



# Pulse of the District

GALVESTON COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

Protecting and promoting the optimal health and well-being of Galveston County.

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## Serious health risks tied to childhood obesity

About one in five children in the United States is considered obese. While there is no simple solution to this public health problem, there are ways to support children on their journey to good health.

September marks National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month and provides a chance to learn more about this serious health condition.

Children who are obese are at a higher risk for having other chronic health conditions and diseases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Those include asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems and type 2 diabetes. They also have more risk factors for heart disease like high blood pressure and high cholesterol than their normal weight peers.

Children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are five times as likely as normal-weight children to be overweight or

obese as adults.

"Obesity in the United States is a problem. Specifically, the rate of obesity in children is alarming, and it's growing," said Eileen Dawley, RN, chief nursing officer.

"Adults who are obese have a higher risk for diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and many types of cancer."

There are several factors that may lead to childhood obesity: too much time spent being

inactive; lack of sleep; lack of places to go to get physical activity; easy access to inexpensive, high calorie foods and sugary beverages; and lack of access to affordable, healthier foods.

"Parents can help and set an example for their children. Choose nutritious meals with fruits and veggies and encourage your children to drink more water as a no-calorie alternative," Dawley said.



### Food for Thought

30 years ago, kids ate just **one snack a day**. Today, they're trending toward three snacks a day.

That adds up to an extra 200 calories a day! Encourage children 2 and older to eat at least **five servings of fruits and veggies a day**.



Childhood Obesity page 11



# OBESITY

Did you know nearly 40% of Americans are considered obese?



## IN GALVESTON COUNTY



**32%**  
of adults  
are obese



**only 24%**  
are physically  
active

## OBESITY CAN LEAD TO



Heart Disease



Type 2  
Diabetes



Stroke



Cancer or  
Death

Those who are obese pay **\$1,429 more** in medical costs **EACH YEAR** than those who are not obese.

And, this isn't just an issue in America. Worldwide, there are currently more than 41 million infants and children who are overweight. At this rate, the number will reach 70 million by 2025.



**2.8 million people die each year from being overweight or obese.**

**But, the good news is we can change all that!**

Obesity and obesity-related illnesses can be prevented.

**How much does your health mean to you?**



[GCHD.ORG/HEAL](http://GCHD.ORG/HEAL)

# Employee spotlight features new immunizations manager

This month's Employee Spotlight features Debbie Marshall, immunizations program manager at the Galveston County Health District (GCHD).

Marshall is a retired nurse from UTMB. She came to the immunizations clinic for services, inquired about possibly working in the program, and the rest is history.

In her spare time, Marshall enjoys traveling, taking cruises, reading and spending time with her grandchildren.

Employee Spotlight is a monthly video series highlight-



ing the employees of GCHD, Galveston Area Ambulance Authority, Galveston County Animal Resource Center and Coastal Health & Wellness.

This series introduces co-workers and the community to the wonderful employees protecting and promoting the optimal health and well-being of Galveston County.

This month's video is available on GCHD social media and the GCHD's YouTube channel, where past Employee Spotlight videos may also be found.

## ARC to host low-cost pet vaccine clinics Sept. 13, 14

The Galveston County Animal Resource Center (ARC) is happy to host two low-cost pet vaccination clinics on Friday, Sept. 13 and Saturday, Sept. 14. Both clinics are open to residents of any city and will include pet microchipping and county registration.

Low-cost vaccinations, flea control and heartworm testing and treatment services through ARC range from \$15 for a rabies vaccine for both dogs and cats to \$60 for the dog package and \$45 for the cat package. Specific pricing is online at [www.gchd.org/arc](http://www.gchd.org/arc).

Microchips are available for all cats and dogs, regardless of jurisdiction, for just \$20 each.



County regulation requires pet owners who live in the municipalities served by the ARC (Bayou Vista, Hitchcock, Kemah, La Marque, Texas City, Tiki Island and unincorporated Galveston County) to register their pets. There is no registration fee for pets that are already microchipped. Registration for pets that are not microchipped is \$20 and includes a microchip. The fee is \$15 for pet owners age 65 and older.

Both clinics will take place at ARC, located at 3412 25th Avenue North (Loop 197 North) in Texas

City from noon-2 p.m. Sept. 13 and noon-3 p.m. Sept. 14. Appointments are not needed. Cash, check and major credit cards are accepted. For more information call 409-948-2485.

