

# WELLNESS WATCH

Across the Lifespan, Across Indiana



## JUNE

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## June Spotlight - Defining Health in Your Life

As we move into summer and the weather warms, many Hoosier women begin thinking more about their physical activity, appearance, food choices and activities in which they want to take part. In other words, we become more aware of our health and the behaviors that we adopt that can impact our health. Many women have a picture of health that is just that: a picture. We often envision an individual, a particular body type, an athlete or someone that represents “health” to us. But, we are more than just how we look; we are how we feel, how we function in our environments, how we interact with others and even how we move around our environment. Health has many components, and each woman needs to consider the many layers that make up her own, individual wellbeing in order to be the healthiest she can be.



Health is defined as the condition of being sound in body, mind or spirit. The definition goes on to say that health is the extent of continuing physical, emotional, mental, and social ability to cope with one's environment.<sup>1</sup> Health is about both feeling and function. In 2011, fewer than half of Indiana women stated that their health was very good or excellent. That means that more than half of the women in our state perceive their health to be less than optimal.<sup>2</sup>

Being sound in body generally encompasses our physical health. And, unfortunately, women often just focus on how we look, rather than considering how complex physical wellness can be. Hoosier women are experiencing serious health concerns that must be considered. The leading causes of death for women in Indiana in 2011 were diseases of the heart

(29%), cancer (28%), chronic diseases of the lower respiratory system (9%) and stroke (8%). These four physical conditions alone account for nearly 75% of all deaths of women in the state. In 2011, nearly a quarter of Indiana women smoked, and nearly 61% of Indiana women were considered overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> It is important that caring for our physical bodies be a strong focus when we are trying to achieve optimal health. But remember to broaden your view of what physical health is and how it looks, and remember that physical appearance by itself does not necessarily equate to good, overall health.

Being sound in mind is the next component of the definition of health, and includes emotional and mental health. Mental health is defined as “...a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”<sup>3</sup> As women, it is critical not to overlook our emotional well-being. There is no need to “tough it out,” be a “martyr” or be confined by cultural values that define us as weak, insufficient or emotional.

Mental illness is defined as conditions characterized by alterations in thinking, mood and/or behavior.<sup>4</sup> In 2012, nearly 22% of Indiana residents reported experiencing mental illness. Of those, only about 44% received treatment.<sup>5</sup> Achieving mental health is critical to meeting our overall health goals, as mental illness has a profound effect on physical health and survival.<sup>4</sup> But, finding mental health means that we must communicate, and we must take our personal experiences with mental health and illness as seriously as we would (*Article continued on page two*)

## (continued) Defining Health in Your Life

(continued from page one) physical health and illness.

The last component of the definition of health involves spiritual well-being, which includes social health. Spiritual wellness is defined as "...finding meaning in life events, demonstrating individual purpose and having the ability to be compassionate towards others."<sup>6</sup> For some, spirituality is expressed through religious beliefs. For others, spirituality may be tied to work, community service, parenting or even gardening. The tie that binds almost all spiritual wellness, however, is connectedness. Research has shown that higher levels of perceived social connectedness are associated with lower blood pressure rates, better immune responses, and lower levels of stress hormones, all of which contribute to the prevention of chronic disease.<sup>7</sup> When we consider healthy living, we often forget about the critical component that other people play in our own health.



So, what does optimal health look like to you as an individual? That depends on where you start and where you want to end up. It is important to recognize that your own definition of health sits on a continuum over time, and that your optimal health should be defined by you. Your pursuit, however, does not have to be done alone. There are ways to seek a healthy lifestyle with the assistance of some very helpful tools that happen to be at your disposal.

