

PREVENT DISEASE AND INJURY. PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS. PROTECT YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY.

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Thanksgiving Food Safety

The holiday season is a time for gathering and sharing delicious meals with loved ones. While you're enjoying your Thanksgiving feast, it's essential to prioritize food safety to ensure everyone stays healthy. Here are some key tips to keep your holiday meal safe:

Proper Food Handling:

- Always wash your hands before and after handling food, especially raw meat. Clean and sanitize all surfaces and utensils to prevent cross-contamination.
- Thaw your turkey in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave, but never on the counter to prevent bacteria growth. [Click here](#) for safe ways and times to thaw your turkey!

Cook Thoroughly:

- Use a food thermometer to ensure your turkey reaches an internal temperature of 165°F in the thickest part to kill any harmful bacteria.
- Check all dishes to make sure other hot dishes, such as casseroles, reach safe temperatures before serving.

Serve Safely:

- Maintain hot foods at 140°F or higher, and cold foods at 40°F or lower.
- Follow the Two-Hour Rule - don't leave perishable foods out for more than two hours to prevent bacterial growth.

Store Leftovers Properly:

- Cool Quickly: Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of serving. Divide large portions into smaller containers for faster cooling.
- Reheat Safely: Reheat leftovers to an internal temperature of 165°F before eating.

Staff Spotlight: Bethany Coutz



Meet Bethany Coutz, the dedicated Program Coordinator for the ECHO Coalition and ECHO Youth Leadership Council. Bethany has been with the Williams County Health Department for 4 years, focusing on systemic issues that affect communities.

Bethany's favorite part of her job is collaborating with various people and organizations to address social issues. She loves building relationships and working together to tackle challenges at individual, family, and community levels. Bethany's passion for public health stems from her belief in prevention. After years in the mental health field at an alternative school, she witnessed students struggling with substance use and generational cycles. She saw how public health and prevention programs can create health and prevent illness, injury, and early death. Bethany is dedicated to helping youth in Williams County have healthy families, friends, schools, and communities. With a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and an OCPSA certification, Bethany brings valuable expertise to her role.

Originally from Butler, Ohio in Richland County, Bethany enjoys spending time with her husband, four children, extended family, and pets (Millie, Clara, and three hermit crabs). She keeps busy with her children's activities and also enjoys sporting events, library activities, exploring parks, swimming, fishing, biking, and hiking. She is also passionate about leading Vacation Bible School, children's programming, and organizing an annual Easter egg hunt at her church. We are grateful to have Bethany on our team!

Gratitude & Mental Health



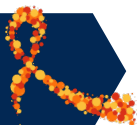
THANK
YOU

November is a great time to reflect on all reasons to be grateful, but did you know gratitude is also good for your mental health? By recognizing all you have to be grateful for, you are training your brain to notice the little things in life and shifting your perspective to be more positive. The negative thinking patterns caused by mental health disorders like anxiety and depression can be reduced by being intentional about practicing gratitude. Ways to do this include:

- **Keep a gratitude journal.** Write down the good things you enjoy each day.
- **Share your gratitude with others.** Expressing your gratitude is an evidence-based way to strengthen your relationships.
- **Go through the motions.** By going through grateful motions like smiling and saying thank you, gratitude will be felt more.

Looking for more mental health information? Visit <https://4yourmentalhealth.org/> for more resources!

Lung Health: COPD & Lung Cancer Awareness Month



November is COPD and Lung Cancer Awareness Month. In Williams County, lung cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer deaths. Early detection and healthy lifestyle choices are critical in reducing the risk of COPD and lung cancer.

Who is most commonly affected?

Individuals over 50, with a higher incidence in smokers are primarily affected. Non-smokers and younger individuals can also be affected.

How can I lower my risk?

- Avoid smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Maintain a healthy diet, rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise regularly to improve lung function.
- Avoid exposure to pollutants and chemicals.

When do I need a screening?

