

# The Health Connection NEWSLETTER

## Meet Taylor!

My name is Taylor Morrison and I am the new Health Environmentalist I at the Greenup County Health Department. I recently graduated from Morehead State University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. In my spare time I love to read and crochet as well as taking my dog on nature walks. I am excited to be a part of the team working to help serve our community!



## In This Edition:

**Pertussis (Whooping Cough) on the Rise in Kentucky!**

Pertussis, also called Whooping Cough, is a highly contagious bacterial infection of the lungs and airways. It spreads easily...

**Advice from a Health Hero**

South Shore resident Barbara Scaff is here to share some New Years Resolutions regarding fitness and health. She started her own health journey on January First over three years ago...

**Cold Weather Safety Tips**

Winter is here! January is the first month that is entirely in the winter season, and as temperatures drop, it's important for parents and caregivers to be vigilant about their children being out in this cold weather...

**GCHD**  
Greenup County Health Department  
*Public Health = Public Wealth*

**WE ARE CLOSED**  
In Observance of  
**Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

*"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"*

**January 19, 2026**

# Pertussis (Whooping Cough) on the Rise in Kentucky!

## Here's What You Can Do to Protect Your Family

Pertussis, or Whooping Cough, is a highly contagious bacterial infection that affects the lungs and airways. It spreads easily through coughing, sneezing, or close contact with respiratory droplets. While anyone can become infected, Pertussis is most dangerous, and can be life-threatening for infants under 12 months, older adults, and individuals with weakened immune systems or chronic health conditions.

As of November 21, 2025, Kentucky has reported 566 confirmed cases, including three infant deaths, the highest number since 2012 (CHFS News Release, 2025). Recent data shows a decline in youth vaccination rates for the recommended DTaP or Tdap vaccines. Because Pertussis is vaccine-preventable, reduced immunization combined with rising cases significantly increases risk to families and communities.

### Signs & Symptoms

#### Early Stage (First 1–2 weeks):

- Mild cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- No fever or low-grade fever
- Infants may experience apnea (pauses in breathing)

#### Later Stage (After 2 weeks):

- Severe coughing fits lasting weeks to months
- High-pitched “whoop” sound when gasping for air
- Vomiting during or after coughing
- Extreme fatigue and breathing difficulties

Symptoms often appear 7–14 days after exposure. In healthy adults, signs may be mild and mistaken for allergies, making hidden transmission a serious concern for vulnerable individuals.



### Prevention Tips:

- Wash hands often
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Stay home when sick after consulting your provider
- Keep vaccinations up to date

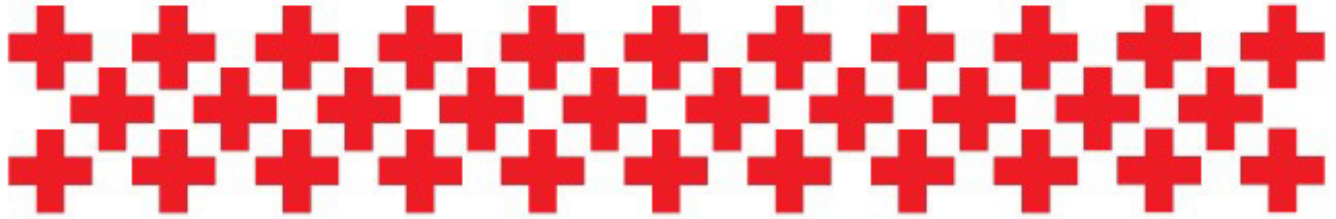
Vaccination remains the best protection against Pertussis. If exposed or unvaccinated, seek medical care promptly.

The Greenup County Health Department, in partnership with neighboring counties and the Kentucky Department of Public Health, is working to share accurate information and reduce illness spread.

For questions or to schedule vaccinations, visit:  
<https://greenupchdky.gov/contact-us/>

# American Red Cross

*Give blood.* Help save lives.



**Blood Drive**  
**Greenup County Health Dept**  
Health Education Center  
806 Seaton Ave  
Greenup, KY

**Monday, January 26**  
**1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

Please bring Red Cross Donor Card, a photo ID, or 2 forms of non-photo ID.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)  
or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter: greenup to schedule an appointment.



