

November-December • VOLUME 21 ISSUE 6

COMMUNITY WELLNESS

November is Diabetes Awareness Month

Diabetes affects millions of people in the United States, and November gives us an important chance to learn more about the condition, how it affects our health, and what we can do to prevent or manage it.

According to the CDC, 40.1 million people in the U.S. have diabetes, about 12% of the population. Many people may not even know they have it. Diabetes is a condition that affects how your body uses sugar for energy, and learning the signs early can make a big difference.

Inside this issue, you'll find helpful tips on prevention, early detection, and ways to take charge of your health.

Florida
HEALTH

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From the Community Health Director

Making the Most Out of New Health and Wellness Trends

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Director, Division of Community Health

Advancements in technology extend far beyond electric vehicles, AI-assisted writing, and genetic engineering. Emerging innovations are increasingly shaping health and wellness trends as well.

In recent years, developments such as new medications for chronic disease management, wearable health devices, online mental wellness platforms, and expanded telehealth services have gained significant traction. While these tools offer meaningful health benefits, they can also pose risks if used without proper guidance or oversight.

As technology becomes more integrated into personal health management, the role of qualified health care professionals is essential. Professional guidance helps individuals interpret data from wearable devices accurately, use digital platforms safely, and understand how new medications or telehealth services fit within their overall care plan. Without expert support, users may misinterpret health metrics, rely on unverified online information, or adopt tools that are not appropriate for their specific needs, potentially leading to unnecessary worry or unintended health consequences.

Telehealth programs are now readily available online and can be cost-effective, convenient, and provide patient engagement to those looking to make positive health changes. At the same time, lack of in-person assessments and lab work can limit the accuracy of care, especially when prescriptions are provided.

When using new technology to monitor your activity, nutrition, and other metabolic measures individuals should include science-based information and recommendations from their health care provider when implementing new health routines to reduce any negative side effects.

Preventive health care has always been central to my professional mission and is the reason I chose to become a dietitian and serve in the field of public health. Encouraging and supporting positive health behaviors that reduce the risk of disease later in life is something I believe everyone should strive for, and something I remain dedicated to promoting in our community.

RECIPE:

Moroccan Chicken with Eggplant-Zucchini Ragout

Ingredients

- 1-1/2 to 2 lbs chicken leg quarters
- 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 tsp salt, divided
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 1 small eggplant, scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water and cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 medium zucchini, scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water and cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 small onion, scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water and diced
- 2 tbsp parsley, gently rubbed under cold running water and minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup white wine or water
- 1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes with juices
- 1/4 cup pimento-stuffed green olives, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp capers, rinsed
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar



Instructions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In large skillet over medium high-heat, warm 2 tablespoons olive oil.
3. Do not rinse raw poultry. Season leg quarters with ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Add leg quarters to pan, skin-side down.
4. Wash hands with soap and water after handling uncooked chicken.
5. Brown chicken, turning once, 8-10 minutes per side. Remove chicken to plate and drain off all but 2 tablespoons oil. Add eggplant to hot pan and cook, stirring, 5 minutes. Add remaining tablespoon olive oil, along with zucchini, onion, and garlic. Cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Raise heat to high and add white wine to pan, stirring to scrape up any browned bits. Add all other ingredients except parsley, and place chicken legs in mixture. Bring to boil, reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 35-40 minutes or until cooked through and internal temperature reaches 165° F on a food thermometer.
7. To serve, place some of the eggplant ragout onto plates, top with a leg quarter and sprinkle with parsley.

Source: [FightBac recipe](#)

UNDERSTANDING DIABETES

Diabetes is a long-term health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy.

There are two main types:

Type 1 Diabetes

The body stops making insulin. This type is usually found in children and young adults.

Type 2 Diabetes

The most common type. The body does not use insulin well or does not make enough.

Both types need daily care, but early detection and healthy habits can improve outcomes.

Diabetes in the United States

The CDC shows how widespread this condition is:

- 40.1 million people in the U.S. have diabetes.
- 29.1 million have been diagnosed, and 11 million do not yet know they have diabetes.
- 115.2 million U.S. adults have prediabetes.

