

HOWELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

APRIL CALENDAR

WIC: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 29, 30

Willow Springs WIC: 1

Mountain View WIC: 28

Family Planning: 9, 23

Immunizations: 7, 14, 21

Food Handlers: 6

Holiday's (closed): None

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

April is STI Awareness Month 2

National Autism Awareness Month 2

Temporary Food Stands 2

Mission 3

HCHD Staff and Email 3

Clinic Hours:

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

Administration Hours

Monday-Friday 8-5

Monthly Monitor

VOLUME 284

APRIL 2026

Stress Management from Dawn Hicks, Health Educator

April is Stress Awareness Month—a time to recognize the impact stress has on our daily lives and to encourage healthy ways to cope. In our community, many people balance work, caregiving, financial responsibilities, and other challenges that can contribute to ongoing stress. While stress is a normal part of life, too much of it over time can affect both physical and mental health. By understanding and managing stress, we can protect our health and improve our quality of life.

Recognizing the Signs of Stress

Stress can show up in different ways for different people. Some common signs include:

- Feeling constantly worried or overwhelmed
- Irritability, mood swings, or frequent frustration
- Low energy, fatigue, or difficulty concentrating
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Withdrawing from friends, family, or social activities

Being aware of these signs



is the first step in taking control of stress before it becomes more serious.

Healthy Ways to Manage Stress:

There are many strategies to help reduce stress and promote well-being:

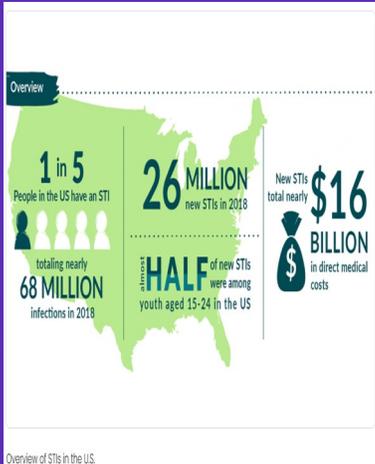
- **Stay active** – Physical activity, even a short daily walk, releases tension and improves mood. Local parks, trails, and community spaces offer easy ways to stay moving.
- **Prioritize rest** – Consistent, quality sleep is essential for both mental and physical health.
- **Practice mindfulness** – Deep breathing, meditation, prayer, or simply taking a few quiet moments each day can help calm the mind.
- **Stay connected** – Talking with friends, family, or community support groups provides comfort and perspective.
- **Set realistic expectations** – Breaking tasks into manageable steps and giving yourself grace helps reduce feelings of overwhelm.

- **Seek help when needed** – Stress that feels overwhelming is a signal to reach out to a healthcare provider, counselor, or support service.

Community Support Matters: Reducing stress is not just an individual effort—our community plays an important role. Local health departments and community organizations provide programs, educational resources, and support networks to help individuals and families manage stress and build resilience. Participating in these programs, attending community events, or connecting with local support services can help create a stronger, healthier environment for everyone.

Take Time This April:

Stress Awareness Month is a reminder to check in with yourself and those around you. Even small steps—like going for a walk, talking with a friend, or practicing a few minutes of mindfulness—can make a meaningful difference. By raising awareness, promoting healthy coping strategies, and supporting each other, we can build a more resilient and connected community.



Schedule an appointment to get screened today.

How to introduce new food colors, smells and textures with autistic children.



April is STI Awareness Month from Cheri Carda, RN

April is about Spring and flowers. When we think of this month, we think of the weather warming up and the outdoors coming into bloom. It is also important to think about your health and STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection) risk.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that in 2018 approximately 1 in 5 had an STI. If left untreated, these can cause serious impact to your health, and to your pocket with medical costs/treatment. Almost half of

those cases involved people ages 18-24. Not all medical screenings/checkups involve testing for STI's. It is important to ask your provider to screen you for STI's and not to assume you have been tested.

Condoms can be used for more than birth control. Almost all STI's can be prevented with condoms or other barrier methods. STI's can be transmitted through oral and anal sex as well. Check with our health department to see about condoms and other barrier methods. Many STI's are curable, and ALL are treatable.

