

WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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HEALTH OBSERVANCE

National Birth Defects

Prevention Month

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January is recognized by the CDC as National Birth Defects Awareness Month. While we all hope for a healthy pregnancy, there are steps that women can take to lower the risk of birth defects. Even if you're a partner or family member, you can still educate yourself on how you can help.

Why do birth defects happen?

Birth defects are structural changes that can impact any part of the body. Some are unavoidable, but there are changes women can make to lead a healthy pregnancy. Reasons for birth defects include:

- Genetic or hereditary factors
- Infection during pregnancy
- Drug exposure during pregnancy
- Environmental impacts

What can I do to prevent birth defects?

Testing has come a long way to prepare parents for how their genetics may impact their unborn child, but it's still outside of one's control. A pregnant woman can take several steps to ensure any environmental impacts on her and the child are lessened, such as:

- Take a prenatal vitamin daily, especially one that contains 400mcg of folic acid
- Manage diabetes, blood sugar levels, and your physical activity
- Avoid alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes
- See a healthcare professional regularly

Modern medicine and science have ensured that children born with birth defects can grow up and live full lives. However, it's still important to ensure that you and the people around you are taking the necessary precautions to ensure a healthy pregnancy. This will give your baby a great start and provide peace of mind.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/awareness-month/before-during-pregnancy.html>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12230-birth-defects>



WellBalance Health Corner Bullying Prevention

Bullying is a behavior that many of us have faced or are currently facing. At times it may be difficult to know what to do or how to act in the face of bullying. It's important to remember that bullying is not the victim's fault. Preventing bullying encompasses both awareness and response.

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Importance of Blood Donation

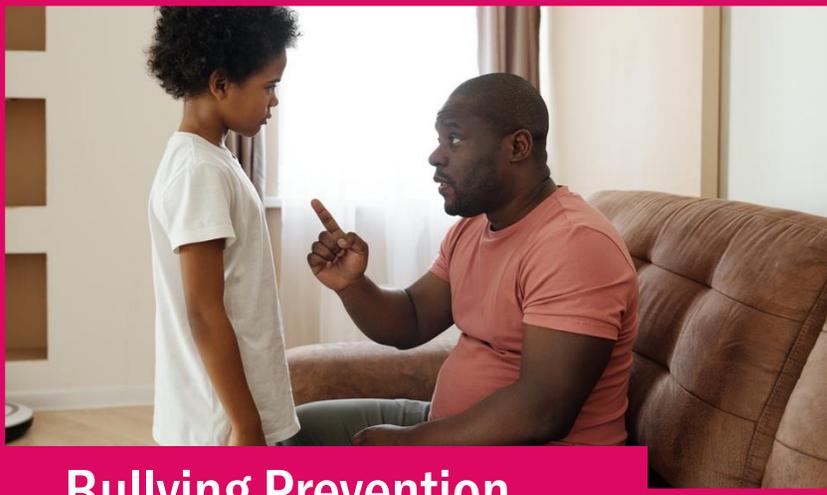
Blood donations are essential to save many lives around the world each year. The winter season in general is a time when blood banks and events such as blood drives typically begin to lose participation. Busy schedules, holiday breaks from school, inclement weather and winter illnesses contribute to fewer blood and platelet donations.

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WelBalance

HEALTH TIP CORNER

Emotional wellbeing refers to being in control of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.



Bullying Prevention

Amber Hontz, Preferred Health Manager – Wellworks For You

Emotional wellbeing and awareness can be taught to our children, the same way we teach ourselves every day to increase self-esteem. Studies show that more and more students every year experience bullying behavior that makes them feel uncomfortable at school. You always have the power to stop bullying before it escalates. Adults who respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior send the message that it is not acceptable.

One out of every five (20.2%) students report being bullied.

41% of students who reported being bullied at school indicated that they think the bullying would happen again.

The first thing that parents, school staff, and other adults in the community can do to help kids prevent bullying is create opportunities to talk about it. One of the best ways to help a victim is ensuring there is open communication and trust. When this is established, the victim will not only feel comfortable discussing bullying with you, but also see you as a support system and resource.

