



Health Matters

**Fairfield County Health Department
Quarterly Newsletter
October 2025**



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From the Commissioner:



As we transition from summer to fall, the leaves are falling, and the days are getting shorter. The work of our team changes with the seasons as well.

In the fall, we have back to school vaccinations, followed by flu clinics across the county, sewage system installers push to get their work done before winter arrives, our health educators increase programming for traffic safety and youth tobacco prevention, and the summer festival season ends, giving our food safety team a much-needed rest.

Public health is the science, art, and practice of protecting and improving the health of populations and communities. It focuses on preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health and safety through education, to empower individuals and communities to make informed choices about their health and the health of their communities.

As the seasons change or new challenges arise, the staff at FCHD are ready to prevent disease, protect the environment, and promote healthy lifestyles for the residents of Fairfield County.

Joe Ebel, Health Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Ebel".



Healthy Eating Active Living

Contact: bethany.carson@fairfieldcountyohio.gov



Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)

HEAL is a program created to increase access to healthy and affordable foods and physical activity opportunities. This year, FCHD focused on making physical activity more accessible for residents by making it safer for individuals to walk to everyday destinations. Through a steering committee, community engagement, and a walk audit, the crosswalks near Mt. Pleasant Elementary were identified as a barrier that we could make improvements to. Along with partners and volunteers, we placed temporary curb extensions to shorten crosswalks and increase visibility. FCHD collected feedback from community members, which was very positive!



Passport to Parks in Fairfield County

In partnership with Fairfield County Park District and Lancaster Parks & Recreation, FCHD launched the Passport to Parks in Fairfield County.

Embark on an adventure and experience the hidden gems of Fairfield County. Gather your family and friends, go solo, or make new friends along the way. Participate in as many activities as you like, at your own pace. By visiting 6 parks/events on the passport, individuals will receive a prize!



Upcoming Events

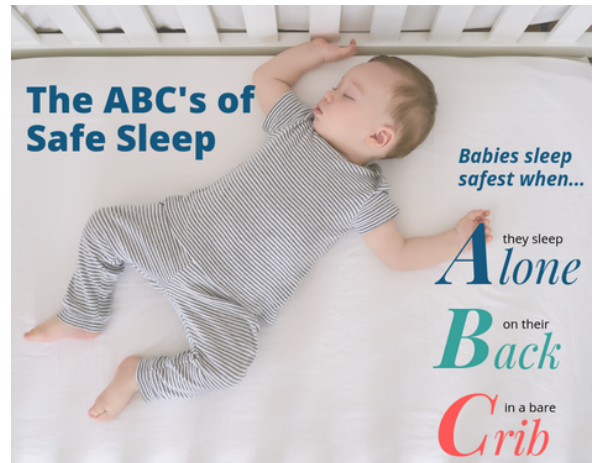
Join us at the Community Garden for our second annual Family Health Fest! The event will take place on Sunday, November 2nd from 11am to 1pm. There will be games, food, resources, and more!



Cribs for Kids

FCHD continued to promote safe sleep practices for infants and newborns and distributed **45** “*crib kits*” containing a cribette from July-September of 2025.

For more information on how to see if you are eligible for a crib, contact Kaleigh Pulsinelli kaleigh.pulsinelli@fairfieldcountyohio.gov or 740-652-2800



Ohio Buckles Buckeyes (OBB)

Our car seat program provides child safety seats and booster seats to eligible, low-income families.

From July to September, **39** convertible car seats, and **1** booster were disseminated. 2 car seat checks were performed- 1 seat was not installed upon arrival and 1 seat was installed correctly upon arrival. We hosted our first car seat check event and served a total of **6** families and checked **7** seats. We had a misuse rate of 86%.

Safe Kids Worldwide

FCHD distributed smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and other household safety items as a part of our Safe Kids program



Bike Helmets

FCHD has given out over 40 helmets this quarter, from both the Safe Kids and Put a Lid on It programs. We are also working on ordering more helmets for ages 3-5 through a Foundation grant.

CIAG Drowning Prevention

The Child Injury Action Group Drowning Prevention program sought to provide families with the opportunity for children to develop swimming proficiency and safe swimming practices. Through a partnership with the Stark County Health Department and the Robert K. Fox YMCA, FCHD was able to provide lessons for over 200 children and provide educational resources to their guardians. We will be partaking in a poster presentation for the program at the in-person OIPP/CIAG meeting in November.

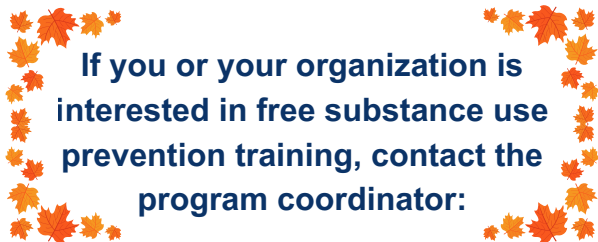


Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation

FCHD continues efforts to reduce dependence on nicotine through the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation grant.