Risk screening and routine testing are important tools for your health. Please consult with your provider or local health department. You can also go to cdc.gov to get more information.

Howell County Health Department will take walk in STI screenings on Fridays from 8-11 and 1-4 during the month of April as part of our effort to promote awareness and screening. Please contact us for questions and testing information. Stay informed. Stay safe. Get screened. Get treated. Don't let STI's put your health at risk!

Autism Awareness Month from April Bridges, WIC Nutritionist

April is Autism Awareness month. All kids go through phases when their eating habits are not great, but for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), feeding challenges can seem impossible. Many autistic kids are so limited on intake that it can lead to deficiencies. Many struggle

with textures, colors, smells, and tastes- all so restrictive that levels of iron, calcium, vitamin D and B12 start to be affected. Although, there is no fool proof plan to help these issues- here are some common suggestions to manage mealtime behaviors: Focus on limiting stress at mealtime. Encourage safe exposure to

new foods rather than forcing consumption. Maintain routine. Consistency in time and place of meals, and also involve children in food selection- like picking out foods at the store, market or garden. Gradual Change. New textures and selections should be mixed in gradually with safe foods, and expectations kept low.

Temporary Food Stands from Curtis Beaulieu, EPHS

Temporary food stands are food establishments that operate for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration. Food stands that set-up for fairs and festivals may receive educational materials and/or inspections through their local health agencies. Prior to setting-up at an event or providing foods for sale, the vendor should consult with their local health agency

about the requirements that may need to be met to prepare, serve or sell that food at a temporary event. There is a brochure that provides general guidance about what is required for **temporary food vendors**.

Food service operators should have a basic understanding of how improper handling of Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHFs) and poor hygiene can cause a

foodborne illness. PHFs are foods (such as meat or dairy products) that must be kept hot or cold because they are capable of supporting the rapid growth of bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. By following these guidelines, temporary food service operators can minimize the possibility of a foodborne illness occurrence. <https://health.mo.gov/safety/foodsafety/industryfoods/retailfoods/tempfoodevents.php>



Howell County Health Department

180 S. Kentucky Ave
West Plains, MO 65775

Phone: 417-256-7078

Fax: 417-256-1179

website: www.howellcountyhealth.com

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

Administrator-Justin Frazier, email: justin.frazier@lpha.mo.gov

Admin Assistant, Vital Records Clerk-Sheila Roberts, email: sheila.roberts@lpha.mo.gov

Admin Receptionist / Vital Records Clerk-Kara McGinnis, email: kara.mcginis@lpha.mo.gov

Financial Officer-Shelly Uphaus, email: shelly.uphaus@lpha.mo.gov

Health Educator-Dawn Hicks, email: dawn.hicks@lpha.mo.gov

Environmental Specialist-Curtis Beaulieu, email: curtis.beaulieu@lpha.mo.gov

WIC Supervisor-Phyllis Crider, email: phyllis.crider@lpha.mo.gov

WIC Clerk-Sharon Owen, email: sharon.owen@lpha.mo.gov

WIC Certifier, HPA & Clerk-Linda Lewis, email: linda.lewis@lpha.mo.gov

WIC HPA-Candace Stockton, email: candace.Stockton@lpha.mo.gov

WIC Nutritionist-April Bridges, email: april.bridges@lpha.mo.gov

WIC Nurse Educator, Cailynne Henry, email:

cailynne.henry@lpha.mo.gov

WIC Breast Feeding Peer Counselor-Alicia Tetrick:

alicia.tetrick@lpha.mo.gov

Director of Nurses, Katey Seiber, email: katey.seiber@lpha.mo.gov

Nurse-Cheri Carda, email: cheri.carda@lpha.mo.gov

Nurse-Bev McDaniel, email: beverly.mcdaniel@lpha.mo.gov

Nurse-Christina Parrish, email: christina.parrish@lpha.mo.gov

Front Desk Receptionist-Abby Stankovich, email:

abby.stankovich@lpha.mo.gov

Front Desk Receptionist-Luz Cope, email: luz.cope@lpha.mo.gov