Prediabetes means your blood sugar is higher than normal, and without changes, you may develop type 2 diabetes. Knowing your risk and getting screened is one of the most important steps you can take.

Tips to Help Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

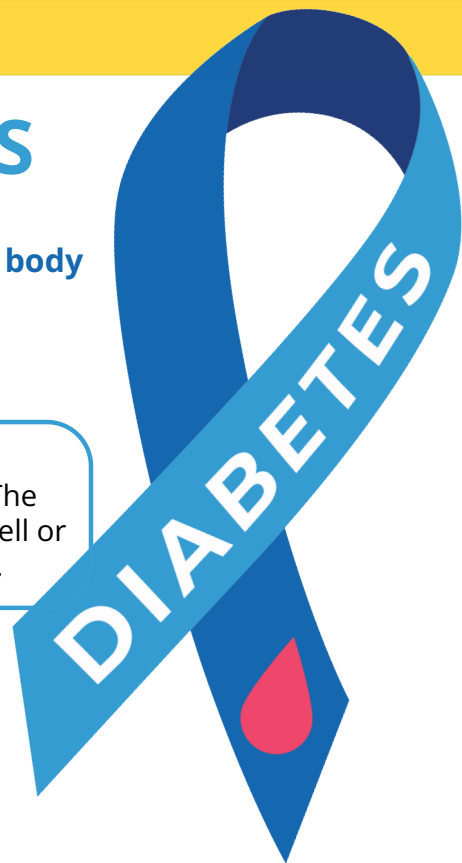
While type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented, type 2 diabetes can often be delayed or prevented with a few simple lifestyle changes.

- **Eat Healthy Foods:** Choose more fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. Limit sugary drinks and foods high in added sugar.
- **Be Active:** Try to get about 30 minutes of physical activity most days. Walking, stretching, and light exercise are great ways to begin.
- **Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Even small weight loss can greatly lower your risk.
- **Manage Stress:** Try breathing exercises, stretching, quiet time, or short breaks.
- **Get Regular Health Checks:** Ask your doctor about a blood sugar test, especially if you have risk factors such as family history, being overweight, or being over age 45.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

We offer programs to support diabetes prevention and provide guidance for people already living with diabetes.

Call **813-309-8009** or visit our website to learn more, get connected with helpful resources, and take positive steps toward better health this November.



DIABETES AWARENESS HEALTH FAIR

Florida
HEALTH

Friday, November 6, 2026
8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

University Area Health Center
13601 N 22nd St.
Tampa, FL 33613

- Open to the Public
- Health Screenings
- Diabetes Education
- Lunch 'n Learn Presentation
- Community Resources



feeding
TAMPA BAY



Humana
Healthy Horizons.
in Florida



**Hillsborough
County Florida**

813-307-8009

Hillsborough.FloridaHealth.gov

Info.HillsWeb@FLHealth.gov



Discover your **HEALTHIER** **YOU**



The Florida Department of Health is providing free access to WeightWatchers® to support you on your journey to a **HEALTHIER YOU**.

This program will provide you with a free membership that includes access to:

- Nutritious eating plans, recipes, and meal-planning tools
- Physical activity trackers and on-demand workouts for all activity levels
- 24/7 coaching support and networking with others that share your goals



Free memberships available to Florida residents of Leon, Hillsborough, and Palm Beach counties.

Learn more about eligibility at FloridaHealth.gov/WW

**START YOUR
JOURNEY NOW**





STAY HEALTHY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON WASH YOUR HANDS!

The holiday season means more cooking, traveling, shopping, hugging, and gathering with friends and family. With all this activity, it's easy for germs to spread.

One of the best ways to stay healthy and protect others is simple: wash your hands often. Good hand hygiene keeps you healthier, reduces the spread of germs, and protects your family, friends, coworkers, and community.

It's a small action that makes a big difference - especially during cold, flu, and holiday gathering season.

Handwashing Matters

Many illnesses spread when germs get on our hands and enter our bodies through our eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can get on your hands after using the bathroom, touching surfaces, preparing food, caring for someone who is sick, or even after coughing or sneezing.

Handwashing with soap and clean, running water removes germs and helps keep you and others healthy. It's one of the most effective ways to prevent both respiratory and stomach illnesses.

