With a commitment to safeguarding and advancing the nutrition & health status of mothers & children & to promoting breastfeeding, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) works within each state to improve healthcare access for low and moderate income women and children with, or at risk of developing, nutrition-related health problems, including obesity & type 2 diabetes.

WIC provides nutrition education and healthy foods enabling families to make healthy eating and lifestyle choices. WIC food packages are specifically selected for their nutritional value to supplement the dietary needs of participants to ensure good health, growth, & development. The WIC food package helps combat food insecurity, and contributes to healthy diets which aid in reducing obesity and chronic disease.

Over the last 4 years, however, WIC participation has decreased significantly across the U.S. (see below). Reasons for the decline are under study. A review of September, 2015 data found that although the average WIC recipient received $95.75/month, the average food amount redeemed was only $59.13; 38% unspent funds by participants.

See the next article for more positive WIC outcomes in Audrain County.
WIC TRENDS & POPULATION GROWTH: IMPLICATIONS FOR AUDRAIN COUNTY
BY SANDRA HEWLETT, MS, APRN, AOCN, CBCN, FACHE - ADMINISTRATOR

In 2015, the ACHD County Health Needs Assessment provided a summary of the health & wellness status and needs of our community. In addition, we examined population and other demographic trends in our county that suggest the WIC program will continue to be a vital need in the future because (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015):

- # of children < 5 years has increased to 6.8% of Audrain’s population; higher than State & U.S. averages.
- Females < 18 years (future mothers) represent 24.9% of the population; exceeding State & U.S. averages.
- Percentage of individuals living in poverty is 20.3%; higher than State (15.9%) and U.S. (14.5%) averages.
- Percentage of children living in poverty in Audrain County is 29.4%; higher than State & U.S. averages.
- Median household income is $43,013 as compared to State ($47,380) and U.S. ($53,046) averages.
- The percentage of uninsured residents in Audrain County is 16.8%; higher than State & U.S. averages.
- Unintended pregnancy rate of 32%, and higher than State & national teen pregnancy rate of 49.6.

Although U.S. WIC participation has declined dramatically across the U.S., Audrain County WIC participation remains robust in many areas, including:

- Successful breastfeeding rates: Initial, up to 6 months, and for a full 12 months.
- ACHD WIC participation, or caseload, remains stable/strong at greater than 600 clients/month.
- Redemption percentage of client checks (& percentage used) for WIC foods.
- Low no-call/no show appointment rates as compared to State & U.S. trending.

The findings above will likely yield positive outcomes for Audrain County babies and their families. Past experience shows that pregnant women who participate in the WIC program have fewer low birth weight babies, experience fewer infant deaths, see the doctor earlier in pregnancy, and eat healthier (WIC, 2016). The primary services provided are health screening, risk assessment, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding promotion, and referral to health care. Supplemental food is provided at no cost.

Audrain County’s caseload far exceeds that of all contiguous counties, and the staff are dedicated to serving all of our WIC clients. For more information about our WIC program, please call ACHD at 573-581-1332.

Holiday Spirit & Cheer!

Emily Stotler, WIC Representative and Webmaster, won the 2016 ACHD Ugly Christmas Sweater contest this year....

By a unanimous vote of her peers!

Happy Holidays & Best Wishes For a Happy New Year!
The Audrain County Health Department has announced that a contract to continue to provide WIC, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, for federal fiscal year 2017, has been signed with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Under the terms of the contract, ACHD will be able to serve an average of 655 persons every month.

WIC provides, at no cost, specific nutritious supplemental foods and nutrition education to pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5. WIC participants are persons who meet WIC income guidelines and are determined by health professionals to be at nutritional risk. A household of four can earn up to $3,747.00 per month and still qualify for WIC.

WIC supplemental food packages are specifically chosen to provide foods high in protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C. Eligible women and children receive fortified milk, cheese, eggs, hot or cold cereals high in iron, fruit juices high in vitamin C, peanut butter, beans, fruits, and vegetables. Although the WIC program recommends breastfeeding, infants may receive supplemental iron-fortified formula when needed, infant cereal, and baby food to include fruits and vegetables. Participants are issued food checks to purchase these foods at authorized local retail stores. By improving the diets of women, infants and children, the WIC program improves the health status of a vulnerable population during a critical growth period.

WIC is administered in Audrain County by the Audrain County Health Department. Anyone interested in applying for WIC or in need of more information, should contact ACHD at 573-581-1332. WIC appointments are made for Tuesdays at the ACHD in Mexico, and in Vandalia on the second Thursday of each month.

Standards for participation in the WIC Program are the same for everyone regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap.

Audrain County Health Department offers breastfeeding moms a support group session twice a month. The meetings are offered the first Wednesday of each month at 10 am at Kentucky Road Christian Church, and the third Saturday of the month at 1 pm at Audrain County Health Department.

These groups are open to any mom or mother-to-be. Moms are welcome and encouraged to bring their little ones with them to group. Moms group is a great way to meet other moms and give as well as receive breastfeeding support from other moms and the breastfeeding staff at the ACHD.