- **Your doctor:** If you don't have one, it is well-worth the search. A yearly physical and sit-down with a physician who knows your personal and family history, your beliefs, your lifestyle and your abilities is a critical component of achieving the overall health you want. Now that some of the routine screenings women need are less frequent, you may find yourself drawn to the idea of only going to the doctor when you are sick or when that pap or mammogram is due. But, realize that could be every 3-5 years, and that is not enough to keep your finger on the pulse of your health. Your doctor is truly your best partner in your health. You should be actively involved in your health decisions, not just along for the ride.
- **Social networks:** The second tool you have at your disposal is your social network. Studies have shown that social networks consistently predict the risk of all cause and cause-specific mortality, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, and traumatic causes of death.<sup>8</sup> For mental health outcomes, we know that social support eases the effects of stressful life events and helps to prevent the onset of psychiatric disorders, in particular depression.<sup>9</sup> The people with whom you surround yourself make a huge impact on your health, even if you don't realize it. Surround yourself with people who motivate you and who support you.
- **Internet:** There are many resources on the internet for taking control of your health.
  - [www.inshapeindiana.org](http://www.inshapeindiana.org) - INShape Indiana motivates, educates, and connects you to valuable resources that helps you eat better, move more and avoid tobacco. There are videos, a monthly e-newsletter, and even a community corner where you can find a county-by-county list to locate a park, trail, farmer's market, YMCA, public facility, or neighborhood garden near you.
  - [www.quitnowindiana.com](http://www.quitnowindiana.com) – If you want to stop using tobacco products, this is a great resource. It can connect you with a Web Coach, their Text2Quit program or the telephone quit line.
  - [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov) – This is a comprehensive, national resource that covers all health topics for women, A-Z. There is updated research, fact sheets and lots of tips for healthier living no matter where you are starting on your journey.



Take the lead, feel empowered, be involved and don't sit back and let someone else define your health for you. You have all the resources you need at your fingertips to achieve the level of health that you desire.

# Spotlight on Women's Health: The Cruel Mystery of Lupus

Help Us Solve  
The Cruel Mystery

## LUPUS™

FOUNDATION OF AMERICA  
INDIANA CHAPTER

Lupus is a chronic, autoimmune disease that can damage any part of the body. Each year, there are more than 16,000 new

cases of lupus diagnosed, but the number of individuals impacted by this condition is likely much higher. Lupus can be very difficult to identify, and many women suffer for years before finding a diagnosis and proper treatment. Lupus primarily affects women of childbearing age (15 – 44) and

impacts women of color at rates two to three times that of Caucasian women. While not as common, lupus can also occur in men, children and teenagers. Symptoms of lupus are broad and can include extreme tiredness, headaches, painful or swollen joints, anemia, a butterfly-shaped rash across the face, hair loss and even abnormal blood clotting or chest pain.

If you have symptoms of lupus, it is important that you gather information about your health, your medical

records and similar experiences of family members to share with your doctor.

The Lupus Foundation, Indiana Chapter, has many resources to help you learn about the symptoms and treatments for lupus. They also provide support groups and many outreach events through the year. If you have questions or want to learn more information, visit the Lupus Foundation, Indiana Chapter webpage at <http://www.lupus.org/indiana>.

## What Do You Live for? Keeping You and Your Family Safe

NATIONAL  
SAFETY  
MONTH 2015

Do you believe that hands-free cell phone use while driving is safer than

hand-held? What percentage of teens will be involved in an auto collision before their high school graduation? Did you know that 48% of unintentional injuries occur in the home?<sup>10</sup> If you are like most people, you may not realize that hands-free is just as dangerous as hand-held, or that nearly 50% of teens will be in an auto collision before they reach graduation.

The National Safety Council (NSC) believes that unintentional injuries and death can be avoided if proper education is provided to help people recognize risky behaviors and situations and learn what it takes to stay safe. The NSC is celebrating National Safety Month with the theme of "What I Live For." The event brings awareness to key safety issues that lead to unintended injury or death. The theme for the 2015 event was inspired by the idea that everyone has something they want to live to see or experience, and by engaging in safe behaviors we can live for what matters to us. Injury prevention programs rely upon spotting hazards early, evaluating their

risk and preventing or controlling them before the harm is done. During the month of June, the NSC has weekly themes for specific injury topics, including prescription painkiller abuse, transportation safety, ergonomics, emergency preparedness and slips, trips and falls. This June, think about the women and girls in your life and access resources to make their world a safer place to live.

