

WELLNESS WATCH

Across the Lifespan, Across Indiana



MAY

- [Arthritis Awareness Month](#)
- [Better Hearing and Speech Month](#)
- [Healthy Vision Month](#)
- [Hepatitis Awareness Month](#)
- [Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month](#)[®]
- [Mental Health Month](#)
- [National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month](#)
- [National Celiac Disease Awareness Month](#)
- [National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month](#)
- [National Physical Fitness and Sports Month](#)
- [National Stroke Awareness Month](#)
- [National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month](#)
- [Preeclampsia Awareness Month](#)
- [North American Occupational Safety and Health Week – 5/3 – 5/9](#)
- [Hand Hygiene Day – 5/5](#)
- [National Bike to School Day – 5/6](#)
- [National Women's Health Week – 5/10 – 5/16](#)
- [National Women's Check-up Day – 5/11](#)
- [National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day – 5/19](#)
- [World Autoimmune Arthritis Day – 5/20](#)
- [National Senior Health & Fitness Day](#)[®] - 5/27
- [World No Tobacco Day – 5/31](#)

May Spotlight - World Asthma Day

May 5th is World Asthma Day. Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease that affects the airways in the lungs, causing recurring periods of wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. During an asthma attack, the airways become smaller and fill with mucus, making it difficult to breathe.¹ While there is no cure for asthma, it can be controlled.

It is estimated that nearly 760,000 Hoosier adults and nearly 177,300 Hoosier children have been told they have asthma. Currently, there are more females in Indiana with asthma than males. In 2013, 13.2% of females impacted by asthma were of child-bearing age (18-44).²

The exact reason why women have higher rates of illness and death from asthma than men is not known, but research suggests that asthma symptoms can be affected by pregnancy.³ According to Karen Rance, DNP, APRN, CPNP, AE-C, and current president of the Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition:

“The cause for some worsening is different with every patient, but often contributed to by hormonal shifts and increased restriction to the lungs caused by the growing fetus. Asthma severity and control

are highly individualized. When setting expectations for pregnant asthma patients, the commonly referred to “rule of 1/3” applies: 1/3 of pregnant women’s asthma improves during pregnancy, 1/3



will maintain the current course, and 1/3 will worsen during pregnancy. Patients often report that asthma worsens in the late second and early third trimesters and then interestingly improves during the last month of pregnancy.”⁴

Pregnant women are encouraged to monitor their asthma, discuss symptoms with their primary care provider during prenatal visits, and to continue to take their medications as prescribed. While side effects may be associated with taking medications while pregnant, they are smaller than the potential risk to the fetus from the mother having uncontrolled asthma. Uncontrolled asthma during pregnancy can lead to decreased lung function for the mother, and, ultimately, a

decreased oxygen supply to the baby.⁵

As with all persons with asthma, pregnant women are encouraged to take the following steps to manage their symptoms:

- Identify and avoid asthma triggers;
- During routine medical visits, talk with your health care provider about your asthma symptoms, triggers, medications, and side effects. In addition, pregnant women should monitor lung function with spirometry at prenatal visits;
- Avoid smoking and being around others who smoke;
- Take medications as prescribed by your health care provider;
- Work with your health care provider to create an Asthma Action Plan, including information concerning daily treatment, medications, short and long-term control measures, and explain when to seek medical treatment.

For more information, or to be connected with Indiana asthma programs and resources, visit the [ISDH Asthma Program](#) as well as the [Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition](#).

Protect Yourself from the Summer Sun

After a long and cold winter, the warm summer sun can feel extraordinary. And, while enjoying bike rides, picnics, outings at the beach and baseball games, it is important to protect your skin from the sun.

Skin cancer is an uncontrolled growth and spread of cells or lesions in the skin. Overall, skin cancers affect more people than lung, breast, colon and prostate cancers combined. The two most common forms of skin cancers are basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma. A third type of skin cancer, melanoma, accounts for less than two percent of skin cancer cases, but causes the most skin cancer deaths. In Indiana during 2012, there were 1,091 new cases of melanoma diagnosed, and 192 melanoma deaths.

People of all ages, races and ethnicities are subject to developing skin cancer. Excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or other sources, such as tanning beds, is the greatest risk factor for developing skin cancer.

The best way to detect skin cancer early is to recognize changes in skin growths or the appearance of new growths. Women should use the ABCDE rule when looking for signs of melanoma. Melanoma might appear differently than what is described in the ABCDE rule, so discuss any changes to existing moles or new growths on the skin with your health care provider.

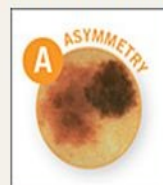
To help protect their skin, women can:

- Limit or avoid sun exposure during peak hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.);
- Wear sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher that protects you from all UV rays. These are called “broad spectrum” sunscreens;
- Wear clothing that has built-in SPF in the fabric or wear protective clothing such as long sleeves and long pants (tightly woven dark fabrics protect your skin better than lightly colored, loosely woven fabrics);
- Wear a hat that protects your scalp and shades your face, neck, and ears;
- Avoid use of tanning beds and sun lamps;
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from ocular melanoma (melanoma of the eye);
- ALWAYS protect your skin, even on cloudy days and during the winter months. Use extra caution around water, snow, and sand as they reflect the sun’s rays.

For more information about melanoma and other types of cancer, visit the [Indiana Cancer Consortium](#). For resources, facts and figures and information on Indiana’s Cancer Control Plan, visit the [ISDH Epidemiology Research Center](#).

