

# The Noble County Health Monitor

A monthly publication sponsored by the Noble County Health Department

## Dental Health

February is National Children's Dental Health Month, a time to learn how to keep kids' teeth healthy and strong. Taking care of teeth is important says the American Dental Association, because healthy teeth help kids eat, talk, smile, and feel confident. Many kids get cavities, but the good news is that cavities are mostly preventable. Simple daily habits can make a big difference according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### Easy Ways to Protect Kids' Smiles

1. According to the American Dental Association Kids should brush their teeth in the morning and before bed using fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride helps make teeth stronger and fights cavities.
2. Flossing removes food and plaque from places a toothbrush can't reach. This helps keep gums healthy.
3. Choose tooth-friendly snacks. Fruits, vegetables, cheese, and water are better for teeth than sugary snacks and drinks. Too much sugar can lead to cavities.
4. Visit the dentist regularly. Dental checkups help find small problems before they become big ones. Dentists can also add sealants to protect teeth.

Helping kids build healthy dental habits starts at home. These simple, parent-friendly tips can make brushing, flossing, and dentist visits easier—and even fun—for the whole family.

- **Brush together.** Kids copy what they see, brushing teeth together regularly can build a habit that lasts.
- **Use the right amount of toothpaste.** The American Dental Association recommends a rice-sized smear for kids under 3 and a pea-sized amount for ages 3 and up.
- **Turn brushing into a game.** Play a two-minute song, use a timer, or let kids choose their toothbrush to keep it fun.
- **Don't skip checkups.** Regular dental visits help catch problems early and can include sealants to protect teeth.

Healthy teeth help kids do better at school and feel good about their smiles. National Children's Dental Health Month is a great reminder for families to build good habits that can last a lifetime. A healthy smile starts today—one brush at a time!

## Come Join Us

Living with Cancer, is a free support group for residents of Noble County and surrounding communities who are currently in treatment for any type of cancer or who have completed treatment.

Join us every third Thursday of the month at 6pm at the Noble County Health Department, 44069 Marietta Road, park behind the building. A licensed social worker from Cancer Support Community Central Ohio will lead each of the one-hour sessions.

Register at: [Cancersupportohio.org/NCHD](http://Cancersupportohio.org/NCHD).

February 2026

February 14-  
Valentine's Day

February 16-  
President's Day

*It always  
seems  
impossible  
until it's  
done.  
- Nelson  
Mandela*

## In this Issue:

Dental Health	1
Cancer Group	1
Blood Drive	1
Low Vision	2
Mental Health	2
Condom Week	2
Heart Month	3
Recipe	3

## Blood Drive

The American Red Cross Bloodmobile will be at the Community Center on Wednesday, March 18 from 11am to 4pm. There is also a scheduled blood drive Friday, March 20 from 12pm to 6pm at the Summerfield VFD.

For more health information contact:  
Noble County Health Department  
740-732-4958  
[www.noblecohd.org](http://www.noblecohd.org)

## Low Vision Awareness Month

February is Low Vision Awareness Month, a time to learn about people who have trouble seeing even with glasses or contacts. According to the National Eye Institute, millions of kids and adults live with low vision, and many people don't even know it yet. Low vision can make everyday things harder. Reading the board at school, seeing street signs, or recognizing faces can be a challenge. Some people see blurry spots. Others have trouble seeing at night or in bright light. Low vision can happen because of eye conditions, injuries, or aging per the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The good news is that help is available.

### What You Can Do Right Now

#### 1. Get regular eye exams.

Eye doctors can find vision problems early and help protect your sight.

#### 2. Use helpful tools.

Magnifiers, large-print books, brighter lights, and screen readers can make reading and learning easier. Many phones and tablets already have these tools built in.

#### 3. Be kind and inclusive.

If someone needs bigger text, more time, or better lighting, that's okay. Small changes can make a big difference.

#### 4. Speak up.

If you or someone you love has trouble seeing, tell a teacher, parent, or doctor. Asking for help is a smart step.

### Why Awareness Matters

Low vision is not always easy to see. By learning about it, we can help people feel understood and supported. During Low Vision Awareness Month the National Eye Institute encourages everyone to take a moment to learn, share, and act. Helping someone see better, or feel less alone, starts with awareness.

## Children's Mental Health

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is a time to talk about how kids feel on the inside—not just how they look on the outside. Mental health includes emotions, thoughts, and how we handle stress. Just like our bodies, our minds need care too. Kids can feel worried, sad, angry, or overwhelmed. Schoolwork, friendships, family changes, and social media can all affect how kids feel. Feeling this way sometimes is normal—but when feelings last a long time or get in the way of daily life, extra support can help according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

### Simple Ways to Support Kids' Mental Health

**1. Talk and listen.** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services recommends asking kids how their day was—and really listen. Feeling heard helps kids feel safe and supported.

