

# THE WEST HAVEN HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ENSURING THE HEALTH OF OUR CITY

## AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

Back to School  
and Health

National  
Immunization  
Awareness Month

National  
Breastfeeding  
Month

## BACK TO SCHOOL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### School Nutrition

Most US children consume almost half of their calories at school. That makes school a great place to foster healthy eating habits and behavior.

### Physical Education and Physical Activity in School

US children spend six to eight hours a day at school. That creates many opportunities for students to be physically active, which is important because experts recommend children get 60 minutes of physical activity per day.

It is also important for students to get physical education designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for physical activity and physical fitness. These can help your kids gain the ability to stay physically active for their entire life time. Physical education can contribute to the one hour of physical activity kids should get each day. In addition, physical education can help improve students' academic achievement such as grades and test scores.



## School Health Services

Approximately 25% of children ages 2-8 years old in the United States are affected by health issues, such as asthma, obesity, other physical conditions, or behavior/learning problems. School health service providers deliver first aid and acute and emergency care for students and assist with managing chronic conditions (such as asthma or diabetes) at school. They also promote prevention and wellness by providing or verifying vaccines, encouraging proper nutrition and physical activity, and providing health education for both students and parents. School health services staff can connect students and their families to community and other health care providers and promote a healthy and safe school environment.

## Oral Health

Tooth decay (cavities) is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States. Children with poor oral health (cavities, gum disease) often miss more school and receive lower grades than children who have better oral health. Don't forget to include a dental check-up in your back-to-school plans



@The CDC

## Tips for Parents

### 1. Eat Right

Learn the ABCs of saving calories and money when you shop for groceries to pack your kids' lunches.

Always use ads and store bonus cards, which may offer discounts on healthy foods like fruits and veggies.

Buy produce in season to cut costs. Fall is often the best time of year to find a wide range of local produce.

Compare brands and package sizes to find the best buy. Be sure to read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged food to choose products with lower numbers for calories, saturated and trans fats, sodium, and sugars.

Turn food shopping into family time after school or on the weekends! Bring your kids along and teach them to look out for healthy choices.

## 2. Get Active

Kicking off the school year can be a busy time, leaving little room for physical activity. These three steps can help you find time to be active as a family.

1. Keep track of how your family spends time for one week.
2. Start small. Find two 30-minute time slots when your family can be active together after school or on the weekends.
3. Get going. Try these great tips:
  - Walk your kids to school
  - Ride bikes after dinner
  - Play baseball
  - Jump rope
  - Shoot baskets
  - Dance
  - Walk the dog
  - Play tag
  - Rake leaves

## 3. Reduce Screen Time

Kids spend a big part of their day sitting in the classroom, so you can help your children spend less time in front of the TV, computer, and video games—and more time having fun as a family—with these tips:

Turn off the TV during mealtime and talk with your children about what they learned in school that day. Families who eat together tend to eat healthier.

Limit screen time to two hours each day for children 2 or older.

Suggest playing outside after school and join in the fun.

Turn on some music and have a family dance party.

Be a good role model. If you reduce your screen time and move more, your kids will too!



@NIH

## NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages. Shots (or vaccines) help prevent dangerous and sometimes deadly diseases. Vaccines aren't just for kids - adults need to get vaccinated to stay protected from serious illnesses like the flu, measles, and pneumonia. National Immunization Awareness Month is a great time to promote vaccines and remind family, friends, and coworkers to stay up to date on their shots.

## How can National Immunization Awareness Month make a difference?

We can all use this month to raise awareness about vaccines and share strategies to increase immunization rates in our community. Here are just a few ideas:

**Talk** to friends and family members about how vaccines aren't just for kids. Shots can protect people of all ages from serious diseases.

**Encourage** people in your community to get the flu vaccine every year.

**Invite** a doctor or nurse to speak to parents about why it's important for all kids to get vaccinated.

@CDC

@DPHP



## Upcoming NIAM Events

An IAP Coordinator and Outreach Worker are teaming up with the Orange Health Department, Quinnipiac Valley Health Department, West Haven Health Department, and Local Libraries to put on an educational reading program for children between the ages of 2-4. Children will listen to the story "How Dinosaurs Get Well Soon." Children will also learn a song about hygiene, and the Health Departments will use the Glow Germ activity to show the importance of washing hands. Children will also be able to create their own dinosaur craft! The IAP Coordinator and Outreach Worker will provide a CT WiZ canvas bag with educational materials regarding vaccines to parents, coloring books and crayons for children, tissues, and the children's book, "Vaccines for Maxine," by Geri Roda. Locations/times include:

- August 19th 10:30 am at the Case Memorial Library in Orange, CT
- August 22nd 10:30 am at the Whitneyville Library in Hamden, CT.
- August 26th 11:15 am in ENGLISH and 1:00 pm in SPANISH at the West Haven Public Library.

Be sure to follow the West Haven IAP Facebook page for updates regarding immunizations during NIAM at [www.facebook.com/WestHavenIAP](http://www.facebook.com/WestHavenIAP)

## NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING MONTH

August 1st marks the beginning of World Breastfeeding Week (August 1-7), as well as National Breastfeeding Month.

The evidence is clear - breastfeeding saves lives by protecting babies from life-threatening infections and illnesses. If babies were breastfed early and exclusively for the first 6 months, over 820,000 lives could be saved each year!

A world in which women receive support to breastfeed is a world in which women and children thrive. Enabling women to breastfeed for as long as they desire would result in less illness and disease, as breastfeeding plays a key protective role for infant health. Fewer children would die from diarrhea and pneumonia - two of the leading causes of child mortality globally - as well as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)—a leading cause of infant mortality in the U.S.

And it's not just babies who benefit from breastfeeding. When a mother breastfeeds, she reduces her risk of developing ovarian cancer, breast cancer and heart disease.



Even with all these benefits, there is still a troubling lack of support for breastfeeding women around the world. NO country (including the United States) offers moms the support they need to reach their breastfeeding goals. This year, let's commit to creating a world where every mom has the support she needs to breastfeed.

Here's what you can do:

**Pledge** your support for women to breastfeed anytime, anywhere.

**Add** an "I Support Breastfeeding" Frame to your Facebook Profile.

**Share** your breastfeeding experience and tell us who supported you on your breastfeeding journey, or who you supported to reach their breastfeeding goals.

No one breastfeeds alone - and we ALL have a role to play in supporting breastfeeding.

**@1,000DAYS**