

B E W E L L

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NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH

August is [National Immunization Awareness Month](#)! Immunizations, or vaccines, play a vital role in keeping our communities healthy and free from diseases that can be very serious, or even deadly. [Vaccines](#) are designed to work with the body's natural defense system to ward off illness. When a germ, such as a bacteria or a virus, enters the body, white blood cells create antibodies to fight off the invader. The first time the germ is encountered, it can take days to produce enough antibodies to fight off the infection. This is where vaccines come in. Vaccines are designed to mimic the infection, so that white blood cells can produce the antibodies needed to fight it off. Then the next time that germ enters the body, the immune system already knows how to protect itself from the invading organism and the infection can be prevented.

The development of immunizations has made it possible for some diseases to be completely eradicated (eliminated). For example, due to the success of vaccination, the World Health Organization announced in 1980 that [smallpox](#) was completely eradicated. The incidence of [measles](#) has also dramatically decreased as a result of vaccination. Before 1963, when the measles vaccine was developed, most children under age 15 were expected to contract the disease. Nowadays, in the U.S. the measles have become a rare condition. Even though we don't see many cases of these vaccine-preventable diseases anymore, there is still a need to continue getting immunized. In this increasingly globalized world, there is a lot of travel between countries, which can result in the spread of illnesses we don't typically see in the U.S. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced in 2000 that the measles were eliminated from the U.S., we have seen multiple [outbreaks](#) in recent years. So far this year, as of July 25, 2019, there were 1,164 reported cases of measles in the U.S. This is the highest

number since 2000 when the disease was declared eradicated. In 2018, there were only 372 reported cases of measles. This demonstrates the importance of continuing to get vaccinated for diseases, even when they do not seem like much of a threat anymore.

The power of immunizations goes beyond just preventing illness in the person receiving the vaccine. As more and more people in a community get vaccinated, it becomes harder for germs to spread from person to person. Consequently, the risk of contracting the illness is lowered for the entire community. This is referred to as [herd immunity](#). This means that even people who were not vaccinated are less likely to get sick. This is important because some people are not able to receive certain vaccines either because of an allergy or because they have a weakened immune system (for example people with cancer, HIV/AIDS, or other health conditions). So, getting vaccinated is important for protecting yourself *and* members of your community.

Immunizations are the most effective when they are administered at the appropriate time. This is why it's important to follow the recommended vaccination schedule for your [child](#). It is recommended for children to receive their first vaccines soon after they are born. The reason the schedule begins at such a young age is because newborns need protection from serious diseases that they may be exposed to.

Waiting to vaccinate your child will leave them vulnerable to illness, so it is best to follow the [vaccination schedule](#).

Vaccinations are not just for children—there are recommendations for [adults](#) as well. As time passes, immunity from diseases you were

vaccinated against as a child can wear off. In these cases, a booster shot may be needed to maintain protection. In addition, your lifestyle, job, travel or health conditions may put you at risk for illnesses that can be prevented through vaccination. For example, it is recommended that first-year college students living in residence halls receive a meningitis vaccine because living in close quarters increases the risk of infection. Older adults may need certain vaccines depending on their age as well. As the body ages, the immune system naturally weakens and boosting immunity through vaccination becomes even more important. For instance, healthy adults over age 50 should receive a shingles vaccine, and adults over age 65 should receive a pneumococcal vaccine to prevent infections of the lung and bloodstream. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider to make sure that you are up to date on all of your immunizations. When possible, it is always better to prevent illness.

The CDC routinely monitors the safety of all vaccinations available to the public. In fact, [according to the CDC](#), the current supply of vaccinations in the U.S. is the safest in history. For more information about the safety of specific vaccines, click [HERE](#).

national
IMMUNIZATION
awareness month

Adults need
vaccines, too!



VACCINES
are not just for kids.

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

60th Annual Lebanon Country Fair will take place **Friday August 9th through Sunday the 11th**. For information about admission/hours and a schedule of events click [HERE](#).