The USPSTF recommends annual lung cancer screening with low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) for adults aged 50 to 80 years who have a 20 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years. Early detection can significantly improve treatment outcomes.

Program Spotlight: ECHO Coalition

The Educating Communities on Healthy Opportunities (ECHO) Coalition is housed by the WCHD. The ECHO Coalition's mission is to promote and advocate for healthy, substance-free lifestyles for both youth and adults in Williams County. The purpose of the ECHO Coalition is to bring together the community to create a comprehensive, evidence-based plan for preventing substance abuse.

The ECHO Coalition is made up of 12 different sectors of the community. These include parents, youth, schools, religious organizations, healthcare professionals, media, businesses, law enforcement, government, youth-serving organizations, substance abuse organizations, and civic/volunteer organizations. Each sector brings a unique perspective to the need for substance abuse prevention in Williams County. Volunteers from these sectors work together to create programs and activities that educate people about the dangers of substance abuse. They focus on preventing the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, and marijuana. The coalition holds regular meetings to develop strategies that increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for substance abuse.

Youth play a big role in the ECHO Coalition through the Youth Leadership Council (YLC). This group is made up of 8th to 12th graders who are passionate about making a positive impact on their communities. These young leaders help run school-based programs that aim to prevent substance use and address other issues facing their peers.

If you are interested in learning more about the ECHO Coalition or want to get involved in the fight against substance abuse in our community, you can [email Bethany](mailto:bethany@echo-coalition.org) or call (419) 485-3141 ext. 126. Your involvement can help make a difference in creating a healthier, drug-free community.





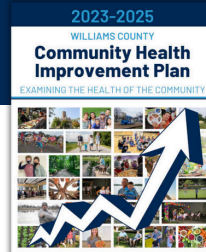
Brain Health

The health of your brain is important to your overall health - it's who you are! Brain disorders are one of the leading causes of disability globally, but cognitive decline can be preventable. Behaviors or behavior modifications that are good for your brain include:

- **Maintaining a healthy blood pressure:** Narrowed or blocked arteries can limit blood flow to the brain and raise risk of stroke.
- **Avoiding tobacco products:** Smoking can cause cognitive decline and raises your risk of dementia and stroke.
- **Engaging in physical activity:** Exercising means your body is releasing feel-good chemicals like dopamine that make you happy.
- **Maintaining a healthy weight:** Being overweight can impact functioning skills and increase dementia risk.
- **Getting enough sleep:** Pathways in your brain that let you learn and create new memories are formed while you sleep.
- **Staying engaged:** Keeping your mind engaged with hobbies and socializing with others keeps your mind sharp.
- **Managing blood sugar:** High blood sugar can damage blood vessels in the brain, causing issues with memory and thinking.

Your brain is who you are - it deserves to be taken care of! [For more tips, click this link.](#)

Community Health Improvement Plan



Every three years, WCHD works with a local coalition called the Williams County Health Partners (WCHP) to create a community health improvement plan (CHIP). This plan is a long-term strategy to tackle health issues found in the community health assessment (CHA). The CHIP explains how different organizations like social services, hospitals, the health department, and other community groups will work together to improve the health of the county.

Community members and local organizations help decide the priorities for the plan based on data. The CHIP for 2023-2025 focuses on 3 main priorities:

1. Mental health and addiction
2. Health behaviors and built environment
3. Access to care

Workgroups meet every couple of months to discuss progress and plan further actions for each priority. By working together, WCHP aims to improve the long-term health of everyone in the county. If you want to learn more or get involved, reach out to WCHD. Your participation can help make Williams County a healthier place to live.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

At WCHD, we care about providing excellent service. Please take a moment to share your feedback about our programs and services. Take our survey: www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCHDServices



WCHD Community Talking Points are published on a monthly basis and posted on our website and social media. If you would you like to receive the community talking points directly, sign up by completing this form: bit.ly/WCCoCommunityTalkingPoints

For more information on WCHD programs and services, visit: williamscountyhealth.org

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