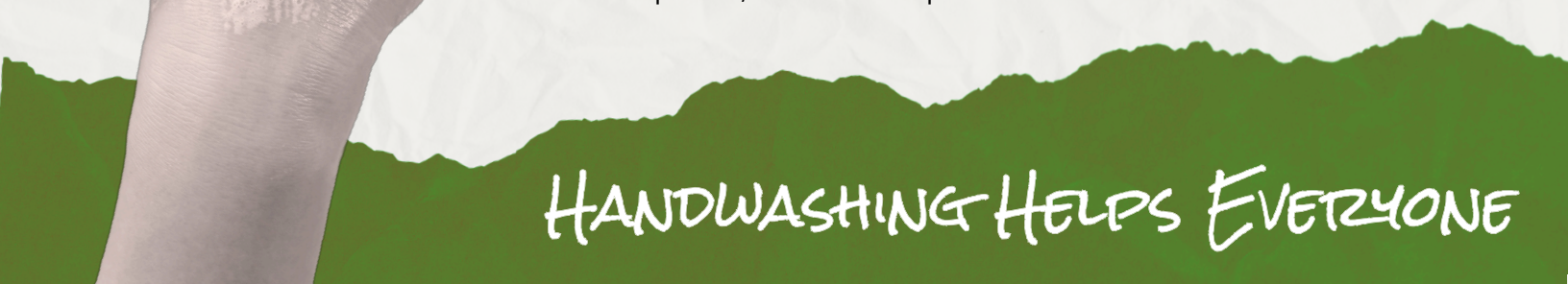


When to Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands often during the holidays, especially:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating
- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching animals or their food
- After handling garbage
- After caring for someone who is sick

These are times when germs are most likely to spread, especially in busy holiday environments like kitchens, stores, parties, and travel stops.



HANDWASHING HELPS EVERYONE

When Connection Stopped Being *Automatic*

By: Bri Roe, MS, Senior Health Educator, Office of Behavioral Health

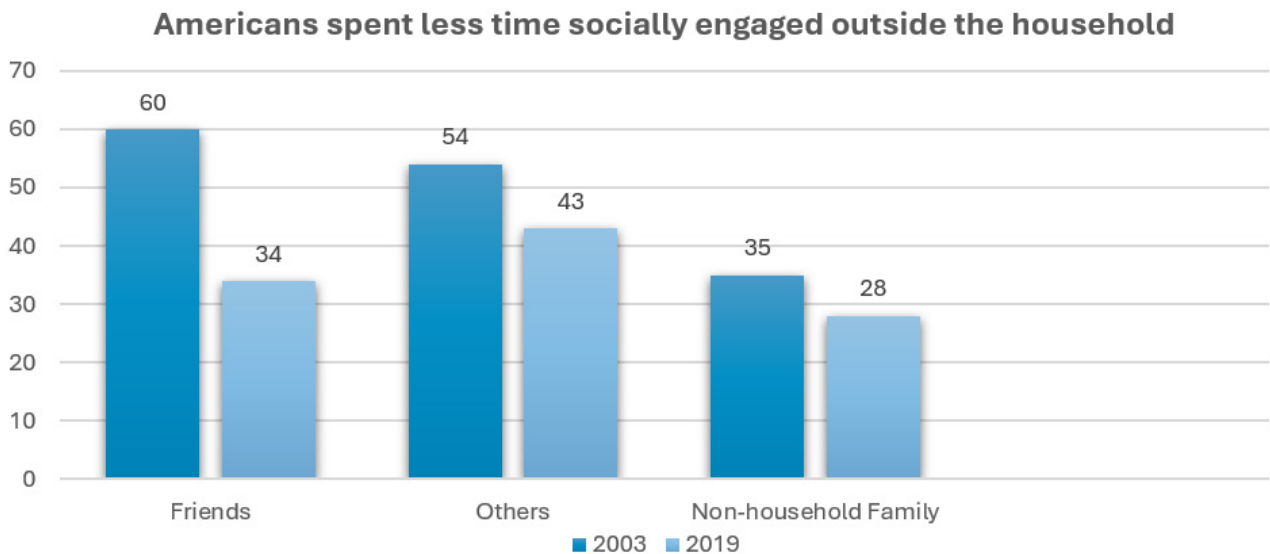
Individuals have more methods of communication than ever before. Messages can travel across the world in seconds, relationships are maintained without physical proximity, and people can share what they are doing without ever speaking to a person directly.

