

# WELLNESS WATCH

Across the Lifespan, Across Indiana



## SEPTEMBER

[Childhood Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[Fruit and Veggies – More Matters Month](#)

[Healthy Aging ® Month](#)

[National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month](#)

[National Head Lice Prevention Month](#)

[National Recovery Month](#)

[National Sickle Cell Month](#)

[National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month](#)

[Newborn Screening Awareness Month](#)

[Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[Pain Awareness Month](#)

[Prostate Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[World Alzheimer's Month](#)

[National Suicide Prevention Week](#)  
9/7 – 9/13

[World Suicide Prevention Day](#)  
9/10

[National Celiac Disease Awareness Day](#)  
9/13

[RAINN Day](#)  
9/17

[National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day](#)  
9/18

[Family Health/Fitness Day USA ®](#)

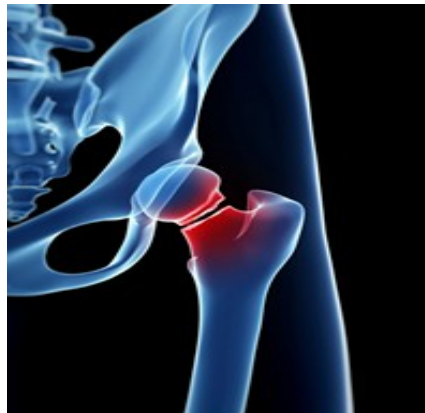
[Sport Purple for Platelets Day](#)  
9/26

## September Spotlight - Falls Prevention

Did you know that one in three older adults falls every year? On average, an older adult woman falls every 21 minutes in Indiana, resulting in a fall-related emergency department visit and nearly 15 women fall per day resulting in an injury-related hospitalization. The good news is that most falls can be prevented.

Indiana is joining other states across the country to declare Sept. 23, 2015, the first day of Fall, as Falls Prevention Awareness Day (FPAD). This year's theme is *Take a Stand to Prevent Falls*, and the event is supported by the National Council on Aging (NCOA).

While falls are the leading cause of both non-fatal and fatal injury for older adults, they are not an inevitable part of aging. This year's theme seeks to raise awareness about how to prevent fall-related injury among older adults. NCOA will be utilizing the hashtag #FPAD15 on social media.



Falls are particularly harmful to older adults, especially among women. Falls and fall-related injuries seriously affect older adults' quality of life, leading to decreased mobility, increased risk of early death and loss of independence. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency department visits, hospitalization and death for Hoosiers age 65 and older. Nearly 350 older adults died in Indiana in 2013 from fall-related injuries. Additionally, there were more than 37,000 fall-related emergency department visits among older adults in 2013; 69 percent were women.

Falls can also have major psychological and social consequences. Seniors may restrict their activities because of a fear of falling and a loss of self-confidence, which can lead to reduced mobility, fewer social interactions, decreased physical fitness and reduced quality of life.<sup>1,2</sup> A host of factors can contribute to a fall. Poor muscle tone, vision problems, medication use and sedentary lifestyle are the

biggest contributors to ground-level and stair falls, and environmental components such as poor lighting and lack of handrails may increase the frequency of falling.<sup>3</sup> Osteoporosis is another risk for falls. It is a disease that causes bones to become weak and brittle, and more likely to break. The most common broken bones associated with osteoporosis are the spine, wrist and hip. In 2013, there were more than 5,600 hip fracture hospitalizations among older adults; 73 percent were women.

The NCOA suggests the following tips to take action to prevent osteoporosis and falls:

- Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium.
- Take vitamin D supplements.
- Get regular physical activity, including weight-bearing exercise.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit your alcohol intake.
- Check your home for safety.
- Talk with your doctor about a screening test and, if needed, get treated for osteoporosis.

Evidence-based falls prevention programs provide older adults with the skills and tools they need to live healthier, more productive lives. Falls can be prevented and severity reduced through practical lifestyle adjustments, evidence-based falls prevention programs and clinical-community partnerships. Programs such as A Matter of Balance, Tai Chi, and Stepping On help older adults gain strength, improve balance and build confidence to help them live healthier lives and preserve their independence.

Fact sheet on osteoporosis, falls and broken bones:  
<https://www.ncoa.org/resources/fact-sheet-osteoporosis-falls-and-broken-bones/>.

For more information about Indiana's efforts to reduce falls and other injuries, visit the [ISDH Trauma and Injury Prevention Division](#).

