



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

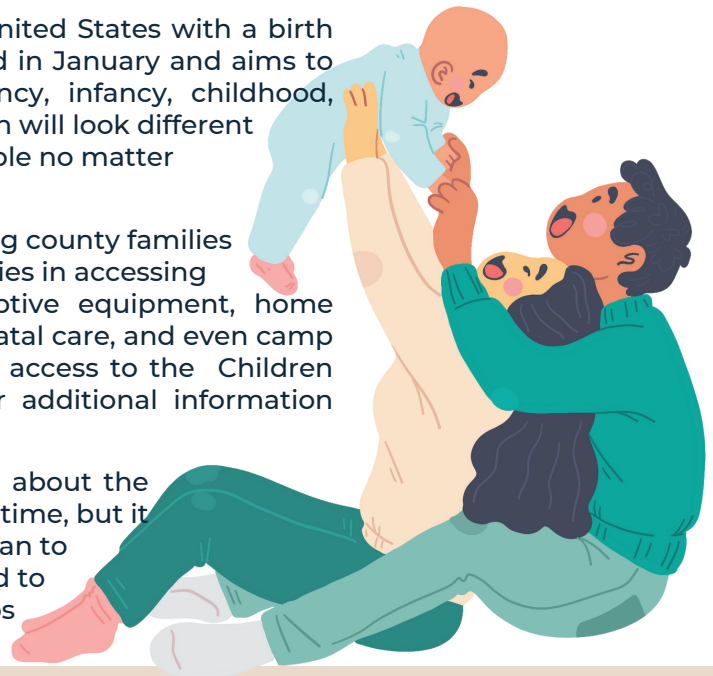
PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

JANUARY IS BIRTH DEFECTS AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that every 4.5 minutes a baby is born in the United States with a birth defect? National Birth Defects Awareness Month is celebrated in January and aims to bring awareness to birth defects conditions from pregnancy, infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Achieving the best possible health will look different for different people, but a community of support can help people no matter what health experiences they are navigating.

The Wyandot County Council for Birth Defects has been serving county families since 1985. Around 97% of all donations are used to assist families in accessing much needed emergency medications and supplies, adaptive equipment, home modifications, gas vouchers or lodging for hospital stays, prenatal care, and even camp registration costs. Wyandot County Public Health also offers access to the Children with Medical Handicaps program for qualified families. For additional information contact Wyandot County Public Health at 419-294-3852.

Birth Defects Awareness Month is also a time to learn more about the ways birth defects can be prevented. Pregnancy is an exciting time, but it also can be stressful. Knowing that you are doing all that you can to get ready for pregnancy, to stay healthy during pregnancy, and to give baby a healthy start provides peace of mind. Use these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:



- Get 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day. Folic acid is a B vitamin. If a woman has enough folic acid in her body at least one month before and during pregnancy, it can help prevent major birth defects of the developing brain and spine.
- See a healthcare professional regularly. A woman should be sure to see her doctor when planning a pregnancy and start prenatal care as soon as she thinks that she is pregnant.
- Avoid alcohol, marijuana, smoking/vaping tobacco and other drugs at any time during pregnancy. There are no known safe levels of these drugs during pregnancy. These drugs can lead to premature birth, low birth weight and other birth defects. Those using drugs for medical reasons should discuss alternative options with pregnancy-specific safety data.
- Avoid overheating and treat fever promptly. During pregnancy, overheating should be avoided and fever treated promptly. Overheating can be caused by a fever or exposure to high temperatures (like getting in a hot tub) that increases the body's core temperature.
- Choose a healthy lifestyle. Keep diabetes under control. Strive to reach and maintain a healthy weight. A woman who is obese before pregnancy is at a higher risk for complications during pregnancy.
- Talk to a healthcare provider about taking any medications. If a woman is pregnant or planning a pregnancy, she should not stop taking medications she needs or begin taking new medications without first talking with her healthcare provider.
- Talk to a healthcare provider about vaccinations. Most vaccinations are safe during pregnancy and some vaccinations, such as the flu vaccine and the Tdap vaccine (adult tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine), are specifically recommended during pregnancy. Some vaccines protect women against infections that can cause birth defects. Having the right vaccinations at the right time can help keep a woman and her baby healthy.



STAY WARM & INFORMED THIS WINTER

During extremely cold weather or winter storms, staying warm and safe can be a challenge. Winter storms can bring cold temperatures, power failures, loss of communication services, and icy roads. To keep yourself and your loved ones safe, you should know how to prepare your home and your car before a winter storm hits.

Make a plan: Consider creating disaster and communication plans with members of your household so you'll know steps to take and how to get in touch with each other in an emergency.

Prepare your home: Weatherproof your home by insulating water lines along exterior walls, caulking or weather-stripping doors and windows, insulating walls and the attic, installing storm or thermal-pane windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside, and finally repair roof leaks and remove tree branches that could fall on your home or other structures.

Heat your home safely: Have your chimney or flue inspected each year, especially when you plan to use a fireplace or wood stove for heating. Install a smoke detector and a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector. Keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby. **REMEMBER:** All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside.

Create an emergency vehicle kit: During a winter storm, it is best to avoid traveling, but if travel is necessary, make sure you have safety essentials with you. Your kit should include your cell phone and a portable charger; items to stay warm such as extra hats, coats, mittens, and blankets; a windshield scraper and shovel; a battery-powered radio with extra batteries; a flashlight with extra batteries; water and snack food; a first aid kit with any necessary medications and a pocket knife; cat litter or sand to help tires get traction, or road salt to melt ice; jumper cables; hazard or other reflectors, emergency flag or flares to draw attention; road maps; waterproof matches and a can to melt snow for water.

When winter weather is forecasted: Listen to weather forecasts regularly and check emergency supplies including water and food. Bring pets indoors or ensure adequate shelter for pets to stay warm and access unfrozen water. Double check that your vehicle is prepped. Check antifreeze and windshield washer fluid levels. Check air pressure and tread of the wheels. Keep the gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank or fuel lines. Keep your vehicle in good working order by checking the following: heater, defroster, brakes, brake fluid, ignition, emergency flashers, exhaust, oil, and battery.



**SIGN UP NOW FOR
WENS ALERTS!**

**RECEIVE UPDATED WEATHER & SAFETY
INFORMATION FOR WYANDOT COUNTY
STRAIGHT TO YOUR PHONE & EMAIL**



SCAN HERE!

VISIT: bit.ly/WyandotWENS

ADD WYANDOT WENS TO YOUR PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

WENS is a texting, email, and phone call service that allows county agencies to alert you directly with emergency information. This service is meant to help anyone who lives, works, or plays in Wyandot County, or who knows someone who does, to receive important health and safety information.

Sign up is quick and easy and doesn't require a download. You'll receive personalized alerts for preferred cities, towns, and townships in Wyandot County in addition to preferred weather alerts. WENS also allows you to indicate if you or someone in your household may be in need of additional assistance in an emergency.

To sign up, visit bit.ly/WyandotWENS