

CHRONIC DISEASE CONNECTIONS

Chronic Disease Connections is a quarterly e-bulletin created for healthcare systems and providers working to prevent and manage chronic disease with a particular focus on blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol control.



Alzheimer's Disease Myths & Facts

September is World Alzheimer's Month with World Alzheimer's Day on September 21st to help encourage individuals to learn about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), risk factors, and lifestyle behaviors to aid in prevention.

It also offers a chance for healthcare providers to consider their own responsibility in risk reduction and be active partners with patients and clients in prevention and intervention. Research has shown that a significant contributing factor to a person not accessing support and treatment for ADRD is due to the lack of discussion with their primary care physician about symptoms beyond memory loss that can appear long before older adulthood.

While dementia describes a set of possible symptoms with memory loss being most common, people in early stages can experience sleep disturbances, loss of balance, perception issues, troubles with spatial reasoning, confusion or agitation, and more. These symptoms may appear as mild for some time before getting worse. Unfortunately for many individuals, when these symptoms appear it means that the disease is already progressing.

It's important to continually have these discussions with patients, family members, and friends. Consider the following Myths and Facts:

- **MYTH:** Dementia just means memory loss.
 - **FACT:** Dementia describes many signs and symptoms.
- **MYTH:** ADRD only affects people over the age of 65.
 - **FACT:** Age is a risk factor for ADRD, but many people under the age of 60 already have dementia and some may see symptoms appear by age 45.
- **MYTH:** Dementia is a normal part of aging.
 - **FACT:** Not everyone will get a form of dementia as they age. It is not considered a normal part of aging.

Over 66,000 Iowans are living with ADRD and over 73,000 Iowans are unpaid caregivers that work tirelessly. The Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Program at Iowa HHS in collaboration with statewide coalitions has information and recommendations for addressing and mitigating dementia-related issues in Iowa. Learn more on the [Iowa HHS ADRD Program Webpage](#). ■

HEALTH OBSERVANCES

AUGUST

- **National Immunization Awareness Month**
- **National Health Center Week**
- August 6 - 12
- **Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month**
- **Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month**

SEPTEMBER

- **Cholesterol Education Month**
- **World Heart Day**
- September 29
- **Suicide Prevention Week**
- September 10 - 16
- **Healthy Aging Month**
- **World Alzheimer's Month**

OCTOBER

- **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**
- **American Pharmacists Month**
- **World Mental Health Month**
- **National Mammography Day**
- October 20

Breast Cancer Awareness and Prevention

This October, make sure patients are up to date on their annual cancer screenings, this include breast and cervical screenings. Some cancers may be too small to feel, that's why having regular mammograms is such an important part of staying healthy. Important methods that can detect breast/chest cancer include regular mammograms, a clinical breast exam by a healthcare provider, and knowing your normal and reporting changes to a healthcare provider.

People who do not have signs or symptoms of cancer and are not at an increased risk for developing cancer, can begin breast/chest cancer screening at age 40. Those who are considered high risk for developing breast cancer should talk to a trusted health care provider to determine when screening should begin.

It's important to get screened if a patient is experiencing signs or symptoms of breast/chest cancer. Some changes are normal, but patients should seek care if any of the following symptoms are present:

- A lump or hard knot inside the breast or underarm.
- Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast.
- A change in the size or shape of the breast.
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin.
- Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple.
- Pulling in of the nipple or other parts of the breast.
- Nipple discharge that starts suddenly.
- New pain in one spot that doesn't go away.



Learn more about the Warning Signs of Breast Cancer and free cancer screening resources from Iowa HHS Care For Yourself program us at hhs.iowa.gov/cfy or call **1-866-339-7909**.

Breast Cancer Prevention in Iowa

In 2022, **2,825** new breast cancer cases were diagnosed among Iowa women.

1 in 8 women in the US will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

Screening can find cancer early
About 25% of women in Iowa, especially women of color are NOT up to date with screening recommendations.

