

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

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## Holiday Safety & Travel

It's the holiday season, which means time with family, celebration, and travel! Traveling during the holidays can be stressful, but there are ways to ensure your travel goes as smooth as possible. Keep yourself, your family, and those sharing your travel spaces with you safe this holiday season!

1. **Prepare a travel health kit.** This can include your prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines to last your entire trip, a mask, hand sanitizer, and your health insurance card.
2. **Choose safe transportation.** Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among healthy travelers. If you are driving, make sure you and everyone else in the vehicle are buckled up and children are in correct child safety seats. Make sure the driver is alert, well-rested, and free of substances like alcohol.
3. **Double check your emergency supplies.** Make sure you have jumper cables in any vehicle you plan to travel in. Stock your vehicle with items like blankets, extra food and water, coats, and a flashlight in case of a winter storm throwing you off course.
4. **Do not overshare your travel plans on social media.** If you plan on being away for some time, don't let others know on social media - this may be enticing for thieves who want to target your home.

The holidays are a time for celebrating with family and friends, not for being unprepared for unwanted travel dangers. Use these tips to keep your holiday season and travels safe this year!

## Staff Spotlight: Kelsea McNeil

Meet Kelsea McNeil, one of our Public Health Nurses!

Kelsea joined the Williams County Health Department four weeks ago and has already brought her passion and dedication to her role as a Public Health Nurse.



Kelsea's favorite part of her job is the supportive and welcoming environment created by her coworkers. She also enjoys serving the community by providing vaccinations, helping families stay healthy, and interacting with community members.

Kelsea was inspired to pursue a career in public health because she wanted to contribute to improving her community's overall health and wellness. Motivated by her goal as a nurse to care for and help others, she brings passion and compassion to every aspect of her role.

Kelsea earned her Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) from Northwest State Community College and holds certifications in Basic Life Support (BLS) and Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP).

Originally from Camden, Michigan, Kelsea enjoys spending her free time playing volleyball, working out, and traveling. She describes herself as outgoing, compassionate, and adventurous—qualities that shine through in her work and interactions with others.

We're excited to have Kelsea on the team and look forward to the positive contributions she will continue to bring to the health department and our community.

Stay tuned to learn more about the amazing people dedicated to making our community healthier and stronger!

## Program Spotlight: Birth & Death Certificates

Getting a certified birth certificate in Williams County is easy! Visit our Montpelier office, fill out an application, and if there are no errors, we'll process your certified birth certificate on the spot. Each copy costs \$25. Here's what you need for the application: Full name at birth, date of birth, mother's maiden name, father's name, and county or city where the birth happened. You may need a birth certificate for getting a driver's license, replacing a social security card, getting married, registering for school, or traveling abroad. If you can't make it to our office, you can order a certified Ohio birth certificate online at [bit.ly/VitalChekForm](https://bit.ly/VitalChekForm). Orders are processed at WCHD on the day they are received.

We also register all deaths that occur in Williams County. If you need a death certificate for someone who died in another county, you must obtain it from the county where the death occurred. Death certificates can be requested in-person at our Montpelier office, by mail, or online through the VitalChek website. For more information, visit our website.

## Winter Car Seat Safety



Winter can be reminiscent of hot chocolate, cozy blankets, and warm firesides, but it can also be a tricky time when it comes to child safety.

Winter can be just as dangerous for children left in unattended vehicles. Exposure to extreme cold can cause frostbite in as little as 30 minutes, and children are especially vulnerable.

Heavier winter coats can create extra space in the harness, leading to a loose fit and increased injury risk in a crash. Opt for lightweight fleece layers instead of bulky materials to keep the harness snug. For extra warmth, cover your child with a blanket or put a coat on backwards over the properly fitted harness.

To learn more, call our child passenger safety technicians at 419-485-3141. Our CPSTs provide free educational sessions and car seat checks to anyone transporting children. For income eligible residents, free car seats may also be provided.

## Holiday Mental Health & Winter Blues



The holiday season can be a time of joy, but it can also bring feelings of sadness and loneliness. To maintain your mental well-being and navigate the winter blues, consider these tips:

### Acknowledge Your Feelings:



It's okay to feel down or stressed during the holidays. Recognize your emotions and allow yourself to experience them without judgment.

### Prioritize Self-Care:

Get enough sleep, eat well, and exercise regularly. Take time for yourself to relax and recharge.

### Get Outside:

Even in cold weather, sunlight and fresh air can improve your mood. Take a short walk during daylight hours to help alleviate symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

### Set Healthy Boundaries:



Be mindful of your limits. It's okay to say no to certain invitations or activities if they feel overwhelming.

### Seek Help:

If you're struggling with feelings of depression or anxiety, don't hesitate to seek support from a mental health professional.

### Limit Social Media Use:



Avoid comparing your holiday experience to others' online. Remember that social media often portrays an idealized version of reality.

## Christmas Light Recycling Event



The Williams County Health Department will be collecting Christmas Lights to recycle in cooperation with WiltonKeck Recycling. Starting December 1st through January 31st you can drop your lights off at the WCHD's Montpelier office Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Questions? Call Shannon at 419-485-3141 ext. 109.



## What is the Community Health Assessment (CHA)?



Data is very important to public health work - it lets us know what population health concerns are impacting our community and gives us a better idea of how to address them. Community Health Assessments serve as a comprehensive check-up of our community's health - like taking the pulse of Williams County.

Data is collected every three years among Williams County adults and youth to better identify and understand health issues facing Williams County residents. Through a combined effort by the WCHD, Parkview Health, and many other community organizations, we are able to provide valuable information about our community. This data is used to develop and improve programs throughout the county to meet health needs.

To collect the data, Williams County adults (19 years of age and older) and youth (grades 6-12) participate in county-wide health assessment surveys. Questions in the surveys are selected by local agencies and modeled after the survey instruments used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for their national and state Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS). Additional data is also provided by local agencies.

The WCHD will be collecting new data for the Community Health Assessment in 2025, and we want to hear from you! Be on the lookout for a CHA survey in the coming months so we can better serve our community.

## Safe Toys & Gifts Month

It's the season of giving, which means it's the season of toys and gifts. While toys can be fun, safe and age-appropriate gift-giving can keep kids safe. Some tips on safe gift-giving include:

- **Inspect toys before buying them.** Make sure the toy does not have sharp edges or loose pieces.
- **Inspect toys gifted to your child before letting them play with them.** Check for age-appropriateness, skill level, and safety before giving them the go-ahead.
- **Look for safety inspection labels.** If the toy says "ATSM", that toy has passed the American Society for Testing and Materials standards and may be safer than toys that have not.
- **Gift appropriate safety equipment if needed.** Protective gear is important to some gifts, like skateboards or scooters.
- **Watch out for small parts and batteries with young children.** Do not gift toys with small parts, magnets, or "button" batteries to small children - if it can fit in a toilet paper roll, it is too small for children under the age of three.

## 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](http://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/WCCommunityTalkingPoints](http://bit.ly/WCCommunityTalkingPoints)

For more information on WCHD programs and services, visit: [williamscountyhealth.org](http://williamscountyhealth.org)

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