Even with these communication methods, loneliness and social isolation remain prevalent public health concerns (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2024). Social connections do not exist separately from the world around them, as where people live, who they live with, how they work, where they gather, and how they communicate all create opportunities or barriers for connection. The issue may not be that people themselves are becoming less connected but more so how the environment surrounding connection changed.

When Connection Was Built into Everyday Life

For much of American history, everyday life shaped constant opportunities for interaction through families, neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, religious institutions, and civic organizations. These communities were not always broad or healthy, but closeness created openings for familiarity and relationships to develop.

Putnam (2000) describes the value produced through social networks as social capital. **Social capital** generates trust, reciprocity, information, cooperation, and support. A neighbor, coworker, church member, or community acquaintance can eventually become someone who notices, shares information, or simply shows up when help is needed.



Source: Kannan et al. (2023)

However, opportunities to develop and maintain these relationships have also changed. Analysis of the American Time Use Survey found declines in social engagement with friends, non-household family members, and others between 2003 and 2019 (Kannan et al., 2023). Most notably, average time spent socially engaged with friends declined from 60 minutes per day in 2003 to 34 minutes in 2019.

These changes occurred before 2020, suggesting that declining social engagement cannot be explained by the pandemic alone. This shift highlights the difference between built-in connection and intentional connection.

- **Built-in connection** occurs when routines, shared spaces, and proximity repeatedly bring people together.
- **Intentional connection** requires individuals to create those opportunities themselves.

As everyday life became increasingly individualized, connections did not disappear; instead, the total responsibility of creating connections shifted to the individual.

When Our Social Worlds Expanded

Moreover, technology created opportunities that previous generations did not have. People can maintain long distance relationships, find communities around specific experiences or interests, and communicate regardless of geography. Social media can support connection, but the relationship depends partly on how it is used; evidence does not support the simple conclusion that social media itself causes loneliness (O'Day & Heimberg, 2021).

Digital life also expanded into a form of connection that existed long before social media called **parasocial relationships**. Horton and Wohl (1956) used the term to describe seemingly intimate, but largely one-sided, relationships between audiences and media figures. Today, someone can know an influencer's routines, relationships, opinions, struggles, and favorite products while not knowing the name of the person living a few doors away. That is not necessarily good or bad, however, it demonstrates just how dramatically the meaning of knowing someone has changed.

Our comparison groups expanded too. Instead of primarily comparing ourselves with people in our immediate environments, digital platforms provide unceasing access to the accomplishments, appearances, relationships, careers, and lifestyles of countless others.

Research suggests social comparison may be one factor shaping the relationship between social media use and loneliness, although that relationship remains complex (O'Day & Heimberg, 2021). Individuals may have more access to people while simultaneously having to work harder to feel known by them.

Then Came the Pandemic

Long term data suggest that social isolation in the U.S. was already increasing while time spent socially engaged with family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others was declining before 2020. The pandemic intensified several of these existing trends (Kannan et al., 2023). It also disrupted many places where connections still happen naturally in places such as workplaces, schools, churches, restaurants, gyms, celebrations, and community organizations. The pandemic, then, may be better understood as an accelerant rather than the beginning.

So, How Did We Get Here?

Households changed. Community participation changed. Technology changed. Work and communication changed. None of these developments are entirely positive or negative, as many created freedoms and opportunities that previous generations did not have. But liberty from forced connection does not automatically create meaningful connection.

Today, people experiencing loneliness are often encouraged to find community, make friends, volunteer, join a group, or to put themselves out there. Those suggestions can help, nevertheless, they also place the responsibility for connection on the individual.

The CDC (2024) recognizes that social connection is influenced not only by individual behavior but also by the environments where people live, work, learn, worship, and play. The story of modern loneliness is less that people forget how to connect and more about the environments that once helped connection happen changing faster than new ones could take their place. If that is part of how society got here, addressing loneliness requires more than asking people to reach out. It requires examining the world they are being asked to reach out from.