# Protect yourself, family from falling ill

## September marks National Food Safety Education Month

Each year, an estimated one in six Americans – that's 48 million people – get sick from food poisoning.

Anyone can get sick from food poisoning. The good news is there are ways to protect yourself and your family from falling ill.

As you prepare and handle food, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests you follow these four tips: wash your hands, utensils and surfaces often when cooking; separate cooked food from raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs, which can spread germs; use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to an internal temperature that kills germs; and refrigerate perishable foods and leftovers within two hours and chill within one hour if it's above 90°F.

September marks National Food Safety Education Month. Below are some areas to pay attention to when dining out.

### Look for a valid permit

All properly permitted and inspected food service establishments are required to display their food service permit where customers can see it. The permit is bright yellow and contains the GCHD logo at the top and a seal at the bottom. Locate the permit and verify it's not expired.

"A permit confirms the establishment you're visiting is in our system to be routinely inspected and that it has met proper safety requirements to prepare and serve food," said Martin Entringer, GCHD consumer health services manager.

### Check inspection scores

Most food service establishments are inspected at least

twice annually based on criteria established in the Texas Food Establishment Rules. Low-risk facilities require one inspection per year. Inspections may occur more frequently based on an establishment's risk level, violations and complaints.

GCHD performs approximately 5,500 food service inspections annually. Inspection results, scored as demerits, are posted online at [www.gchd.org/restaurant-scores](http://www.gchd.org/restaurant-scores).

"Demerit scores reflect conditions at the time of the inspection. They may not indicate current conditions," Entringer added. "We suggest reviewing demerit scores over a period of time for the best representation of an establishment's overall conditions."

### Check for cleanliness

The first indication of a restaurant's overall cleanliness is the exterior. Look around to see if the building and grounds are well maintained. Once inside, make sure the tables,

silverware and dishware are clean. Servers should be well-groomed and wearing clean uniforms. Restroom cleanliness also offers insight into a restaurant's overall sanitation.

### Be cautious with raw or undercooked food

Raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood may carry bacteria that can cause illness, especially with those who have medical conditions. Proper thorough cooking kills potentially harmful bacteria.

### Be careful with leftovers

Taking food to go is perfectly safe. Remember to refrigerate within two hours or one hour if the weather is over 90°F.

Food Safety page 11

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Galveston County Health District Consumer Health Services**  
investigates food-borne illnesses.

Sick from eating at a restaurant?  
**Call (409) 938-2208 or (409) 978-2215.**

**GCHD.ORG/CONSUMER**

**GALVESTON COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT**



# HEALTHY EATING, ACTIVE LIVING

## COOKING CORNER

### TERIYAKI PORK CHOPS WITH BLUEBERRY-GINGER RELISH

#### Ingredients

4 bone-in center cut pork chops  
(about 1 3/4 pounds), trimmed of fat

#### Marinade

12 oz. Lawry's teriyaki with pineapple  
juice marinade  
3 Tbsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce  
2 Tbsp. dry sherry  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 tsp. brown sugar  
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper

#### Blueberry-Ginger Relish

1 cup fresh blueberries, coarsely  
chopped  
1 shallot, chopped  
1 serrano chile, seeded and minced  
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro  
1 Tbsp. lime juice  
1 tsp. minced fresh ginger  
1/4 tsp. salt



#### Directions

To marinate, place pork chops in a large sealable plastic bag.

Whisk soy sauce, sherry, brown sugar and crushed red pepper in a small bowl. Add the marinade to the bag, seal and turn to coat. Marinate in the refrigerator for at least two hours

or overnight.

To prepare relish, about 20 minutes before grilling the pork, combine blueberries, shallot, chile, cilantro, lime juice, ginger and salt in a small bowl.

Preheat the grill to high.

