds of potato chips than one can imagine. It can be difficult to know what we should be eating, where to get it and how to prepare it. Every woman needs to consider carefully her food and nutrition choices each day because the consequences of poor nutrition can impact your health, appearance and lifestyle, no matter how old or young you are.

Women are more likely than men to experience nutritional deficiencies. Health effects of dietary deficiencies can include cardiovascular disease, stroke, impaired cognitive function, cancer, eye disease, poor bone health and many other conditions.¹ In order to reduce the risk of these adverse effects of poor diet, women need to have a variety of foods each day. The U.S. Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture have developed Dietary Guidelines for citizens age 2 and older that are designed to help maintain a healthy weight, promote health and prevent disease.²

The five primary food groups include fruits, vegetables, grains, protein-rich foods and calcium-rich foods or drinks. Many American women find it challenging to consume something from all of the food groups each day. Thankfully, there are many great tips and resources to help you improve your diet and reduce the risk of disease.



- Half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. If you are eating out or getting fast food, imagine what your food would look like on a dinner plate. Does it measure up? Can you add an apple, banana or some broccoli to equal half?
- Consider cooking your meals. Most women are very busy and have long days, so cooking is not always on the agenda. Healthy eating is much easier when you control the ingredients, however. Make your food for the week on a Saturday morning and freeze it. Or, set up “cooking stations” so that your kids or family members can help with chopping, washing, stirring or plating on busy evenings.
- Keep a bowl of fruit on the table, counter or refrigerator for easy access.
- Add fruits to your favorite cereals or desserts.
- Be sneaky! If you have picky eaters in your midst (including you), blend vegetables, legumes and other healthy additions, such as ground flax seed or nutritional yeast, into pasta sauces or soups.
- Rethink calcium and protein. There are many ways to incorporate calcium into your diet, including soy, rice or almond milk, calcium-fortified breads and juices, tofu, some legumes and even leafy greens like kale, collard or turnip greens. Protein sources can include nuts and seeds like almonds or sunflower seeds, as well as foods such as beans, lentils, chickpeas and hummus.
- Have a recipe swap with your friends or co-workers to keep meals interesting. Pick a new vegetable, fruit or protein for each swap and have everyone bring in their favorite recipe, the healthiest recipe or even the recipe with the fewest ingredients.

For more tips on the five food groups, eating and cooking on a budget, sample menus and grocery shopping guides, visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

Additional resources:

- [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#): This resource includes recipes, tips for weight loss, workout ideas and Watch and Learn cooking videos.
- [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) SuperTracker](#): Look up nutrition information for thousands of foods, track your food and physical activity, set goals and build and save your favorite recipes.
- [USDA Interactive Playground](#): Many resources are available here to get your children or grandchildren on the right path to health, including games, eating calculators and fun quizzes.



National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD) is an annual observance that sheds light on the impact

of HIV and AIDS on women and girls. Every year on March 10, and throughout the month of March, national and community organizations come together to show support for women and girls impacted by HIV and AIDS. This year marks the 12th observance of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

HIV is an autoimmune disease. It at-

tacks the body's immune system, leaving it defenseless to fight off infections. In its final stages, HIV can develop into full-blown AIDS. A person is classified as having AIDS if their CD4 cell count falls below 200 cells/mm of blood. Once a person has HIV, they cannot get rid of it; however, medical advances have made it possible for individuals to live a full life with the virus.

Researchers urge all women between the ages of 13 and 64 to get tested for HIV, as recent trends show that 20% of new HIV cases occur in women.¹ Women face unique HIV risks and challenges

that can prevent them from getting needed care and treatment. Addressing these issues remains critical to achieving an HIV- and AIDS-free generation. To learn more about HIV/AIDS in Indiana, visit the [ISDH Division of HIV/STD webpage](#).

The only way to know your status is to get tested. It is important to get HIV/AIDS testing for your safety and the safety of your partner. To find a testing location near you, use the [HIV Testing Sites and Cares Services Locator](#).

Diabetes

The burden of diabetes for women is unique because diabetes can affect both mothers and their unborn children. In Indiana, approximately 10.3% of all women have been told they have diabetes, including 10.4% of white women and 13.5% of black women. Additionally, women who are Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American or Pacific Islander have a higher risk of developing gestational diabetes.