The next part of this series will explore how the Office of Behavioral Health and its partners are responding to loneliness and social isolation by creating stronger opportunities for connection within the community.

References

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DENGUE FEVER ALERT

Dengue has been detected in your area. Take steps to stop mosquitoes from breeding to keep you, your family, and your community safe.



Mosquitoes are more than just a nuisance, **they can spread diseases like dengue fever that can make you sick.** Fight the bite by taking steps to control mosquitoes and protect from mosquito-borne illness.



SPRAY

yourself with mosquito repellent.



COVER

your arms and legs with clothing.



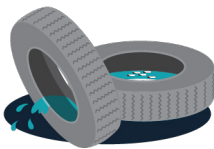
DRAIN

standing water.

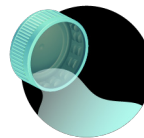
Stop Mosquitoes from Breeding

At least once a week, empty or cover **anything that could hold water**, such as:

- Buckets
- Toys & Child Pools
- Playground Equipment
- Birdbaths
- Trash & Recycling Bins
- Boat & Car Covers
- Roof Gutters
- Animal Food/Water Containers & Washing Areas
- Tires



Mosquitoes breed by laying eggs in and near standing water.



As little as one bottle cap of water standing for more than one week is enough for mosquitoes to multiply.

Individuals with symptoms of fever, chills, sweats, nausea/vomiting, and headache should seek immediate medical attention.

Learn more at [FloridaHealth.gov/Dengue](https://www.floridahealth.gov/dengue)

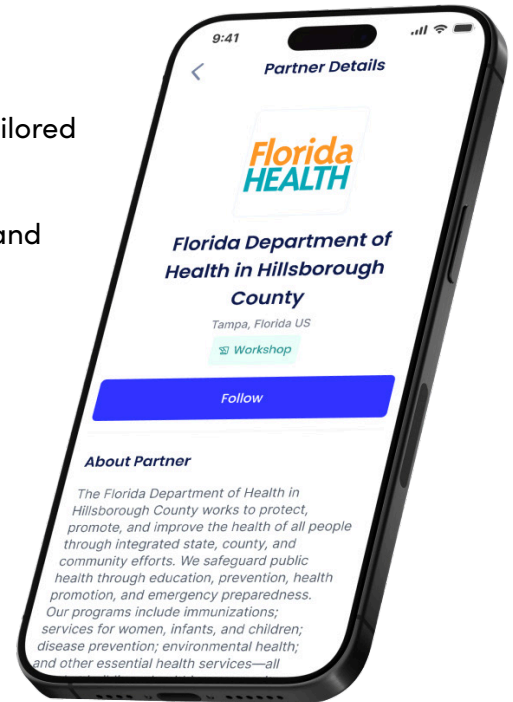
Florida
HEALTH

We're Now on the TampaWell App!

We're thrilled to announce that the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County is now part of the TampaWell app, giving you an exciting new way to connect with everything we offer! From discovering our programs and events to finding inspiration for your wellness journey, the app makes it easier than ever to stay engaged and motivated.

Here's what you'll love about the TampaWell app:

- **Customized Activity Feed:** Discover wellness events and activities tailored just for you.
- **Daily Challenges:** Take on fun, daily tasks that support your health and wellbeing.
- **Progress Tracking:** Stay on top of your goals with tools that help you measure your progress.
- **Points and Rewards:** Earn points for healthy choices and redeem them for exciting rewards.
- **Event Discovery:** Explore local fitness classes, wellness workshops, and more.
- **Social Connections:** Meet and connect with others on a similar wellness journey.
- **Smart Notifications:** Get alerts about events and activities that match your interests.



We're excited to feature all our health education programs for diabetes prevention and management, including healthy eating, physical activity, and blood pressure control, along with our presentations, events, and articles on health topics on the app, so you can easily stay in the loop and on track with your goals.

Join the thousands of Tampa Bay residents who are transforming their health journeys with TampaWell.