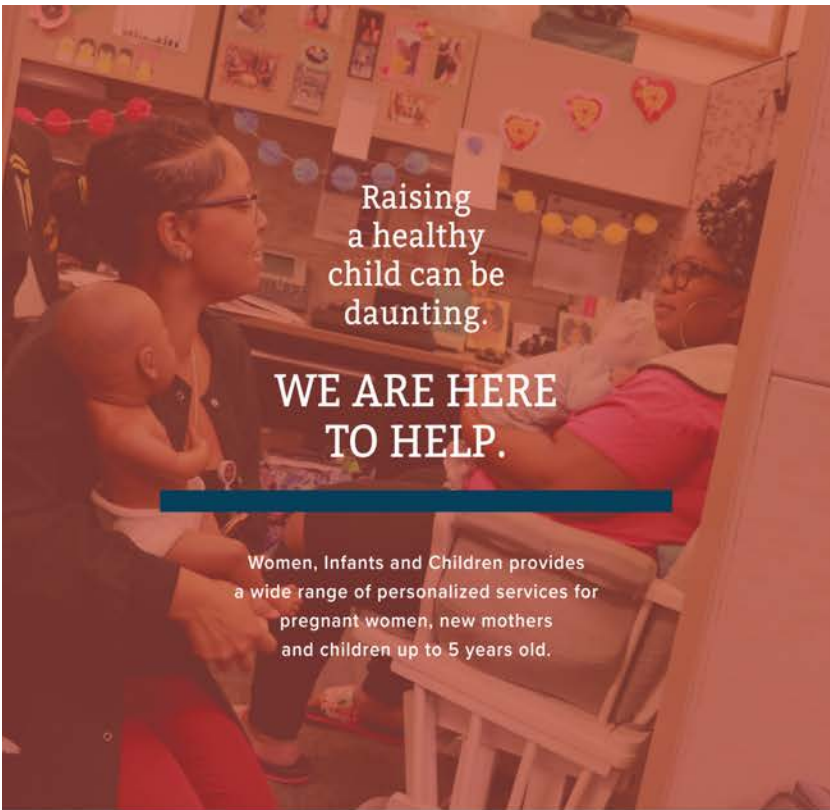
Remove the pork chops for the

marinade (discard marinade).

Grill the chops 3-5 minutes per side.

Let them rest for 5 minutes before serving with the relish.

To make ahead, marinate the pork for up to one day.



Raising a healthy child can be daunting.

**WE ARE HERE TO HELP.**

Women, Infants and Children provides a wide range of personalized services for pregnant women, new mothers and children up to 5 years old.

Disasters happen, prepare now

# September marks National Preparedness Month

Galveston County is no stranger to disasters. While the type may range from hurricane to tropical storm, floods or fires, one thing remains the same. When faced with a disaster, preparing ahead of time is vital to protect your family and property.



**Randy Valcin**  
Director of Public Health Surveillance Programs,  
Galveston County Health District

September marks National Preparedness

Month and the Galveston County Health District (GCHD) encourages you to take time now to prepare for the wide variety of disasters you may face.

This year's theme is "Prepared, Not Scared. Be Ready for Disasters." Being prepared can be the difference between life and death.

Most homeowner and renter insurance policies do not cover flood damage. If you add flood insurance, keep in mind most policies take 30 days to go into effect, so don't wait until it's too late.

Take photos of important documents and personal belongings. Include birth and marriage certificates, immunization records for children and adults, driver license and other photo IDs and Social Security Cards. You also want photo documentation of valuables. It will help you quickly file an insurance claim after a flood, if necessary.

Disasters can be costly. Start now and set aside a small amount of each paycheck to go into a savings account. Also, keep cash on hand since ATMs and credit card readers may not be avail-

## Mother's Milk Club

is a breastfeeding support group designed to help moms come together, share their experiences and concerns and support each other through the ups and downs of parenthood.



Do you ever wake up in the middle of the night with a question on your mind?

Our 24/7 breastfeeding hotline is for you. Call us anytime at **(409) 392 - 7120.**

Classes are 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Dickinson:**  
second and fourth  
Wednesday

**Galveston:**  
second and fourth  
Tuesday

**Texas City:**  
first and third  
Tuesday

## GROW WITH US.

 **(409) 949-3471**  
[gchd.org/wic](http://gchd.org/wic)

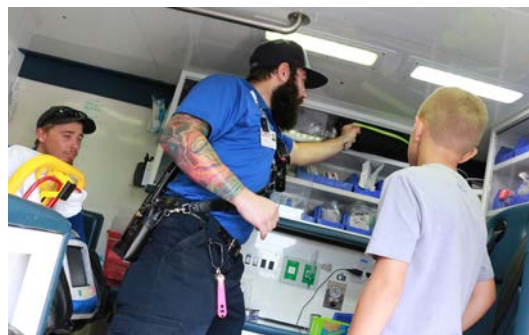
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# GAAA celebrates grand opening of Fire Station No. 1



