

WELLNESS WATCH

Across the Lifespan, Across Indiana



JULY

[Cord Blood Awareness Month](#)

[International Group B Strep Awareness Month](#)

[Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month](#)

[National Cleft & Craniofacial Awareness & Prevention Month](#)

[World Hepatitis Day 7/28](#)

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program

The Indiana Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) is recognized as an effective means for improving access to nutritious foods and promoting healthier eating and lifestyles. Indiana WIC is committed to nutrition, breastfeeding education and support for all Hoosier babies and families. Breastmilk protects babies from ear infections, diarrhea and constipation, pneumonia, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), obesity, diabetes, asthma and allergies, childhood leukemia and eczema. It also contains antibodies, hormones, anti-viruses, anti-allergens, anti-parasites, growth factors and enzymes that are not in formula.

WIC wants all mothers to have an opportunity to provide this nutrition to their babies and has implemented systemic changes to encourage breastfeeding. These include increased lactation education and pump availability, increased staff hours when possible and changes to WIC's internal systems. The program offers formula to families that are unable to breastfeed or choose to formula feed, but there are many resources available for those mothers who breastfeed. WIC programs in the community offer a variety of ways for mothers and families to connect to breastfeeding education and support. These include:

- **Peer counselors** - Each agency has been funded to staff at least one Peer Counselor that can offer one-on-one breastfeeding support to mothers in need. Peer Counselors are a positive role model for breastfeeding mothers and give continued encouragement along the way.
- **Food packages/breast pumps** - Breastfeeding mothers get larger food packages, access to breastfeeding education and support and breast pumps when needed.
- **Lactation education** - Indiana WIC requires that each agency have a Breastfeeding Coordinator to oversee breastfeeding promotion in the clinic and provide a supportive environment. The program routinely provides staff the most current, evidenced-based lactation education so that families receive up-to-date information. WIC offers a variety of culturally appropriate resources to breastfeeding clients,

with materials translated into Spanish and Burmese as needed.

- **Hospital certifications** - Several hospitals in the state have partnered with the WIC program to allow services to be provided to mothers right after delivery. Hospital certifications and Peer Counselor support allows families access to food benefits and to arrange for post-discharge lactation support before they even leave the hospital. This allows for critical lactation support in the first week home and saves the family another trip to the WIC office for benefit issuance. WIC's connection with hospitals also improves communication, allowing high-risk lactation moms, or those with infants staying in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), to get access to hospital-grade breast pumps and to a Peer Counselor more quickly. It also provides opportunity for lactation concerns to be monitored more closely so that moms and babies stay breastfeeding longer.
- **EBT** - WIC is now issuing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards designed to make it simpler to utilize WIC benefits. The EBT program modernizes benefit delivery for the Indiana WIC Program by replacing paper checks with cards that look and function similar to debit cards. The amount of WIC food benefits allocated to each participant will not change, but individuals will have greater flexibility to utilize their benefits. EBT improves the WIC experience for participants and authorized retailers by:
 - Allowing participants to buy as many or as few of their authorized foods they want each shopping trip; checks require all items to be purchased at once or be forfeited;
 - Providing a receipt showing remaining benefits for the month at the end of each transaction; and
 - Eliminating the hassles and stigma associated with using cumbersome paper checks.

For more information about the WIC program, visit [Indiana Women, Infants and Children](#).

When does anxiety become a problem?

Anxiety is a feeling that many of us know well. Driving in heavy traffic, presenting in front of a group or taking an important exam are a few examples of times when we may feel anxiety creep in. During these activities anxiety can actually be helpful, keeping us alert and focused on the task at hand. However, for many people, feelings of anxiety do not just occur in certain situations and are not temporary. For these individuals, anxiety can negatively impact daily activities such as going to work, completing school work or maintaining relationships. If this type of disruption sounds familiar to you, you may be experiencing an anxiety disorder. While that might sound frightening or confusing, it is important for you to recognize the symptoms of an anxiety disorder because, much like depression, anxiety does not go away on its own and can get worse over time. There is no need to be ashamed or afraid of treatment for your anxiety. Millions of people experience this condition and you can feel better. There are many different types of anxiety disorders. Generalized anxiety disorder includes symptoms such as:

- Restlessness or feeling on edge;
- Sleep problems;
- Trouble managing your worry;
- Irritability;
- Difficulty concentrating; or
- Getting tired easily.



Individuals who have a panic disorder might experience panic attacks, or sudden periods of fear that can include sweating, trembling, pounding heart, shortness of breath, a sensation of choking or an impending sense of doom. These symptoms can feel very scary and many individuals mistake them for medical emergencies.

Another type of anxiety includes Social Anxiety Disorder. People who experience this type of anxiety may feel fear in social or performance situations. Symptoms might include feeling very anxious when around other people and having a hard time talking to them, blushing, sweating or trembling around other people, worrying for days or weeks in anticipation of an event involving other people, feeling very self-conscious in front of others, having a hard time making and keeping friends or feeling nauseous or sick to your stomach when other people are around.

There is some evidence that indicates that anxiety disorders have roots in both nature and nurture; in other words, your genetics and your environment. Some risk factors might include:

- Shyness in childhood;
- Being female;
- Have few economic resources;
- Parental history of mental disorders;
- Exposure to stressful/traumatic events in childhood;
- Being divorced/widowed; and
- Elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the saliva.



