

HOWELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

AUGUST CALENDAR

WIC: 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 31

Willow Springs WIC: 5

Mountain View WIC: 25

Family Planning: 6, 20

Immunizations: 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 28

Food Handlers: 3

Holiday's (closed): None

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Vaccines for Back to School 2

National Breastfeeding Month 2

Acidified and Low Acid Canned Foods 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 288

AUGUST 2026

Healthy Eyes, Healthy Minds, Healthy School Year from Dawn Hicks, Health Educator

As families prepare for a new school year, don't forget one important part of your child's back-to-school wellness checklist, healthy eyes. August is **Children's Eye Health and Safety Month**, making it the perfect time to ensure your child is ready to learn, play, and thrive. Did you know that up to 80% of learning is visual? Clear vision is essential for reading, writing, using computers, and participating in classroom activities. Unfortunately, many children don't realize they have trouble seeing because they assume everyone sees the way they do.

Signs Your Child May Be Having Vision Problems

Watch for these common signs:

- Squinting or covering one eye
- Sitting too close to the TV or holding books very close
- Frequent headaches or eye rubbing
- Difficulty reading or



losing their place while reading

- Complaints of blurry or double vision
- Trouble focusing or declining school performance

If you notice any of these signs, schedule a comprehensive eye exam with an eye care professional.

Keep Eyes Healthy at School

Help protect your child's vision throughout the school year by encouraging healthy habits:

- Take breaks from screens using the **20-20-20 rule**: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for

at least 20 seconds.

- Make sure homework and reading areas have good lighting.
- Encourage outdoor play, which has been linked to healthier vision development in children.
- Provide protective eye-wear for sports and recreational activities when appropriate.
- Remind children to wash their hands often and avoid rubbing their eyes to help prevent the spread of eye infections.

Back-to-School Wellness Starts with Healthy Vision

A healthy school year begins with healthy habits. Along with getting enough sleep, eating nutritious meals, staying physically active, and keeping immunizations up to date, good vision plays a vital role in your child's overall wellness and academic success.

By making eye health part of your back-to-school routine, you're helping your child start the school year with the confidence to see, learn, and succeed.



Call us to see if your kids are up to date on their vaccinations.

Great job breastfeeding and giving your little one a healthy start!



Vaccines for Back to School

from Beverly McDaniel, RN

As August arrives, families begin gathering school supplies, watching for school buses, and filling their calendars with back-to-school activities. It's also a great time to review vaccination records, not just for school-age children, but for every member of the family.

Vaccines help protect against serious diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and meningitis. Staying up to date on recommended immunizations helps prevent out-

breaks, protects our communities, and safeguards those with weakened immune systems who are at greater risk of severe illness.

Vaccines work by teaching your immune system how to recognize and fight harmful viruses and bacteria. Along with healthy habits like eating a balanced diet, washing your hands often, and avoiding contact with people who are sick, vaccines are one of the best ways to stay healthy.

Our goal is to help keep children and families

healthy all year long. If you're unsure whether you or your child is up to date on vaccinations, we can help. Call us to review your immunization records, or access them anytime through the Docket app on your smartphone.

For recommended vaccination schedules, visit the CDC's vaccine website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines. To schedule an appointment or ask questions about vaccines, call us at **417-256-7078**.

National Breastfeeding Month

from April Bridges, WIC Nutritionist

August is recognized as National Breastfeeding Awareness Month. Here at the Howell County Health Department, we celebrated early this year and had a pool party in July to kick off a month full of recognition to all our breast-

feeding moms and their supporters. We will continue to celebrate throughout August by showcasing some of our breastfeeding mothers and babies on our Facebook page. Fun fact: Howell County's breastfeeding rates are in the top 15 of the state. In 2025,

71% of Howell County WIC mothers initiated breastfeeding, 32% were still fully breastfeeding at 6 months, and 22% were still breastfeeding at 1 year. Those are AMAZING numbers! Kuddos to all the breastfeeding moms out there, we are very proud of you!

Acidified & Low Acid Canned Food

from Curtis Beaulieu, EPHS & DHSS.mo.gov

When foods are sealed in containers, proper processing is essential to prevent the growth of bacteria that can cause botulism. This is done either by using enough heat to destroy bacterial spores (low-acid canning) or by lowering the food's pH below 4.6 through the addition of acids such as

vinegar or lemon juice (acidified foods).

In Missouri, acidified foods—including many salsas, pickled vegetables, and similar products—must meet state regulations in addition to current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMPs). These regulations require the food process to be reviewed by

a qualified process authority and for processors to complete Better Process Control School (BPCS) training. These requirements help ensure canned foods are produced safely and protect consumers from foodborne illnesses such as botulism.

For more information: <https://health.mo.gov/safety/foodsafety/industryfoods/>



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 Nutrition Educator, Stephanie Johnson, email: stepanie.johnson@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