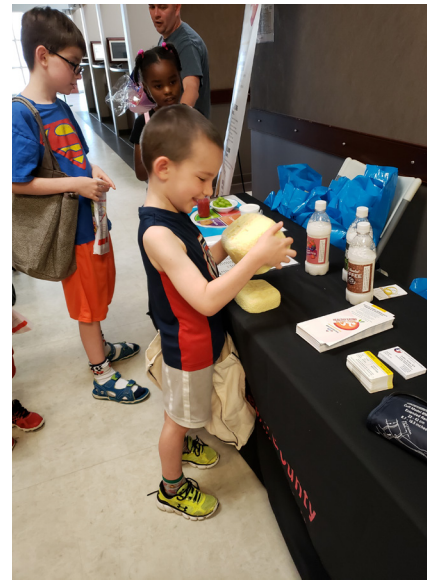
Galveston Area Ambulance Authority (GAAA) was thrilled to join the City of Galveston in celebrating the grand opening of Fire Station No. 1 in Galveston on Aug. 21. GAAA Medic 1, 2 and 10, along with supervisors, will also operate out of the new station. GAAA Director of EMS Amy Weber, GAAA EMS Operations Manager Tommy Leigh and Galveston County Health District CEO Kathy Barroso, along with other GAAA staff, attended the grand opening.



# Out and about: Community outreach



Women, Infants and Children (WIC) staff celebrated World Breastfeeding Week with a Super Breastfeeding Extravaganza for WIC clients and the community on Aug. 7 with games, prizes, face painting, balloons, snacks and more. World Breastfeeding Week is a chance for WIC to highlight many of the resources available to expecting and breastfeeding mothers.



Public health nurses shared information about Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) at Coastal Health & Wellness' Community Resource Fair on Aug. 9. Visitors, at left, learned more about leading a healthier life, how much sugar is in different products and more.



Galveston County Health District (GCHD) outreach staff, above and at left, attended Movie on the Dike in Texas City Aug. 17.

Public Health Nurse Ashley Sci-ba, RN, at right, attended several outreach events in August, offering blood pressure and blood sugar screenings to the public.



# ARC sees 89 adoptions with Clear the Shelters

The Animal Resource Center (ARC) participated in the nationwide pet adoption event Clear the Shelters on Aug. 17 and had 89 adoptions, an all-time high adoption rate for the ARC. Below are a few photos of families who welcomed new four-legged friends to their crew.





## THE ZIKA VIRUS CAN CAUSE BIRTH DEFECTS IN UNBORN AND NEWLY BORN BABIES.

You can **Fight the Bite** by wearing  
EPA-approved insect repellent,  
wearing long sleeves and pants  
at dawn and dusk,  
and removing standing water  
from your home.

[GCHD.ORG/ZIKA](http://GCHD.ORG/ZIKA)



## Calendar of Events

### Diabetes 101

The Galveston County Health District (GCHD) Diabetes 101 class meets each Wednesday, 3-4 p.m. and is a support group for those living with diabetes. Topics include monitoring blood glucose, healthy eating, meal planning, understanding food labels, counting carbs and managing stress through increased activity. Classes take place in the GCHD Texas City WIC classroom, 9850-B Emmett F. Lowry Expressway, Suite B-101.02. Registration for the group is required by calling 409-938-2293 or emailing [chs@gchd.org](mailto:chs@gchd.org).

### Mother's Milk Club – Texas City

The Galveston County Health District's Mother's Milk Club meets 5:30-6:30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month at the Texas City WIC Clinic, 9850 Emmett F. Lowry Expressway, Suite B-101. For information, call 409-949-3471.

### Mother's Milk Club - Dickinson

The Galveston County Health District's Mother's Milk Club meets 5:30-6:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at the Dickinson WIC Clinic, 2401 Termini St., Dickinson. For information, call 409-337-7606.

### Mother's Milk Club - Galveston

The Galveston County Health District's Mother's Milk Club meets 5:30-6:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the Galveston WIC Clinic, 4700 Broadway, Suite F102, Galveston. For information, call 409-763-7207.