## Close to Home: Human Trafficking in Indiana

If you were to think of an industry that was one of the fastest growing in the world, with nearly \$150 billion in profits annually, you might consider real estate or the tech industry. But, in truth, modern day slavery takes hostage 27 million people each year and is a problem nationally and here in Indiana. Human trafficking has two primary categories: labor trafficking and sex trafficking. Labor trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.” Sex trafficking is a “...commercial sex act induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.”<sup>7</sup> While many people consider trafficking to be an issue in other countries, or with immigrants to the United States, the truth is that 83 percent of sex trafficking victims found in the U.S. were U.S. citizens.<sup>8</sup>

Without demand for commercial sex and labor, human trafficking would not exist. The demand for sex leaves one million children exploited in commercial sex each year. It is believed that this number is largely underestimated. In Indiana during 2014, more than 100 tips were investigated by law enforcement. The average age that U.S. children are first pulled into commercial sex is between 12 and 14 years old. A recruiter, who the victim might know as a “boyfriend,” neighbor or family member, gains the victim’s trust and then sells him/her for labor or to a pimp. The trafficker then controls the victim through abuse, threats and lies. Victims can come from any socio-economic class, education level, neighborhood or racial/ethnic group. No one is immune. The consumer funds the trafficking industry by purchasing goods and services from the traffickers. Often consumers, or “johns,” think that buying commercial sex is a victimless crime, but children and adult victims suffer with every dollar spent.<sup>9</sup>



People are often recruited into human trafficking through grooming (i.e. an older boyfriend giving lots of attention, gifts), the Internet (i.e. Backpage.com or Craigslist.org, social networking sites), fake employment agencies, family or friends, newspaper ads, front businesses, word of mouth or abduction. While anyone can fall victim to human trafficking, those recruited into commercial sex often have common characteristics. Of those victims recruited into human trafficking, 57 percent had experienced sexual abuse as children, 49 percent had been physically assaulted, 85 percent of girls were victims of incest and 90 percent of boys reported a history of physical abuse. Our most vulnerable citizens are at a much higher risk to continue to be victimized through this criminal industry. The average age of death for those in commercial sex is 34 years old.<sup>9</sup>



The state of Indiana is leading the charge against human trafficking. We know that demand for this crime exists only because we tolerate it. The Indiana Attorney General’s Office supports multiple efforts in the state to put a stop to human trafficking. Indiana’s anti-trafficking task force is the [Indiana Protection for Abused and Trafficked Humans \(IPATH\)](#) group, which is one of 42 task forces nationwide. The goal of this task force is to improve and enhance awareness, law enforcement capacity for identifying/rescuing victims, victim services as well as protocol and training related to trafficking. In addition, the office champions the “[Indiana’s Not Buying It](#)” initiative, which strives to reduce the demand for commercial sex and change the cultural acceptance of buying sex. There is also curriculum available for [human trafficking prevention for youth and youth workers](#). This curriculum can be utilized to help arm our children and youth with the information they need to stay safe.

For more information about human trafficking and how you can help, as well as many other programs in place to protect Hoosier citizens, please visit the [Indiana Attorney General](#)’s website.

# Social Determinants of Health and Health Disparities

Typically, when we think of what impacts our health, we think of our family history, current habits and behaviors. It can be challenging to consider that our health status can be impacted by where we are born and grow up, where we live and work, our age and the effectiveness of the systems in place to care for us when we are ill. These considerations, along with our economy, social policies and political environments are what is referred to as social determinants of health.

Social determinants of health impact everyone, but health inequities, or avoidable inequalities between groups of people, are heavily influenced by these factors.<sup>8</sup> In Indiana during 2012, the infant mortality rate was 5.5 babies

per 1000 live births for Caucasians and 14.5 babies per 1000 live births for African Americans. This health inequity is influenced by social determinants such as unequal access to healthcare and education, poverty and even reliable access to healthy foods and places to be active.

It is critical in our work in public health, and many other public service sectors, that we take into consideration the challenges that social determinants of health pose for underserved and underrepresented populations. We must acknowledge deficiencies in our own policies, procedures and practices that prevent Hoosiers from accessing the services and

education they need to live healthy lives.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) supports your work to reduce health disparities and improve the lives of all individuals living in the state. To learn more about the work being done at ISDH and to access support and resources for your organization or community, visit the [ISDH Office of Minority Health](#). To read about how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working to apply social determinants of health to public health practice, visit [Public Health Reports](#).