Diabetes can also affect various parts of your life, including your mental health, sexual and reproductive health

and your pregnancy. People living with diabetes have a higher risk of heart disease, which is the leading cause of death among Indiana residents, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey. Women are already at a greater risk for developing heart disease, as approximately one in three women will die from heart disease in the U.S. Making simple lifestyle changes may reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes. You can take some easy steps to help prevent type 2 diabetes:

1. Talk to your doctor about prediabetes and diabetes. If your doctor says you

have prediabetes, join a [Diabetes Prevention Program](#).

2. Maintain a healthy blood pressure.
3. Eat more fruits and veggies.
4. Take a 15- to 30-minute walk after lunch and dinner.
5. Don't smoke. If you do, talk to your doctor about the benefits of quitting, or contact the [Indiana Tobacco Quit-line](#).
6. Get 8 hours of sleep at night.
7. If you are pregnant or have recently given birth, consider breastfeeding. Breastfeeding may help to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes for both mother and baby.

Celebrating the MCH MOMS Helpline

The MCH MOMS Helpline is celebrating its one-year anniversary since its launch in March 2016! The mission of the MCH MOMS Helpline is to reduce the infant mortality rate in Indiana by providing families with access to available resources focused on improving the health of mothers and their children.

Since the launch of the rebranded MOMS Helpline, 5,200 phone calls have been processed that have connected women and pregnant women with the maternal and child health population services. The MOMS Helpline Specialists connect women of child-bearing age and mothers with resources in their specific area, such as health and educational services for

mothers before pregnancy and during and after delivery in order to foster a healthier lifestyle and positive well-being for women and children.

The MOMS Helpline has primarily assisted mothers and pregnant women with resources within their community, such as finding Medicaid transportation providers, referring mothers to providers in their community, ensuring that mothers and children have dental care, food and clothing, enrolling mothers with health coverage and providing child safety resources.

The MOMS Helpline aims to connect, educate and bring greater awareness of available resources through our growing

relationships with medical health care providers, medical professionals and local health departments.

The MCH MOMS Helpline specialists and navigators are available Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about the MOMS Helpline, visit the [MCH MOMS Helpline webpage](#), call 1-844-MCH-MOMS (1-844-624-6667) or email the MCH MOMS Helpline at MCHMOMSHelpline@isdh.in.gov.



The key to a healthy baby and a happy mom



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Thank you for subscribing to the Office of Women's Health (OWH) Wellness Watch Newsletter. The Office of Women's Health wants to ensure that each woman in Indiana is aware of her own health status, risks and goals, and can achieve optimal health through access, education and advocacy.

- For more information about OWH's programs and initiatives, please visit: www.womenshealth.isdh.in.gov.
- Follow OWH on Twitter at [@INWomensHealth](https://twitter.com/INWomensHealth).
- Follow this link to manage your subscription or to subscribe to the [OWH Wellness Watch Newsletter](#).

Upcoming Events

3/18 - Indiana Black Breastfeeding Coalition - [Breastfeeding Class and Support Group](#)

3/11 - Black Women Physicians Institute & Community Healthnet Inc. - [3rd Annual Celebrating Healthy Hearts Event](#)

3/24 - Indiana State Department of Health & Marion County Public Health Department - [World TB Day 2017](#)

4/1 & 4/15 - Indiana Black Breastfeeding Coalition - [Breastfeeding Class and Support Group](#)

4/10-4/11 - Indiana Coalition to End Sexual Assault - [2017 Statewide Sexual Assault Conference](#)

5/15 - Indiana State Department of Health - [3rd Annual Injury Prevention Advisory Council \(IPAC\) Conference - "Making Connections: Community, Programs, and Progress"](#)

11/15 - Indiana State Department of Health - [2017 Labor of Love Infant Mortality Summit](#)

References

¹Kaiser Family Foundation. (2014). *Women and HIV/AIDS in the United States*. Retrieved from <http://kff.org/hiv/aids/fact-sheet/women-and-hiv-aids-in-the-united-states/>

²Office of Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). *Endometriosis*. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/endometriosis>

³The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2012). *Frequently Asked Questions FAQ013 Gynecologic Problems*. Retrieved from <http://www.acog.org/-/media/For-Patients/faq013.pdf>