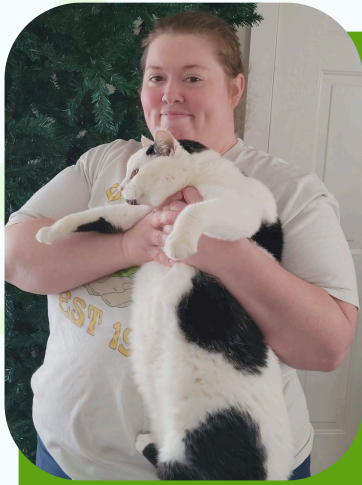
**Come give blood 1/26-2/28 for a \$20 e-gift card to your  
choice of merchant. See [rcblood.org/heart](http://rcblood.org/heart)**

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) | Download the Blood Donor App

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# Advice from a Health Hero



Before



After

South Shore resident Barbara Scaff is here to share some New Years Resolutions regarding fitness and health. She started her own health journey on January First over three years ago. She and her husband take classes at SOMC Life Center and have recently taken up hiking.

Here are some of her tips:

- Take it a day at a time. Burnout and failure happen when you get demoralized by unrealistic expectations, just focus on how to make yourself healthier TODAY with diet changes and exercise.
- Stop drinking your calories! One of the BIGGEST small changes I made on my journey in the beginning that gave me almost immediate results was dropping my calorie drinks (pop, coffee with creamers, tea, etc.) and switching to zero calorie/sugar drinks.
- Don't be intimidated at the gym, everyone there had their first day and I pinky-promise folks WANNA see you succeed! I know I do!
- Eat some beans! I'm eating a can of black beans every single day. One can of black beans is about 300 calories, 28 grams of

protein, and your entire day's worth of fiber...32 grams!

- Invest in a watch to track your steps. I got my Garmin in May and it keeps me motivated to not only get 10,000 steps a day, but challenging myself to hit higher goals. In 2025 from May to December I walked 1,618 miles!
- Celebrate your small victories. I sure do, because I'm truly CLAWING my way out of this mess I made with hot pockets and white cheddar cheese-its.
- Don't be sabotaged by sauces. Ketchup and BBQ sauce have around 140 calories for only TWO tablespoons. Mustard has zero. Grocery stores have a good supply of zero sugar/low calorie sauces.
- No one truly has TIME for exercise and gym, but I'm prioritizing and sacrificing my little free time to get myself healthy. Health is wealth. When I was 350 pounds I was heading headfirst towards a heart attack, stroke, or losing mobility earlier than I needed. Getting strong now, better ensures my mobility in the future.

I'm in year 3 of my weight loss and I've only lost 120 pounds. It is extremely easy to be discouraged when others have faster weight loss than you. Just focus on your journey. If two people are racing and one is on foot and the other is in a race car, you can't judge your foot powered race time by their engine powered race time. No one will call the race car driver a cheater for using their abilities, but it's nonsense to compare two entirely different situations that both have their own struggles and strengths.

To wrap up this spotlight, Barb would tell everyone to get out there, move their feet, and have a great day!

# Dining with Diabetes Brings Education and Healthy Choices to Greenup County

By Brandi Roe, LPN

In February, the Greenup County Health Department will host our annual event Dining with Diabetes, an engaging dinner designed to help adults with diabetes and those who care for them build confidence, knowledge, and practical self-management skills.

This special evening will welcome up to 60 participants. Follow us on our Greenup County Health Department Facebook page and be on the lookout about how to register for this FREE event. Attendees will enjoy an interactive program featuring a panel of healthcare providers and community members sharing real-life success stories, along with expert guidance from a registered dietitian on diabetes-friendly nutrition. Participants will also learn about Medical Nutrition Therapy services available locally through the Greenup County Health Department.



The night will wrap up with a delicious, diabetes-friendly meal, showing that healthy eating can be both satisfying and achievable. Join us for an informative and inspiring evening focused on healthier living, one plate at a time!

## January Employee Anniversaries



**Lauren Kitchen**  
**3 Years**

## Employee of the Month



**Summer Kershner**

# The Importance of Prenatal Vitamins and Folic Acid for Overall Health



By Dianna Charles, RN

Prenatal vitamins are often linked only to pregnancy, but their benefits go far beyond supporting expectant parents. These supplements provide essential nutrients, such as folic acid, iron, calcium, iodine, and key vitamins that promote overall health throughout life. Understanding their role can help individuals make informed choices for long-term wellness.

Folic acid, the synthetic form of vitamin B9 (folate), is vital for cell growth, DNA synthesis, and red blood cell production. Adequate folate intake helps prevent certain types of anemia, reducing fatigue and weakness, while also supporting brain function and potentially lowering the risk of cognitive decline.