Willimantic's 3rd Thursday Street Fest- Come visit Historic Downtown Willimantic on **Thursday August 15th** from 6-9pm. Street Fest features live music and entertainment as well as over 100 local and regional crafters and vendors. For more information click [HERE](#)!

Summer Sizzler Airline Trail 5K- The race will take place on **Friday evening August 16th** on the Airline Trail on the Columbia/ Willimantic line. To register or to make a donation to support the Airline Trail, click [HERE](#)!

Steeplechase Bike Tour and Walk is scheduled for **Saturday August 17th**! The Bike Tour features 100-, 62.5-, 50-, 35- and 20-mile routes through scenic Northeastern Connecticut's Quiet Corner, as well as a 5-mile walk. Proceeds go to three Windham area non-profit organizations. There will be rest stops with free food and drinks, free parking, and prizes for donations over \$100! For more information and to register click [HERE](#).

170th Annual Brooklyn Fair will be held **Thursday August 22nd through Sunday the 25th**. The event features great food, live concerts, vendors, livestock, competitions and much more! For a schedule of events click [HERE](#).



International Overdose Awareness Day— August 31st

According to a report by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), in 2015, an estimated 547,543 Emergency Department (ED) visits occurred for all drug-related poisonings in the U.S. In 2016, a total of 63,632 persons in the United States died from a drug overdose. Although many of these deaths may have involved more than one drug, it is estimated that prescription and/or illicit opioids were involved in 66.4% of these overdose fatalities.

The purpose of [International Overdose Awareness Day](#) is to raise awareness about this growing health crisis. It is an opportunity to take action and discuss drug policy and overdose prevention. One of the other aims is to reduce the stigma surrounding drug-related deaths and acknowledge the grief of families and friends who have been impacted by overdose. It's important

to understand the basics about overdose. The signs and symptoms of an overdose can look different depending on the type of drug(s) being used. Sometimes people may be reluctant to call for help for fear of police involvement, but you should *always* call an ambulance if you think someone is at risk for an overdose. You should not assume that someone is asleep or that they will "sleep it off" if you cannot get a response from them. If the person is snoring or gurgling this could be a sign of a potentially life-threatening obstruction of their airway. Besides being unconscious or unresponsive, other signs of an overdose may include seizure, severe headache, chest pain, difficulty breathing, and agitation or confusion. For more information on what an overdose looks like for various drugs and when to take action, click [HERE](#).

The U.S. has seen a drastic rise in the number of overdose fatalities from [opioid use](#). [Opioids](#) include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic drugs like fentanyl, and prescription painkillers such as oxycodone and hydrocodone among many others. [Naloxone](#) (Narcan®) is a medication that has been developed to block the effects of opioids and rapidly reverse an opioid overdose. For more information on how Narcan® can save lives, click [HERE](#).

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from your employer. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.



BIG NEWS WITH BE WELL

There is still time to sign up for the **BE WELL Rewards Program** if you haven't already! If you wish to sign up, please fill out the [Employee Wellness Rewards Program Agreement Form](#) and submit it to Mike Wilkinson.



Vegetarian Stuffed Peppers

INGREDIENTS ♦ 4 red or green bell peppers ♦ 1 pint or 2 cups cherry tomatoes ♦ 1 medium onion ♦ 1 cup fresh basil leaves ♦ 3 garlic cloves ♦ 2 tsp olive oil ♦ ¼ tsp Salt ♦ ¼ tsp pepper

DIRECTIONS Preheat oven to 425°F. Lightly oil a large shallow baking pan. Cut peppers in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Arrange peppers cut sides up in baking pan and lightly oil cut edges of stems. Halve cherry tomatoes and chop onion and basil. Finely chop garlic. In a bowl toss tomatoes, onion, basil, garlic, 2 tbsp. oil, salt and pepper to taste. Divide mixture among peppers and roast in upper third of oven until peppers are tender, about 20 minutes.