If you or someone you love is experiencing the symptoms of an anxiety disorder, there is help and treatment. You do not have to live in fear or with constant worry. Anxiety disorders are typically treated through psychotherapy, or talking to a therapist about your experiences, medication or both. Other complementary treatments might include self-help or support groups and learning stress management techniques to help you cope with your symptoms. For important information on anxiety and your options for treatment, visit the [National Institutes of Health](#), the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), [Mental Health America](#) and the [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#).¹

Moving through menopause



While the symptoms of menopause can be uncomfortable, menopause can be an empowering experience for women. There is no better time to evaluate your health behaviors and make positive changes to improve how you feel, reduce unpleasant symptoms and diminish the chances of serious health concerns down the road. Check out these tips to help make the transition through menopause a more

positive experience:

- Practice bone-strengthening exercises: Weight-bearing, strength training and balance exercises can help prevent fractures and injury.
- Manage your diet and exercise: Weight gain is not inevitable in menopause, but it takes diligence to keep active and eat right.
- Establish healthy sleep: Follow a regular sleep schedule, avoid heavy evening meals, keep the bedroom comfortable, lower the lights, and avoid alcohol, caffeine and nicotine.

- Practice good oral hygiene: Brush and floss daily and visit your dentist every six months.
- Live a heart-healthy lifestyle: Reduce stress and see your doctor regularly for routine screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and breast health.²

For more information on how to navigate through menopause more comfortably, visit The [North American Menopause Society](#).

Immunizations and pregnancy

Our decision to get vaccinations helps keep us, and those around us, from getting very serious diseases and spreading those diseases in our communities.

Knowing what vaccinations you have received and when you need them again is a vital part of maintaining your own health and public health.

When a woman becomes pregnant, it is even more important for her to think about both her current immunization status, and if those around her have also gotten vaccinations. During the first year of life, even young infants follow-

ing the recommended vaccine schedule are vulnerable to conditions that could be life-threatening. All pregnant women should receive a tdap vaccination during their third trimester of pregnancy. Tdap vaccinations include protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). The newborn baby will benefit from the protection that mom receives by having this vaccine administered during pregnancy.

Another important consideration with immunizations and pregnancy is the concept of cocooning. This means that

all those who will be in physical contact or near a new baby should be up to date on all of their immunizations. This should include siblings, parents, grandparents, friends, family members and child caregivers. By preventing illness among those who are closest to a new baby, it will be much less likely he/she will be exposed to diseases against which he/she has not yet been immunized.

For more information about immunizations, visit the [Indiana Immunization Coalition](#).

Getting your finances healthy

When we consider women's health, we often think about our hearts, healthy eating, managing conditions like diabetes or even addressing depression.

However, the impact of finances on our health can be significant, and it is important to consider resources that help us better manage this area of our lives. Consider the resources below if you need a crash course in, or just a good reminder of, some basic money management strategies:

- [Mymoney.gov](#) – Information on saving, spending, investing, earning, borrowing and protecting your assets.

- [USA.gov](#) – Contains an assortment of educational resources and tools addressing everything from money management to crowdfunding.
- [American Institute of CPAs](#) – Provides financial literacy resources for all stages of life.
- [America Saves](#) – Helps you determine your financial status and set reasonable goals to improve your financial health.
- [Annualcreditreport.com](#) – A federally authorized resource that allows you to access all three of your credit reports annually for free.
- [Consumer.gov](#) – Provides resources for managing your money, using

credit and loans and protecting your personal information and money.

- [Money Smarts](#) – This site provides financial literacy, financial aid and career resources for college students.
- [Investor.gov](#) – Introduces the basics of investing and financial markets, and addresses specific information related to seniors and special life events.
- [Military One Source](#) – A comprehensive resource for service members, family members and surviving family members. Addresses financial and legal issues specific to this population.



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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.
- Follow this link to manage your subscription or to subscribe to the [OWH Wellness Watch Newsletter](#).

Upcoming Events

Indiana Black Expo
[46th Annual Indiana Black Expo, Inc. Summer Celebration](#)
7/7 – 7/17

United Way
[Miami County United Way Mobile Food Drive](#)
7/13

Indiana State Department of Health
[2016 INShape Indiana Black & Minority Health Fair](#)
7/14 – 7/17

Indiana Transgender Wellness Alliance/Indiana Internal
Medicine Consultants/Indiana University School of Medicine/
Eskenazi Health
[Transgender Health Conference 2016](#)
7/16

Indiana Primary Health Care Association
[CHC's Dental Professionals Webinar](#)
7/21

MDwise
[Bluebelle Baby Shower: LaPorte County Health Department](#)
7/21

Lupus Foundation of America, Indiana Chapter
[Dr. Dannee Neal Health Fair 2016](#)
7/23

Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers, Inc.
[Indiana Council 2016 Summer Quarterly Conference](#)
7/27 – 7/29

References

¹National Institutes of Health. (2016). *Anxiety disorders*. Retrieved from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>

²The North American Menopause Society. (2014). *Staying Healthy at Menopause and Beyond*. Retrieved from <http://www.menopause.org/for-women/menopauseflashes/staying-healthy-at-menopause-and-beyond>