The groups typically consist of introductions, questions and concerns, and a monthly breastfeeding topic.

We like to have a light snack and occasionally do a fun activity at our meetings. If you have any questions about our breastfeeding moms groups, please call or text Whitney at (573) 721-1436.
Diabetes occurs when your body no longer makes enough insulin or doesn’t use insulin well. Type II Diabetes is also called non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM).

You may experience these symptoms with Type II Diabetes:

Non-insulin oral medications lower your blood glucose level when diet/weight control aren’t enough. Know the name, frequency, side effects of your medication and how food/other medications interact with them. Know what to do if you miss a dose. Establish a daily routine to:

- Fatigue
- Extreme thirst
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Frequent urination
- Vaginal/genital itching
- Frequent infections (urinary, vaginal, boils, abscesses)
- Weight changes

Non-insulin oral medications lower your blood glucose level when diet/weight control aren’t enough. Know the name, frequency, side effects of your medication and how food/other medications interact with them. Know what to do if you miss a dose. Establish a daily routine to:

- Maintain your ideal weight
- Take medications as prescribed
- Eat calorie balanced low fat meals/snacks
- Exercise the same time each day

Monitor your blood sugar, keep daily records and share them with your doctor. Varying the times of blood sugar tests help show one’s level of control throughout the day. If your blood sugar is below 100mg/dl, have a snack. Fasting ranges of 70 – 130 mg/dl and less than 180mg/dl 1 to 2 hours after a meal indicate good control. Test your blood sugar before/after exercise. If it is above 240mg/dl, wait until it drops to exercise. Should high blood sugars persist, call your doctor.

Individuals with diabetes are 15 times more likely to experience a lower extremity amputation therefore, foot care is vital. Diabetic nerve damage and poor circulation are common. Some foot care tips include:

1. Wash, dry (especially between toes)
2. Check your feet daily
3. Get treatment for small cuts or sores
4. Never go barefoot
5. Don’t soak your feet
6. Buy good fitting shoes and break them in slowly
7. Have a professional trim your toenails
8. Learn the proper nail trimming technique

Diabetes is a major factor leading to other disease processes. Blood sugar control is your best defense.
Prenatal Classes and Breastfeeding Education

BY GRETA HOPKE, RD

The research proves over and over again the health benefits of breastfeeding, and it is our goal through the WIC experience to help moms make an educated decision about how they will feed their newborn. We challenge our moms to consider breastfeeding in a way that can work for them and their situation. While we still have about 26% of our moms that choose not to try breastfeeding, we continue to provide all moms the same opportunity of solid breastfeeding education during prenatal visits.

ACHD offers a separate Prenatal Breastfeeding Class open to any woman. Our goal is to increase the mom’s confidence and knowledge in being able to successfully breastfeed her baby. The class emphasizes the importance of a good latch, how to achieve a good latch, and what it will look like. Other topics include milk supply, safe sleep/SIDS reduction, recognizing baby-blues and what is “normal” baby behavior. While education is a key ingredient in successful breastfeeding, it also takes the mom’s drive to “stick with it”, and a good support system, which is what makes our Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program so valuable!

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors: A Specialized Support Team

BY ANA GARCIA, BFPC

Hello, my name is Ana Garcia. I am one of the two breastfeeding peer counselors (BFPC) at Audrain County Health Department, along with my colleague, Whitney Sells. We believe a strong support system is important to ensure a successful breastfeeding experience.

We are here to support all breastfeeding mothers along this beautiful journey and gift to their babies. Some of the ways in which we offer this support is by providing education through monthly group meetings, referrals to our lactation specialist, clinic visits, providing a breastfeeding pump, and being available for your questions and concerns anytime of the day or night via text or call.

If breastfeeding support is needed, we welcome and encourage you to call either: Ana Garcia, BRPC: (573) 721-6543 (English & Spanish support); or Whitney Sells, BFPC: (573) 721-1436 (English support).

If you have questions, or for more information about our BFPC Support Program, please do not hesitate to call us at the Audrain County Health Department: (573) 581-1332, Monday through Friday from 8AM to 4PM, or via our cell phones listed above at any time. We’d like to be of assistance to you and your new bundle of joy.
ACHD was just awarded recertification as a Gold Level Breastfeeding Center from the MO DHSS.

Sarah Palmer has just completed 2 more courses toward her first Environmental PH degree...she is halfway there!

Jodi Elliott, Brandi Meyer, Sarah Palmer, Emily Stotler, and Katie Swaim all completed national certification as Car Seat Technicians.

Ana Garcia, Greta Hopke, Whitney Sells, & Becky Wieberg attended the Annual WIC Conference in St. Louis recently.

Dorothy Schafer has reached her 5 years of Service at ACHD...congratulations!

Chris Newbrough earned his certification as a Ham Radio operator.

Sandra Hewlett just completed 22 FEMA Epidemiology courses as preparation for earning her Epidemiology certificate later this month.