## Straight Talk: Chronic Stress and Your Body

Work, kids, holidays, friends, bills, school, medical appointments, caregiving, wedding planning, vacation, back-to-school...the list goes on and on. If you needed to take a couple deep breaths after reading this list, then you are probably like most women and balancing scores of responsibilities each day. Stress is a natural response of our bodies that can be very beneficial and give us a boost to help drive us through important or urgent situations. But women today often experience chronic stress in their everyday balancing acts and this can have a very negative impact on a woman's overall health.<sup>4</sup>

The stress reaction in our bodies is designed to work for a short period of time and then, once the situation has passed that is causing stress, our hormone levels return to normal. When stressors keep coming and never go away, our stress-response system stays turned on and you increase your risk for many health problems, including anxiety, depression, digestive issues, cardiovascular disease, sleep problems, weight gain and memory concerns.<sup>5</sup>

Your individual reaction to stress can be influenced by your own genetics. It can also be influenced by your life experiences. If you have experienced events that felt traumatic to you, as a child or an adult, you may have a stronger stress re-

sponse to everyday challenges. It is important to recognize when you are no longer coping well with your stressors. You may experience symptoms such as:

- Headaches, jaw clenching or pain;
- Neck or back pain;
- Frequent colds or infections;
- Heartburn, stomach pain or nausea;
- Frequent urination;
- Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness;
- Depression symptoms;
- Frequent or wild mood swings;
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating;
- Withdrawing from others;
- Constant tiredness, weakness or fatigue;
- Weight gain or loss; and many, more symptoms.<sup>6</sup>

Do not just ignore your symptoms. It is easy when you are busy or overwhelmed to ignore small signs of stress and maybe even chalk them up to a bad day. When these small signs continue over time, you increase your risk for much more serious health problems. Luckily, there are many options for you to address your stress and start to take back control. Some examples include:

- **Organize:** Take the time to look at your environment at home, at work or at school. Make "to do" lists, have

frequently used items within reach, use a calendar to schedule activities or even schedule ahead a day to sort and de-clutter.

- **Connect:** Social connection is one of the best ways to reduce stress. Find someone to talk to, whether it is a friend, family member, counselor or spiritual leader. Everyone experiences stress and it can help to talk it out.
- **Eat well and move:** We hear it all the time, but finding ways to practically improve your diet and get exercise really does make a meaningful difference. Stand instead of sit, eat an apple instead of a doughnut or go to bed a little early. Small changes can really help.
- **Give yourself a timeout:** Not just for toddlers, timeouts are a great way to reduce stress. When you feel tension, anxiety or stress that is overwhelming, step away for a moment if you can and take a deep breath. Eat lunch outside, sit in your car, take a walk by yourself or put on your headphones and jam to your favorite tune.

For more information about stress, visit the [American Institute of Stress](#). To learn about ways to improve your overall health, visit [INShape Indiana](#) or the [Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health](#).





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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: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/18061.htm>.
- 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

Indiana Perinatal Network  
[6<sup>th</sup> Annual Perinatal Hospital Summit](#)  
9/2/15

American Lung Association – Indiana Chapter  
[LUNG FORCE Walk](#)  
9/13/15

ISDH Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention  
[Injury Prevention Advisory Council \(IPAC\) Meeting](#)  
9/17/15

La Plaza  
[FIESTA Indianapolis celebration](#)  
9/19/15

Ovar'Coming Together  
[Turn the Canal TEAL event](#) – 9/24/15  
[Teal Ribbon Ovarian Cancer RUN/WALK](#) – 9/26/15

Lupus Foundation of America – Indiana Chapter  
[Walk to End Lupus Now™](#)  
9/26/15

## References

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- <sup>2</sup>Vellas, B.J., Wayne, S.J., Romero, L.J., Baumgartner, R.N. & Garry, P.J. (1997). Fear of falling and restriction of mobility in elderly fallers. *Age and Ageing*, 26:189–193.
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- <sup>4</sup>Indiana Protection for Abused and Trafficked Humans (IPATH). (2015). *Human trafficking: Healthcare provider awareness and intervention training* [PowerPoint slides].
- <sup>5</sup>Human Trafficking/Trafficking In Persons, Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2012). Retrieved from <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=40>.
- <sup>6</sup>Office of the Attorney General. (2015). *Indiana's Not Buying It*. Retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/3082.htm>.
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- <sup>9</sup>Mayo Clinic. *Healthy Lifestyle: Stress management*. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20046037>.
- <sup>10</sup>The American Institute of Stress. (2015). *50 common signs and symptoms of stress*. Retrieved from <http://www.stress.org/stress-effects/>.