Bullied students indicate that bullying has a negative effect on how they feel about themselves (27%), their relationships with friends and family (19%), their school work (19%), and physical health (14%).

Sources:

<https://www.teachthought.com/technology/7-ways-to-prevent-cyberbullying/>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/how-to-prevent-bullying>

[National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/2019)

In order to build a safe school environment, it's important to create a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. Victims can better prevent bullying, when they understand what bullying is and how they can identify it. Defining bullying will help victims learn what to look for and how to better stand up to bullies in a safe manner. While you may not be able to prevent bullying from happening directly, giving the victim tools and strategies will help restore their confidence and empower them to protect themselves and stand up to bullies in a safe way.

To help prevent bullying in your community follow these tips:

- **Spot the Bullies** – Boys and girls can be bullies. Boys bully more often and are more likely to experience physical bullying. Girls are more likely to experience emotional bullying and sexual harassment.
- **Know the Targets** – Those who are labeled as weak, depressed, or unpopular are more likely to experience verbal abuse.
- **Make the effort to stop it** – Stop, look, and listen to all of the early warning signs and build a checklist of ways to communicate.

[Read more](#) about strategies that will build your child's self-esteem and prevent bullying before it starts.

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/stats.asp>

<https://www.mhanational.org/bullying-tips-parents>

We recognize that this is a trying time for our country as we balance the new demands of returning to former routines with the ongoing pandemic, but lifesaving blood donations remain essential for hospital patients in need of emergency and medical care that can't wait. The Red Cross is working around the clock to meet the blood needs of hospitals and patients – but we can't do it alone.

Chris Hrouda

President - Red Cross Biomedical Services



The Importance of Blood Donation

QUICK FACTS

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. Those needs do not diminish during disasters or pandemics.

About 38% of the U.S. population can donate blood — but only 10% actually do.

There are two ways those who have recovered from COVID-19 can make a big difference:

- A convalescent plasma donation: The Red Cross is collecting convalescent plasma at over 170 locations throughout the country. If you've recovered from COVID-19, you may be eligible to donate your plasma to help others going through COVID-19 treatment.
- A whole blood donation: Plasma from whole blood donations that test positive for COVID-19 antibodies may be used to help COVID-19 patients.

Sources:

<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/press-release/2021/emergency-blood-shortage-donor-turnout-reaches-lowest-levels.html>

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/how-blood-donations-help/blood-needs-blood-supply.html>

Maria Wagner Wolf BSN, RN, CDCES – Orthus Health Diabetes Clinical Director

January is a critical month for the American Red Cross, who is responsible for roughly 40% of the national blood supply. The entire month is recognized as Blood Donor Month to drive participation and gather as many blood and platelet donations to save lives all around the world. On average, the Red Cross needs to collect more than 13,000 donations every day to keep the blood supply ready and available to meet the needs of about 2,500 hospitals, clinics and cancer centers across the country.

2022 is a turning point for the Red Cross, in terms of an emergency blood shortage. With COVID-19 and similar variants still a major part of society today, donor turnout has reached record lows and has decreased by about 10% since August 2021. All eligible donors are strongly encouraged to donate a pint of blood at their local blood drive in January to help overcome the current shortage.

Schedule an appointment to give blood or platelets as soon as possible by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). All blood types are needed.

FEATURED RECIPE



Slow Cooker Butternut Squash and Farro Chili

6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lb. butternut squash, peeled and diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 (15 oz.) cans diced tomatoes
- 3 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained
- 1 (15 oz.) can cannellini beans, drained
- 1 ½ cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup farro, rinsed
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. salt

DIRECTIONS

1. In a 6-quart slow cooker, add butternut squash and the rest of ingredients, cover and place on high for 3 to 4 hours or low 6 to 8 hours.
2. Spoon chili into bowls and add desired toppings. Enjoy!

NUTRITION

Per serving: Each serving (1 ½ cups) contains about 323 calories, 8.5g sugar, 1,566.5mg sodium, 1g fat, 0g saturated fat, 67.1g carbohydrates, 14.5g fiber, 13g protein

Source: <https://www.eatyourselfskinny.com/slow-cooker-butternut-squash-and-farro-chili/>