We are starting recruitment for 18–20-year-olds to assist in completing tobacco retailer compliance checks and store audits that will collect data on price promotion, advertising and more! Checks will be completed from December until March. Please email Hannah if interested.

FCHD is working with the Fairfield Community Health Center to improve tobacco health optimization in Fairfield County. Together will be increasing the number of providers who screen and refer individuals for tobacco cessation. If you or your agency is interested in learning more about recommended screening practices, please reach out.



Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Contact:
hannah.josefczyk@fairfieldcountyohio.gov

Project DAWN and Harm Reduction Contact:
megan.baker@fairfieldcountyohio.gov

Project DAWN/ Integrated Harm Reduction

FCHD gave out a total of [592](#) Project DAWN Naloxone kits this quarter. Of those kits distributed [144](#) were to first responders in Fairfield County. FCHD also distributed other harm reduction supplies such as deterra medication disposal bags, hygiene kits, first aid kits, sharps containers, medication lock boxes, etc.

In collaboration with the Fairfield County ADAMH Board, FCHD has placed [3](#) harm reduction cabinets with various harm reduction supplies. One cabinet is located at Connexion West and there is a cabinet at both Pickerington Public Library locations. The purpose of these cabinets is to bring free harm reduction supplies to Fairfield County residents. FCHD also continues to place naloxoboxes and ship naloxone through our free mail order to increase access.

Scan this QR code or
visit our website for
free naloxone kits
shipped
directly
to you!



Thank you to our community partners
of the harm reduction cabinet project!





Safe Communities

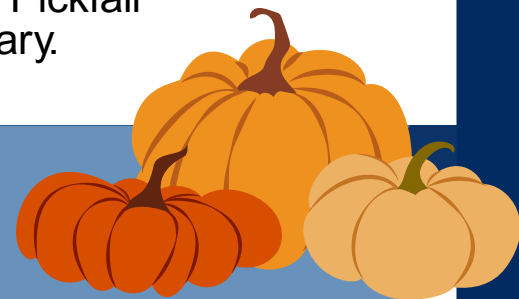
The Safe Communities Coalition is happy to report a decrease in traffic fatalities. There were two fatal crashes in quarter 3 of 2025, which is three fewer than the five reported in quarter 3 of 2024

Older Adult Falls Prevention

FCHD and OhioHealth hosted two falls prevention classes in Fairfield County in 2025. A Matter of Balance class was hosted at the Pickfair Square Retirement Community in the through July, whilst a Stepping On class took place at the Olivedale Senior Center in the Summer. Between the two, over 30 older adults participated in the classes. A follow-up booster session for Stepping On has also been scheduled for October 29th, and the participants from Pickfair Square requested that another class be held there in January.

Public Health Nursing

Contact: gale.neville@fairfieldcountyohio.gov



Cold, Flu, Covid, and RSV

Now that everyone is back to school and the weather is getting colder, colds, flu, and Covid are on the rise. To prevent these illnesses, make sure you get your annual booster for flu and Covid. Here are some other tips from the CDC to reduce the spread of illnesses:

- Wash your hands often. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your mouth & nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Practice good hygiene and other healthy habits.



Vaccine Clinics

We have Flu, COVID, and RSV vaccines! RSV Vaccine is different from the Flu, and COVID vaccines in that you should not get an RSV vaccine any closer than every two years. So, if you had RSV last year you don't need it again this year.

FCHD has vaccine clinics on Tuesday and Thursday every week. We also have a clinic in Pickerington once a month on the third Wednesday of each month, by appointment. **Call 740-652-2828 to make an appointment for all clinics.**

Fairfield County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

- 12 events
- 75 hours of community service to support emergency preparedness efforts in Fairfield County
- 88 volunteers
- Sponsored 4 new community members' CPR certification training
- Attended events to provide emergency resource education



Interested in joining our team and serving our community? Email riley.ernst@fairfieldcountyohio.gov for more information.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness

After the July 2025 flooding event, it's important to remove contaminated materials and disinfect remaining items to protect your and your family's health.



Use fans, air conditioning units, and dehumidifiers for drying.



Wear rubber boots and gloves to reduce skin exposure to contaminants.



Clean walls, hard floors, and other surfaces with soap and warm water. To disinfect, use a mixture of 1 cup bleach and 1 gallon water.

Preventing H5N1 (Bird Flu)

With detections of H5N1 in wild birds and dairy cattle across the U.S. this year, it's important to stay aware of how the virus spreads and ways to stay safe. H5N1 mainly affects birds but can occasionally infect other animals or people through close contact with infected animals or contaminated environments. The current risk to the public remains low.