One of the most important public health messages about folic acid is its role before pregnancy. Neural tube defects occur very early, often before pregnancy is confirmed. Taking folic acid prior to conception and during early pregnancy significantly reduces this risk. Since nearly half of pregnancies are unplanned, experts recommend that women of

childbearing age take a daily folic acid supplement to ensure healthy development from the start.

Beyond pregnancy, folic acid supports heart health by regulating homocysteine levels, which, when elevated, increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. This makes folate important for cardiovascular health in both men and women.

Iron, another key nutrient in prenatal vitamins, is essential for oxygen transport. Iron deficiency can lead to anemia, which is common among women of reproductive age. Adequate iron intake supports energy, immunity, and brain health. Those with heavy menstrual cycles, low dietary iron, or absorption issues may benefit from supplementation.

Prenatal vitamins also provide vitamin D and calcium for strong bones, muscle function, and nerve signaling, reducing the risk of osteoporosis later in life. Iodine supports thyroid health and metabolism.

Many of these nutrients are available through food: folate from leafy greens, beans, lentils, citrus, and fortified grains; iron from lean meats, beans, and dark greens; and calcium and vitamin D from dairy, eggs, fish, nuts, and seeds. While designed for pregnancy, healthcare providers may recommend prenatal vitamins before conception or for individuals with higher nutritional needs. Always consult a healthcare professional to choose the right supplement.

In short, prenatal vitamins, especially folic acid, support blood health, brain function, heart health, and development. Starting them early and maintaining good nutrition can deliver lifelong benefits.

# Go Red for Heart Health

By: Lauren Kitchen, Support Service Associate.

Greenup County Health Department will host a Go Red for Heart Health event for both men and women on February 9th. This day will focus on promoting heart health awareness and preventive care in our community.

Your Health Department nurses will be available to perform biometric screenings such as blood pressure, weight and BMI, blood sugar, and lipid (cholesterol) profiles. Both men and women are welcome, and fasting is preferred for the most accurate results.

This event will be held at the Greenup County Health department on February 9th, 2026, from 8am-12pm. No appointment required.



## Check Out the Latest Food Scores!

Planning to eat out somewhere you've never been? Not sure how clean they are?

You can know how clean that restaurant really is! Click to see the scores in Greenup County!

[Click Here](#)



# Cold Weather Safety Tips



Winter is here! January is the first month that is entirely in the winter season, and as temperatures drop, it's important for parents and caregivers to be vigilant about their children being out in this cold weather. Exposure to cold can lead to serious health risks, including hypothermia and frostbite. Fortunately, with awareness and planning, children can enjoy all the winter fun.

## **Dress in Layers**

Protect children from the cold by layering clothing. Start with a moisture-wicking base layer (not cotton), add insulating layers like fleece, and top with a waterproof, windproof outer layer. Hats, gloves or mittens, scarves, and warm socks are essential, as children lose a lot of heat through their heads and hands.

## **Limit Time Outdoors**

Even with proper clothing, prolonged exposure can be dangerous. Wind chill can

make temperatures feel much colder than it really is. Encourage short outdoor play sessions with frequent breaks indoors.

## **Recognize Signs of Hypothermia and Frostbite**

Watch for shivering, slurred speech, clumsiness, and fatigue, signs of hypothermia. Frostbite may appear as pale, hard, or numb skin on fingers, toes, ears, or the nose. Move children indoors immediately if these occur and seek medical attention if needed.

## **Safe Play Areas**

Ensure children play in supervised areas. Snow can hide hazards like ice, rocks, or uneven ground. Avoid frozen ponds or rivers, which may be unsafe. Just because it is frozen, doesn't mean the ice is strong enough to hold the weight of a person.

## **Hydration and Nutrition**

Children still need fluids in cold weather, even if they don't feel thirsty. Warm drinks and nutritious meals help maintain energy and body heat.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Everyone should prepare for winter emergencies, including power outages and storms. Keep blankets, non-perishable food, flashlights, and batteries on hand.

## **Enjoy Winter Safely**

With proper precautions, children can safely enjoy Greenup County's winter fun. Dressing appropriately, monitoring outdoor time, and recognizing signs of cold-related illness make a big difference.



# GCHD

Greenup County Health Department

*Public Health = Public Wealth*

★ New Year Reminder: ★

Please Bring Your  
**Insurance &  
Medical Cards**  
to Your Appointment!



- ✓ Insurance Card(s)
- ✓ Medical Card(s)
- ✓ Photo ID

Having your insurance and ID with you  
helps ensure the best care **possible!**



# GCHD

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Visit [greenupchdky.gov](http://greenupchdky.gov)