

**HOWELL
COUNTY
HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**

MARCH CALENDAR

WIC: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29

Willow Springs WIC: 6

Mountain View WIC: 26

Family Planning: 7, 20, 21

Immunizations: 5, 12, 19

Food Handlers: 4

Holiday's (closed): None

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Clinic Hours:

Monday-Friday 8-12 & 1-5,
closed for lunch 12-1

Administration Hours

Monday-Friday 8-5

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Early Spring Gardening from www.bhg.com

Though the official first day of spring is in March, gardeners often go by the weather to decide that spring has started. Think of early spring as the time when temperatures begin trending upward and stay consistently above freezing if you live in a cold climate. In temperate regions, most plants are just about to break dormancy but haven't started actively growing yet.

1. Clean up flower-beds.

Clear away dead leaves or any other winter debris from the soil surfaces where you're planning to plant annual flowers and vegetables. Remove protective winter mulch from around perennials and ornamental grasses (hedge trimmers make it easy to give grass clumps a clean, even look), and cut back last year's dried foliage. To protect yourself from cuts and scrapes, remember to wear gardening gloves, especially when working with plants with prickly leaves.

2. Divide your perenni-



als.

A good time to divide many perennials is just before spring growth begins. Dividing perennials is a budget-friendly way to add more plants to your garden, or to share extras with friends. It also aids in keeping your existing perennials healthy. After a few years, if your plants grow in a large clump, the middle can thin out, leaving a bare spot. Dividing the clump will encourage new growth.

3. Add mulch around perennials.

One of the easiest ways to make your yard look polished is to add a fresh layer of mulch around the garden beds. This also helps the soil retain moisture and keeps down weeds. It often takes more mulch than you imagine to cover a bed, so it's a good idea to buy a little more than you think you'll need. Spread the mulch evenly with your

gloved hands or use a rake, being careful not to layer it on too thickly or too close to your plants, which can cause diseases. Keeping the mulch level also helps it stay in place during heavy rains or wind. If you have downspouts that tend to wash away mulch, one fix is to replace it with river rocks.

4. Prune trees and shrubs.

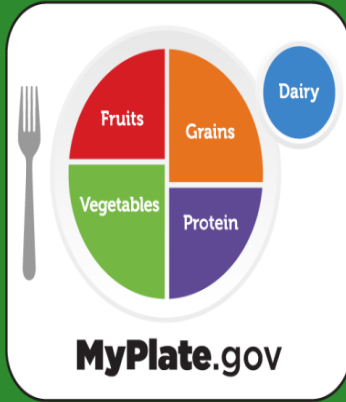
If you didn't prune in winter, now is the time to trim your fruit trees. Prune before the buds begin to break into bloom, or you'll stress the tree and get a tiny crop (or possibly none). It's also a good time to prune evergreen trees and shrubs.

5. Perform basic maintenance on your hardscaping.

Check stonework for frost heaves, particularly in paths and edging. Check the general condition of your deck or patio and make any needed repairs. Clean off outdoor furniture so it's ready when you are for relaxing after a busy day in the garden.

6. Plant vegetables.

Hardy, cool-season vegetables, like potatoes, artichokes, peas, and some lettuces, germinate best in cool soil, so plant them in early spring, once the soil has thawed. They should be ready to harvest by early summer.



Try foods from
all the groups.

Call and schedule
your water test
today, 417-256-7078.

Buy
produce if
possible
from your
local
Farmer's
Market.



National Nutrition Month

from April Bridges, WIC Nutritionist

March is National Nutrition Month. At WIC, we always encourage clients to visit MyPlate.gov for help planning a healthy diet. Get a head start on making Nutrition month successful by trying a few tips you may find there. To *vary your veggies*, eat a rainbow of vegetables—have plenty of dark green, orange, and red ones. Also, try new ones more than just once. To *focus on fruit*, use them as snack

or after dinner dessert in place of sugary treats. *Make half your grains whole*: whole grains are easier to get than you might think, oatmeal is a great way to start the day, replace white rice with brown, and snack on popcorn. (Many people don't realize that popcorn is a whole grain!) *Go lean with protein*: have seafood at least two times each week; try other sources of protein like beans, tofu or nuts. Finally, *build strong bones with*

dairy. Sometimes it's hard to get in adequate calcium just from milk, especially if it is not your favorite drink. Remember that yogurt and cheese counts too, add these to snacks or meals to meet those needs. Be sure to choose low-fat versions and limit added sugars. By using the "MyPlate" visual aid with each meal, it is easy to fill your plate with all the right foods.

Water Testing Services

from Justin Frazier, EPHS

Are you curious if your well water is safe to drink? The Howell County Health Department provides kits for private well water testing. County residents may call or stop in the health department for a kit and directions on properly collecting a water sample. Only samples collected

in a testing kit from the health department will be analyzed. Water samples may be dropped off to the health department Monday – Friday by 12 PM. Water testing fees are \$10.00 for standard e-coli and coliform bacteria tests, if the samples are "self-drawn," and \$20 for an official test, which will be drawn by the health

department. Water test for metals, nutrients and minerals such as Iron, Lead, Uranium, Sulfate, Nitrates, pH and more can also be performed by a member of the Howell County Health Department for an additional charge. Protect yourself and your family's health and contact us at 417-256-7078 to schedule your water test today.

Nutrition Month-Making Healthy Choices

from Beverly McDaniel, RN

With spring right around the corner, we can start thinking of warmer activities and planning for outdoor adventures. National nutrition month is a great time to learn about making healthier food choices, developing better habits and teaching kids about making good choices at the table or store. Many people enjoy planting garden not only for the great benefits of healthier eating but also getting exercise while planting, pull-

ing weeds and tending the garden area. Kids enjoy the learning process of watching something grow and picking fresh vegetable to eat. Consuming home grown fruits and vegetables gives you the peace of mind knowing no chemicals were added during growing process. Saving money is another benefit, less waste from grocery store packaging, proper storage and saving time are few other positive out-

comes. Supporting our local farmers when buying produce at a farmer's market provides us benefits as well as the community. Planning ahead and looking for new recipes that have healthier items will make it easier to choose better options. We can all make small steps to better wellness, whether by choosing a better snack, put more fruits and vegetables in our daily meals, or teaching a child to garden.



Howell County Health Department

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Public Health: Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The mission of the Howell County Health Department is to improve, promote and protect the health of Howell County through awareness, assessment, planning and assurance in order that our community may achieve their fullest health potential.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Howell County Health Department Staff & Email



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