Download the app today from the App Store or Google Play and take the first step toward a healthier, happier you. Let's make wellness a rewarding adventure together!

Learn more about our free health education programs by calling 813-307-8009 to register, or visit Hillsborough.FloridaHealth.gov.

BP For Me

Blood Pressure Management Education

A five week program helps participants understand blood pressure numbers and how high BP can increase your risk for heart attack, stroke, heart disease, heart failure, kidney disease, and more. With the guidance and education from our registered dietitian, learn how to control your blood pressure through the foods you eat and how you prepare them.

Diabetes Self Management Education

A six week program that gives participants tools to monitor glucose at home, make lifestyle changes, learn about medications and insulin, and make informed choices about foods and carbohydrates to manage diabetes.

The program is accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists. Participants in the program have an average reduction in A1C of 1.15!

Diabetes Prevention Program

A year-long program (26 sessions) designed around behavior modification and resources to cope with stress, choosing healthy meals, and getting into an exercise routine. This program is great for those looking for ongoing accountability, support, and permanent lifestyle changes. Those who lose 5-7% of their body weight reduce the risk for developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers, along with lowering cholesterol, and improving blood glucose levels. This evidence-based weight loss program has a participant average weight loss of 6% of their body weight.

Get Into Fitness Today

A 12-week program for health and wellness, using science-based information to reduce chronic diseases through obesity prevention. This program is great for those who already know the basics of wellness and just need a refresher and motivation to lose weight. Our GIFT program has helped 90% of participants increase their physical activity, and is for anyone who is looking for a starting point to lose weight. You'll learn tools for healthy eating and how to be more physically active.

Get Into Fitness Together Learning Emotional Activity Program (GIFT-LEAP)

Designed to encourage children ages 5-9 years in making healthy choices so that they can lead a healthy lifestyle into adulthood. The program is six weeks long and covers healthy eating, physical activity, and how to deal with stress and emotions. Families are welcome to join in the program.

BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER EARLY DETECTION PROGRAM

We offer **free** mammogram and Pap smear testing.

For more information and to schedule an appointment, call 813-307-8082.

Tampa Family Health Center

To schedule an appointment, call 813-284-4529

Fl♥rida KidCare

The Florida health insurance for children for those that are eligible, birth through age 18, even if one or both parents are working. To apply by phone, call 888-540-5437, or TTY-877-316-8748.

FL HEALTH CHARTS

Have you ever wondered about the health of your community or state and how it compares to other Floridians? If so, Florida Health Charts is a great resource for accurate health data.

Learn more at **FLHealthCHARTS.gov**

PARKS AND RECREATION

Florida State Park
FloridaStateParks.org

Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation, and Conservation
HillsboroughCounty.org

Plant City Parks and Recreation
PlantCityGov.com/ParksRec

Tampa Parks and Recreation
TampaGov.net/Parks-and-Recreation

Temple Terrace Parks and Recreation
TempleTerrace.com

CONTACT US

* All numbers are area code, 813, unless otherwise indicated.

MAIN OPERATOR

and director's office 813-307-8000

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Behavioral Health 235-3273
Breast/Cervical Cancer 307-8082
Community Health Director 307-8071
Compass Program 267-6103
Diabetes 307-8009
Epidemiology 307-8010
Health Education 307-8009
Health Literacy 307-8071
Insulin Program 307-8009
Lead Poisoning Prevention 307-8071
Office of Minority Health 307-8066
School Health 307-8071
Tobacco Prevention 559-4760
Weight Management 307-8009

DISEASE CONTROL

HIV/AIDS Specialty Center 307-8064
Immunizations 307-8077
Sexually Transmitted Infections 307-8058
Anonymous Testing 307-8058
Tuberculosis (TB) 307-8047

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH 307-8059

HUMAN RESOURCES 307-8031

NUTRITION/WIC 307-8074

PHARMACY

(HIV/AIDS care clients only) 307-8072

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS 307-8042

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER 307-8044

VITAL STATISTICS

(birth and death records) 307-8002

Have a question or comment, email us at
DLCHD29WebsiteDistribution@FLHealth.gov



Mission: To protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

**Florida Department of Health in
Hillsborough County**

Health Education (70)
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