Symptoms of H5N1 (in humans)

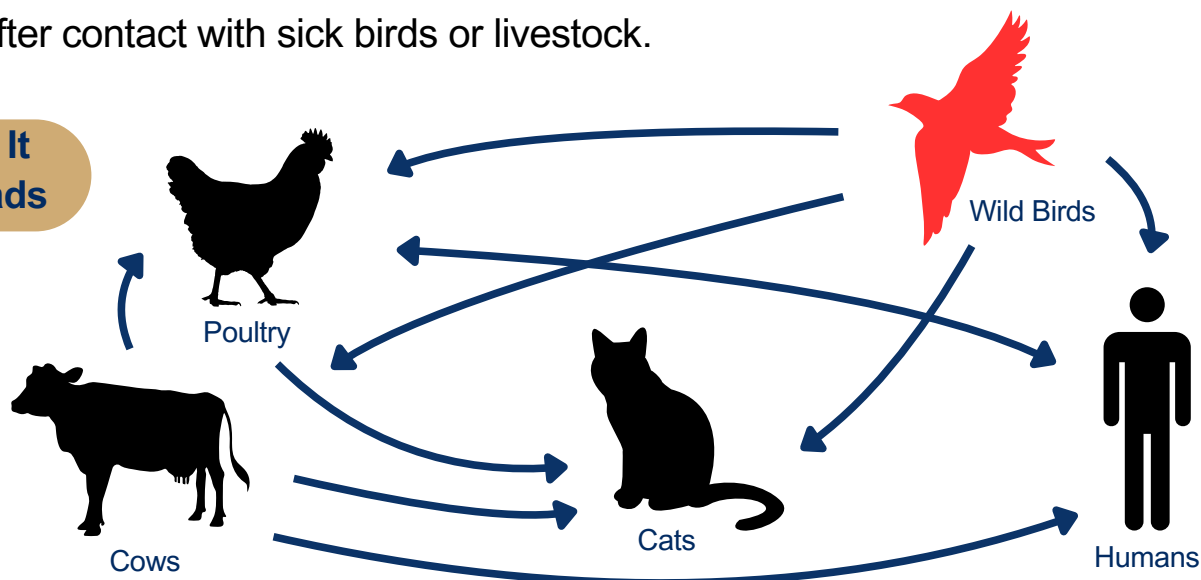
- Eye redness
- Fever and cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches and fatigue
- Shortness of breath

Symptoms appear within **2–7 days** of exposure. Seek care if you develop flu-like illness after contact with sick birds or livestock.

Prevention & Safety Checklist

- ✓ Avoid direct contact with sick or dead birds or other animals
- ✓ Wash hands thoroughly after handling animals or their environments
- ✓ Do not consume raw or unpasteurized milk or dairy products
- ✓ Keep wild birds away from backyard poultry and livestock areas
- ✓ Cook poultry, eggs, and meat to safe internal temperatures
- ✓ Report any unusual bird die-offs or sick livestock to the Ohio Department of Agriculture

How It Spreads



WIC: Women, Infants, and Children

Contact: mary.smith@fairfieldcountyohio.gov



WIC Participation

Participation continues to increase at our Pickerington WIC clinic site, serving a monthly average caseload of 762 participants, and a monthly average of 1,152 at our main clinic site Lancaster

We are also working towards increasing the number of participants who utilize WICHealth.org, which provides online nutrition education to WIC participants on numerous topics.

New Lactation Specialist



Paige Betsill, a WIC Dietetic Technician, became certified as a Lactation Specialist in August. This provides our breastfeeding moms at our Pickerington WIC clinic site with additional breastfeeding assistance.

Breastfeeding Awareness Month

WIC held an ice cream social in August for pregnant and breastfeeding women to celebrate Breastfeeding Awareness Month.



Farmers Market Coupons

Due to funding, our Fairfield County WIC program only received 10 Farmers Market coupon booklets for the 2025 WIC Farmers Market season, which were all distributed.

Environmental Health

Contact: rachel.moresea@fairfieldcountyohio.gov



Tick Control

FCHD placed tick collection stations and conducted tick drags at parks around Fairfield County in order to collect ticks. 92 ticks were collected and sent to the Ohio Department of Health to be tested for diseases.

No Dumping

We received some "No Dumping" signs through the Shine a Light on Dumpsters Grant, which we will be distributing to local townships.



FCHD in the Community



FCHD staff participated in the 4th of July parade in Lancaster

FCHD staff participated in United Way's Community Cares Day this year. They inventoried diapers and supplies for Bottoms Up



FCHD co-planned an event for Suicide Prevention in Downtown Lancaster in collaboration with our friends at the Fairfield County ADAMH Board and the Suicide Prevention Coalition



FCHD collaborated with Ohio Health and the Pickerington Police Department for a pop-up harm reduction resource giveaway in Pickerington. Medication lock boxes, deterra drug disposal bags, and sharps containers were distributed.



FCHD staff member at the Hope on a Hill Event!

FCHD staff member at the Thomas Ewing Open House



FCHD co-planned an event to observe Overdose Awareness Day in Downtown Lancaster in collaboration with our friends at Project FORT and the Fairfield County ADAMH Board



Stay in touch with us online!



Instagram- @fairfield_health



**X (formerly known as Twitter)-
@fairfieldco1550**



**Facebook-
www.facebook.com/FDHealth**



**Safe Communities Facebook-
www.facebook.com/FairfieldCountySC**



**LinkedIn-
linkedin.com/company/fairfieldhealth**



Website- fairfieldhealth.org