To find information and access free materials, visit: <http://www.nsc.org/act/events/Pages/national-safety-month.aspx>

## National Cancer Survivors Day: A Day for Support and Celebration

Each year in the United States, nearly a quarter of a million women lose their lives to cancer. Breast, lung and colorectal cancers are the most common, and lead to the most deaths.<sup>11</sup> For those who successfully battle cancer and can call themselves survivors, the road is not always easy. These strong and resilient women need ongoing support, encouragement and resources.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual National Cancer Survivors Day (NCSA) will be held on Sunday, June 7, 2015. Hundreds of

cities across the U.S. and abroad will hold celebrations on this day to honor cancer survivors, to bring attention to the ongoing challenges of cancer survivorship, and to show the world that life after a cancer diagnosis can be fruitful, rewarding, and inspiring. NCSA also provides an opportunity for cancer survivors to connect with other survivors, celebrate the milestones they've achieved, and acknowledge the family members, friends, and healthcare professionals who have supported them along the way.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with cancer, or you are a survivor who would like to volunteer or provide support others on their cancer journeys, visit the [Cancer Support Community of Central Indiana](http://www.cancercommunityofcentralindiana.org) for more information.

Visit [www.ncsd.org](http://www.ncsd.org) to find an event in your community, or to receive information on hosting a future event in your community. For more information on Indiana's cancer burden, visit [www.IndianaCancer.org](http://www.IndianaCancer.org).





# Indiana State Department of Health

Indiana State Department of Health  
Office of Women's Health  
2 N. Meridian St., 3M  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Phone: 317-233-9156  
Fax: 317-233-8199  
E-mail: [lchavez@isdh.in.gov](mailto:lchavez@isdh.in.gov)

Thank you for subscribing to the Office of Women's Health (OWH) Wellness Watch Newsletter. The Office of Women's Health wants to ensure that each woman in Indiana is aware of her own health status, risks and goals, and can achieve optimal health through access, education and advocacy.

- For more information about OWH's programs and initiatives, please visit: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/18061.htm>.
- Follow OWH on Twitter at [@inwomenshealth](https://twitter.com/inwomenshealth).
- Follow this link to manage your subscription or to subscribe to the **OWH Wellness Watch Newsletter**.

## Upcoming Events

Indy Runners

[Monumental Mile](#) – 6/4

American Brain Tumor Association

[Head for Cure 6K](#) – 6/6

Indy Pride

[Rainbow 5K Run/Walk](#) – 6/6

Indiana Coalition against Domestic Violence

[5K Race Away from Domestic Violence](#) – 6/6

Outrun the Sun

[Race Against Melanoma](#) – 6/13

Indiana Spine Group

[We've Got your Back Race for Spinal Health](#) – 6/20

Epilepsy Foundation Indiana

[#Dare to Walk for Epilepsy](#) – 6/27

## References

<sup>1</sup>Health. (2014). Merriam-Webster Dictionary online. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/health>

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<sup>3</sup>World Health Organization. (2014). *Mental Health: A state of well-being*. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/)

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (HHS). (2009). *Women's mental health: What it means to you*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>5</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2012). *The NSDUH Report: State Estimates of Adult Mental Illness*. Rockville, MD.

<sup>6</sup>University of New Hampshire Health Services. (2014). *Spiritual wellness*. Retrieved from <http://www.unh.edu/health-services/ohsp/spiritual-wellness>

<sup>7</sup>Uchino, B., Cacioppo, J., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J. (1996). The relationship between social support and physiological processes: A review with emphasis on underlying mechanisms and implications for health. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119 (3), 488-531. Retrieved from [https://www.bcbmnmfoundation.org/system/asset/resource/pdf\\_file/5/Social\\_Connectedness\\_and\\_Health.pdf](https://www.bcbmnmfoundation.org/system/asset/resource/pdf_file/5/Social_Connectedness_and_Health.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>Berkman L, Glass T. (2000). Social integration, social networks, social support, and health. In: Berkman L, Kawachi I, editors. *Social Epidemiology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>9</sup>Kawachi I, Berkman L. (2001). Social ties and mental health. *Journal of Urban Health*. 2001;78(3):458-467. Retrieved from [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3455910/pdf/11524\\_2006\\_Article\\_44.pdf](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3455910/pdf/11524_2006_Article_44.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>National Safety Council. (2015). The National Safety Council does not believe in accidents. Retrieved from <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/nsc-priorities.aspx>

<sup>11</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Cancer Prevention and Control. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/depc/data/women.htm>.