**2. Keep routines.** Regular times for meals, homework, play, and sleep help kids feel calm and secure.

**3. Encourage healthy habits.** Good sleep, physical activity, and balanced meals can improve mood and focus.

**4. Ask for help early.** If a child seems very sad, anxious, or angry for weeks, talk to a teacher, school counselor, doctor, or mental health professional. Getting help early makes a big difference.

### Why This Week Matters

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week reminds us that it's okay to talk about feelings and ask for help. When kids know their mental health matters, they are more likely to grow into healthy, confident adults. Caring for kids' minds today helps build a stronger tomorrow.

## National Condom Week

February 14-21 is National Condom Week, and is a time to talk about staying healthy and preventing the spread of germs and infections. Condoms are a tool that helps protect people from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and helps prevent unplanned pregnancy when people are old enough to make those choices per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Learning about health tools early helps people make safer choices later. Even if this topic feels uncomfortable, having correct information is important for keeping communities healthy.

### How Condoms Help Keep People Healthy

Condoms can help prevent infections. Condoms lower the risk of spreading STIs like HIV and other infections when used the right way as reported by the CDC. Using condoms correctly and every time is an effective way to prevent pregnancy. Using condoms supports responsible choices. Knowing how to protect your health is part of growing up and taking responsibility.

### Where to Get Help and Information

The Noble County Health Department offers condoms for free at the Health Department, making it easier for people to protect their health and get reliable information.

### Why This Week Matters

National Condom Week reminds us that health education saves lives. When people have access to facts, support, and resources, they can make safer and healthier choices for themselves and others.

## February is American Heart Month

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in both Ohio and the United States. In 2023, nearly 30,000 Ohioans died from heart disease, placing Ohio 12th highest in the nation for heart disease death rates according to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

Heart disease is closely connected to other chronic conditions the ODH reports. The biggest risk factor is high blood pressure, also called hypertension. More than one-third of adults in Ohio have been diagnosed with high blood pressure. ODH reports that other risk factors include high cholesterol, diabetes or prediabetes, being overweight, tobacco use (including vaping), age, genetics, and family history.

The Noble County Health Department (NCHD) and ODH encourages adults to get screened for high blood pressure every year and to work with their healthcare provider to monitor and manage it, including checking blood pressure at home. NCHD offers free blood pressure screenings Monday's 7am-6pm and Tuesday-Friday 7am-4pm. The Wisewoman program, which is a grant that NCHD has received, provides free cardiovascular screenings for eligible women in Ohio. Call the health department at 740-732-4958 and ask to speak with a Wisewoman representative for more information.

Healthy habits that can lower heart disease risk, such as regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, quitting tobacco, and limiting alcohol use. To make changes easier, ODH suggests starting small by adding new healthy habits to daily routines.

Taking small steps today, like checking your blood pressure, eating healthier, or moving more, can make a big difference for your heart. Talk with your healthcare provider and use available resources to start protecting your heart health now and for the future.

## Southwest Ground Beef & Sweet Potato Skillet

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 5 teaspoons chili powder divided
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- Kosher salt & ground black pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon grated garlic
- 2 cups peeled and diced sweet potatoes
- 14.5 oz can fire roasted diced tomatoes
- 4 ounces canned diced green chiles
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Cilantro for garnish optional



### Instructions

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add in the ground beef and diced onion and crumble the beef with a wooden spoon. Add in 1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons) of chili powder, 1 teaspoon of cumin, and season with salt and pepper. When the beef is nearly cooked through add in the garlic and cook for another minute. Pour it out onto a plate and wipe out the skillet.
2. Add the diced sweet potato, fire roasted tomatoes, green chiles, water, 2 teaspoons of chili powder, 1 teaspoon cumin, salt and pepper to the skillet. Stir everything together and cover it with a lid. Lower the heat and let it simmer for about 20 minutes or until the sweet potatoes are tender.
3. Add the ground beef mixture in with the sweet potatoes and stir everything together. Top with shredded cheese and cover with the lid again for another minute or until the cheese is melted. Top with chopped cilantro and serve.

### Have an upcoming event?

If you would like it in the monthly health monitor please contact Samantha Hesson at 740-732-4958 or [Samantha.Hesson@noblecohd.org](mailto:Samantha.Hesson@noblecohd.org).

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