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Achievements in Public Health

April 6 to 12 is National Public Health Week!

Check out five ways public health has improved your community at home and across the nation.



Thriving Babies

One of public health's proudest milestones is the **94% decrease in the infant mortality rate since 1915**. Thanks to advances in prenatal and neonatal care, nutrition support, and parent education on topics like safe sleep, babies today have a stronger start than ever before. Decreased exposure to infectious diseases through antibiotics, vaccinations, and water sanitation has also played a major role in helping more babies grow up healthy and strong!

Immunizations: Protecting Generations

Vaccines have virtually eliminated smallpox and helped protect people from diseases like malaria, polio, and rubella. The **Vaccines for Children program has prevented 508 million illnesses and over 1 million deaths (1994–2023)** by providing free, recommended vaccines to eligible children and giving every child a healthier start.

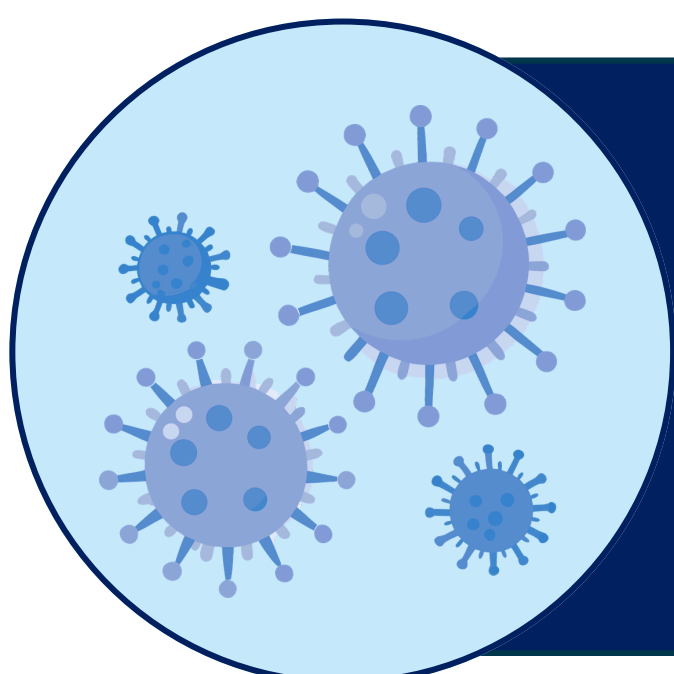


Cleaner Air: Smoking Rates at Historic Lows

Smoking rates in Wood County have **decreased 11% since 2008**, and for the first time ever, smoking rates among US adults is below 10%. Smoking is a risk factor for numerous diseases and conditions like cancer, heart disease, lung disease, and type 2 diabetes. Evidence-based education, warning labels, and accessible cessation programs are helping communities breathe easier and live longer.

Stronger Hearts

From 1970 to 2022, deaths from heart disease **fell by 66%** and death from heart attacks **declined 89%**. While heart disease is still the leading cause of death in the US, reductions in smoking, better prevention and treatment medications, and improved diagnostic techniques have led to fewer deaths overall.



Controlling Infectious Diseases

Waterborne and foodborne illnesses have declined in the US because of improvements in surveillance, lab testing, and food and water safety standards. **Tuberculosis has dropped significantly** since the 1950s, and HIV/AIDS has **decreased 73% from its peak in the 1980s**. Advancements in living conditions, medications, and public health messaging continue to protect and empower communities around the nation.