In 2020, % of women aged 40+ who have had a mammogram within the past two years

All Iowa women	74.8%
White	75.1%
Non-white	72.2%

Prevention matters:

- Decreases risk of cancer: Physical Activity, Breast Feeding
- Increase risk of cancer: Alcohol, Obesity

Barriers to Screening for Iowa Women

- No health insurance
- Medical bill payment
- Language

Contact us: (866) 339-7909

Learn more at www.hhs.iowa.gov

Data source: Cancer cases were from Iowa Cancer Registry. Screening rates were from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Barrier data were from Care for Yourself program data.

Iowa Diabetes + Wellness Summit - Register Now!

The 8th Annual Iowa Diabetes + Wellness Summit will provide an engaging forum to discuss the latest practices, opportunities, resources, and tools for diabetes prevention, control, and management. National, state, and local experts will share innovative and best practice strategies to reduce the burden of diabetes and empower patients and their families to live healthier lives. Join us Wednesday, November 1st.

Individual registration and exhibitor registration is now open.

REGISTER HERE!



Iowa
Diabetes + Wellness
Summit
Wednesday, November 1, 2023
FFA Enrichment Center, Ankeny, IA

Cholesterol Education Month

Cholesterol screening is recommended every four to six years for most healthy adults between the ages of 20 and 65 years old. Screenings should occur more often with individuals who have other comorbidities or a family history of high cholesterol. It is particularly important for individuals, particularly those at highest risk, to also receive education and counseling for how to manage high cholesterol.

According to the Iowa Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS), 82% of adult Iowans reported having their cholesterol checked at least once in the past five years. However, the rate of adults being screened in Iowa decreases with education level and age. Additionally, non-White, Hispanic adults received lower screening rates than White, non-Hispanic Iowans. Worse yet, the screening rate for uninsured Iowans is under 50%. This tells us that disparities in cholesterol screening rates exist in Iowa due to social factors. This can lead to further disparities in health and disease states if cholesterol is not managed properly. For healthcare providers, it is important to screen and educate about cholesterol for all patients to identify and lower their risk of heart disease.

September is National Cholesterol Education Month, and a great time to review [cholesterol tools and resources](#) to improve patient education on cholesterol management. [Know Your Numbers](#) is a great introduction for many patients to learn their own metabolic numbers and start the conversation about cholesterol management and lifestyle changes.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

- ✓ Blood Pressure
- ✓ Cholesterol
- ✓ Blood Glucose

Diet and Dental Health

When thinking about someone's diet it is likely that dental health doesn't come to mind. However, the foods we eat affect our dental health as well as our overall health! Foods that contain sugars of any kind can contribute to tooth decay. Tooth decay happens when the plaque-bacteria on our teeth come into contact with sugar, creating an acid byproduct and attack the enamel on our teeth. Repeated acid attacks weaken the tooth's enamel and can cause the area to decay, creating a hole in the tooth. This is what we call a cavity.

So what foods do we need to eat to encourage healthy teeth?

- **Calcium and protein rich foods:** These are sources of phosphorus and play a critical role in rebuilding tooth enamel.
- **Fruits and cruciferous vegetables:** High in water and fiber, these foods will balance out the sugars they contain. They also stimulate saliva, which helps cleanse the harmful acids and food particles that may be left on the teeth following a meal or snack.

Sugar sweetened beverages can drastically increase cavity risks, so drinking water with fluoride is a great way to reduce someone's cavity risk by eliminating unnecessary sugar exposure and exchanging it for exposure to fluoride, which helps strengthen tooth enamel.

Sound familiar? Many of the food and dietary guidelines promoted for chronic disease management and prevention are the same as recommendations to strengthen oral health. The next time you work with a patient to improve their diet, share how these lifestyle changes can help their dental health, too! For more information and tools about diet and dental health, visit the [American Dental Association](#), [Oral Health Foundation](#), or [RDH Magazine](#). For local resources, contact the [Bureau of Oral and Healthy Delivery systems](#) at Iowa HHS.



CONTACT US

To submit webinars, events, funding opportunities, or health promotion news, contact Heart Disease and Stroke Coordinator, McKyla Carson, at mckyla.carson@idph.iowa.gov. View previous [Chronic Disease Connections E-Bulletin](#) issues [here](#).