This article provided by the [ISDH Division of Chronic Disease, Primary Care and Rural Health](#).

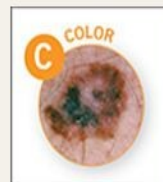
ABCDEs of melanoma



A = Asymmetry
One half is unlike the other half.



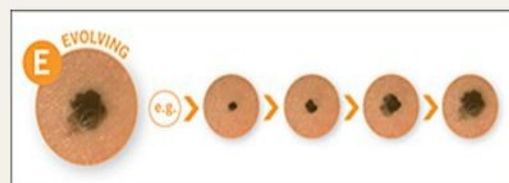
B = Border
An irregular, scalloped or poorly defined border.



C = Color
Is varied from one area to another; has shades of tan, brown or black, or is sometimes white, red, or blue.



D = Diameter
Melanomas usually greater than 6mm (the size of a pencil eraser) when diagnosed, but they can be smaller.



E = Evolving
A mole or skin lesion that looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape or color.

Spotlight on Women's Health: National Bike Month



May is National Bike Month. Bicycling is a great physical

activity for women, strengthening bones and muscles while also being easy on the joints. A great tool to help keep yourself motivated to ride is to enroll in the [National Bike Challenge](#). You can see where you stand among others in the state, and even win prizes. Many Indiana communities will be

participating in Bike to Work day on Friday, May 15th. Indianapolis hosts a large event downtown to encourage bicycle commuting, and it is anticipated that more than 1,600 cyclists will be biking to the celebration at the Bike Hub at the City Market, and more than 2,000 additional riders will register their commutes online.

If you're new to biking, a great way to take the plunge is by joining a bike train, which is a group of people who ride together. Many people feel safer when riding in a group or on a paved

trail away from traffic. Get a group of friends together and give it a try!

Bike to School Day is Wednesday, May 6th. Walking and bicycling to school enables children to incorporate the regular physical activity they need each day while also forming healthy habits that will last a lifetime. Regular physical activity helps children build strong bones, muscles and joints, and it decreases the risk of obesity. It also promotes safety, a cleaner environment and is fun for the kids. Learn more at www.walkbiketoschool.org.

World Tobacco Day: Quitting is the First Step to Better Health

May 31, 2015, has been designated as World No Tobacco Day by the World Health Organization. Tobacco use has been linked to many poor health outcomes, including chronic diseases such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. The global tobacco epidemic kills nearly 6 million people each year, of which more than 600,000 are non-smokers dying from breathing second-hand smoke. In Indiana, during 2013, almost 22 percent of adults were current smokers. Women can use this day to quit using tobacco products. The

Indiana Tobacco Quitline is a free phone-based counseling service that helps Indiana smokers quit. Services include:

- One on one coaching for tobacco users who have decided to quit
- Resources for healthcare providers who want to improve patient outcomes
- Best practices for employers who want to implement smoke-free policies
- Support for family and friends who want to help loved ones stop smok-

ing

- Tools for tobacco control partners to complement their current programs.

Services are available to women seven days a week in more than 170 languages. A trained quit coach will work with women and provide solutions tailored to their needs. For more information, visit www.QuitNowIndiana.com, or call the Indiana Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).

Straight Talk: Women's Health and Obesity

While most women realize that maintaining a healthy weight is a critical component of our health, we often fail to take the necessary steps to make long-term change. Obesity is defined as an excessively high amount of body fat in relation to lean body mass.⁶ A body mass index (BMI) of 30 or above indicates obesity, and overweight is defined as having a BMI between 25 and 29.9.⁷ In Indiana, 31.8% of adults are considered obese, and 67.3% of adults fall in the overweight/obese category.

Why should this matter to you?

When you do not maintain a healthy weight, your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, arthritis, kidney disease, dementia and even mental health conditions such as depression is significantly increased.⁶ Lowering your weight could mean saving your own life.

What can you do? Start with your doctor. Making a game plan to eat healthy and get active is the most important first step. It might be small, simple changes to start, like taking the

stairs or replacing that can of soda pop with water. But, over time you

will see real change. Find support, ask for help and stop putting yourself last. Women are often the foundation of our families and we must commit to our own health before we can support those we love. For resources on finding your healthy weight, visit the [Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative](#).





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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

- [Indiana State Department of Health \(ISDH\) Office of Women's Health](#)
National Women's Health Week Walk a Mile for Women event - 5/11/15
 - Walk starts at the ISDH entrance (2 N. Meridian St. Indpls. IN 46204) at 12:00 noon
 - Biometric screenings for women provided at ISDH by the [IU Center of Excellence for Women's Health Women's Wellness on Wheels \(WOW\) bus](#) from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- [Indianapolis 500 Festival Mini Marathon](#) - 5/2/15
- Indiana Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) [Annual Conference](#) – 5/4/15 – 5/5/15
- Indiana Latino Institute [Indiana Latino Health Summit](#) – 5/7/15
- Lupus Foundation ["Make Lupus Matter" event](#) – 5/8/15
- Baxter YMCA [Senior Health and Fitness Day](#) – 5/15/15
- Butler University [Indianapolis Congenital Heart Walk](#) – 5/16/15

References

- ¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014. Learn How to Control Asthma.
- ²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] and Indiana State Department of Health Data Analysis Team [ISDH DAT]. (2014). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Prevalence Data, 2013*.
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- ⁶Trust for America's Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2014). The State of obesity: Better policies for a healthier America 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2014/09/the-state-of-obesity.html>.
- ⁷Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Defining overweight and obesity. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/defining.html>.