### Free WIC cooking class

Learn how to cook with Galveston County Health District's Women, Infant and Children (WIC) services and Galveston's Own Farmers Market to create low-cost, delicious and healthy recipes. For more information, call 409-949-3471. All ingredients are provided and you get to eat the food you create! This is a FREE class open to WIC clients.

### Healthy Concepts Clinic

Healthy Concepts Clinic (HCC) is a public health clinic that offers STD, HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis C, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing as well as Tuberculosis case management and treatment. The Texas City clinic, located at 9850-B Emmett F. Lowry Expressway, Suite B103, is open Wednesdays 1-5 p.m. The Galveston clinic, located at Island Community center, 4700 Broadway, Suite F101, is open Mondays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

## Food Safety

Leftovers should be eaten within three to four days.

Some groups of people are more likely to get sick and have a more serious illness including children younger than 5, adults aged 65 and older, people with health problems or who take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness and pregnant women.

According to the CDC, those who are more likely to get food poisoning should not eat: undercooked or raw animal products including meat, poultry, eggs or seafood; raw or slightly cooked sprouts; unpasteurized (raw) milk and juices; and soft cheese unless it is la-

beled as made with pasteurized milk.

Food poisoning signs include high fever higher than 102°F, bloody diarrhea, frequent vomiting, diarrhea for more than three days and dehydration.

GCHD sanitarians routinely inspect more than 1,800 food service establishments for compliance with state regulations designed to protect the health and well-being of customers. GCHD investigates sanitation complaints related to food service establishments. **Complaints may be filed by filling out the form at [www.gchd.org/complaints](http://www.gchd.org/complaints) or by calling 409-938-2241.** Please provide contact information to allow GCHD to follow-up. Pictures may be submitted

with complaints.

Food poisoning is a common, yet preventable public health problem. If someone believes they became ill from eating at a restaurant in Galveston County, it's important to quickly report it to GCHD. Prompt reporting gives GCHD epidemiologists the best chance at determining the source.

Callers should be prepared to offer information about symptoms, what and where they recently ate and if they've seen a doctor.

Suspected food poisoning may be reported to 409-938-2208 or 409-938-2215 during business hours or 1-888-241-0442 after hours.

## Preparedness

able. Cash can help pay for immediate expenses like lodging, food and gas.

And, be sure you put your emergency plan in writing. If evacuating, know where you plan to go. Having a plan in place lets you know everyone in the home is on the same page and prepared.

Develop a family emergency communication plan. It is possible family members may become separated from one another during a disaster, especially during the day when adults are at work and children are at school. **Plan for touching base and getting back together.** Practice fire escape plans by having a home drill at least twice a year with everyone in the home.

When it comes to medicine, put prescriptions, emergency contact information for family and doctors, insurance cards and identification together in a plastic bag.

If you haven't already, sign up for alerts and warnings in your area so that you can stay on top of changing conditions.

Now that school has started, update school records and make sure your children know who to contact in an emergency. Including favorite stuffed animals, board games, books or music in the emergency kit can help comfort children in a disaster.

In the hustle of dealing with a disaster, pets sometimes fall to the end of the list. Plan for pets now. Have copies of vaccination records, a current photo of your pet, an ample supply of food and water, a carrier or cage, medication, muzzle, collar and leash.

You may also want to learn life-saving skills such as CPR and first aid. For more information, visit [www.ready.gov/September](http://www.ready.gov/September) and <http://www.gchd.org/public-health-services/public-health-preparedness/natural-disasters>.

## Childhood Obesity

Provide vegetables, fruits and whole-grain products and choose lean meats like poultry, fish, lentils and beans for protein. And, remember portion size.

Make sure drinking water is always available as a no-calorie alternative to sugary beverages and limit juice intake. The idea is to balance calories from foods and beverages with the calories children use through physical activity and growth.

"Get active with your children. Find activities you enjoy as a family," Dawley said. "It's important that children get the recommended amount of physical activity every day."

Children age 2 and older should get at least 60 minutes of enjoyable, varied, moderate-intensity physical activity every day.

Being active helps you prevent chronic diseases, improve heart and lung health, build strong bones and muscles, reduce fat, improve sleep, decrease stress, fight depression and increase your confidence and self-esteem.

"Small changes can make a difference. Together, we can all do our part to prevent childhood obesity," Dawley said.