

SW REGION COMMUNITY HEALTH CORNER

A Monthly Newsletter by K-State Research and Extension,
the Immunize Kansas Coalition and local partners supporting
women's wellness



Care for Your Mind, Body & Soul!

Sometimes, we think of wellness as only physical health, but overall wellness includes emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social well-being. Knowing that many things contribute to wellness requires focusing on things that refuel you, which can help you take care of yourself and others.

Busy women may find it challenging to set aside time to focus on their well-being while caring for families, working at jobs, and volunteering in the community. Feeling overwhelmed and stressed can be common. A 2021 AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) survey of 4,851 women over 18 revealed how stress and anxiety affected sleep, weight, and other health issues. Though 63% of Latina women from the survey reported sleep problems, 60% said they chose inner peace to outer beauty. Balancing responsibilities and stress with self-care takes a little attention each day to focus on things we enjoy.

Self-care means taking care of yourself; managing stress, recognizing emotional and spiritual needs, sustaining relationships; and balancing different areas of life.

Self-care is different for everyone and is based on culture, beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. But, according to National Mental Health First Aid, self-care can start in four simple ways:

- Move more: physical activity can help the brain cope better with stress.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet: what we eat impacts our mood, prevents disease and speeds recovery from illness.
- Get enough sleep: most adults need 7-8 hrs. of sleep at night; falling to sleep can be helped by relaxation exercises, turning off the cell phone, and not eating sweets before bedtime.
- Set boundaries: saying “no” to things that add unnecessary stress and planning for things that give you joy will lead to positive mental wellness.

Self-care can also mean you engage in things that bring you joy. Joy takes many forms. It could be cooking for family, participating in church events and festivals, attending athletic matches, being with friends, or connecting with the arts. Regardless of what brings you joy, engaging in self-care activities is essential for a healthy mind, body, and soul!



Image by Student Health and
Counseling Services at UC Davis

Vaccination.

Get Caught Up: Mom and Baby!

Vaccination is a tool to help our bodies build immunity against potentially life-threatening diseases and protect our families and communities at the same time. Vaccinations are needed at several stages of life, including during pregnancy, and continue to be proven safe and effective for use.

Health professionals recommend that pregnant women receive a Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria toxoids, and acellular pertussis) vaccine during each pregnancy, preferably between 27 and 36 weeks of carrying a baby. Timely vaccinations protect the mom and the baby through the passive transfer of protective antibodies. Once vaccinated, the mother's body makes the antibodies needed to protect her and her baby from diseases like Whooping Cough (Pertussis) by passing them on through the placenta and/or breast milk. Passive immunity can last several weeks to months after birth, protecting babies through their most vulnerable time before their immune systems are fully developed.

In addition to Tdap, it is also recommended that pregnant women receive vaccinations for influenza and COVID-19 due to a greater risk of health complications resulting from flu or COVID-related infections. Other vaccinations may be recommended before, during, or after pregnancy, depending on your risk. Expectant women should seek the advice of their health providers as to their overall health.

Encuentre una vacuna cerca de usted:

Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

Text your ZIP code at **438829**

Call **1-800-232-0233**



K-STATE
Research and Extension

IKC
Immunize Kansas Coalition



Where Does Health Come From?

Finding Your Voice: From Employment to Elections.

For many women, paid work outside the home is fulfilling. It provides a sense of purpose, money for family stability, and a way to learn to lead. However, a recent report on the Status of Women in Kansas showed that 54.2% of women working full-time earn less than \$25,000 compared to 52% of the U.S. Additionally, women working full-time in the U.S. earn 82 cents for every dollar of male earnings, and in Kansas, women only earn 78 cents. On top of wage disparities, many women continue to bear the weight of being the primary caregivers for their families.

Juggling these responsibilities can quickly become overwhelming. Managing the demands of work, carrying the responsibility of caregiving, and deciding whether to enter, leave, or stay in the workforce can take a toll on everyone. It is essential that women support one another and seek out development and leadership opportunities. During tough times it's also important to encourage women to practice self-care in the workplace. National Mental Health First Aid suggests using **S.T.O.P** when feeling overwhelmed, especially at work:

S: Stop what you are doing. Put things down for a moment

T: Take a breath. Breathe naturally, deeply, in and out.

O: Observe your thoughts and feelings. If feeling stressed, put a name on it. Simply naming your emotions can have a calming effect.

P: Proceed with something that will support you right at the moment, like drinking a glass of water, stretching, reaching out to a friend, taking a brief walk.

Managing stress at work is a step towards empowerment, but there are more steps you can take to address low earnings, high childcare expenses, and women's leadership roles. Women's empowerment can begin with civic engagement. For example, although women vote at high rates and comprise most of the population in Kansas, women make up only 28% of Kansas legislators. Seeking positions on school boards or taking on voluntary leadership roles like being a library board member can translate into additional leadership experience and expanded opportunities for women, their families, and their communities. It is important to remember your voice counts and should be heard!