



Rock Island County
321 W 2nd Ave. Milan, IL
(309) 756-9978
Mon-Fri 8am - 4 pm
(closed 12 - 12:30 pm)

Henry/Stark Counties
358 Front St. Galva, IL
(309) 932-3447
Mon, Wed, Fri 8 am - 4 pm
(closed 12 - 12:30 pm)

Mercer County
910 13th St. Viola, IL
(309) 871-5032
Tues, Wed, Thur. 8 am - 4 pm
(closed 12 - 12:30 pm)

We will be closed on Labor Day, Monday, September 6, 2021. Regular hours will return Sept 7.

Building a Healthy Immune System

Jenna Smith, IL Extension Nutrition & Wellness Educator

Avoiding illness has been on our minds lately, especially over the last 18 months. A healthy immune system helps protect us from becoming ill, but the question is: Can we strengthen our own immune system? The short answer is yes. However, it's important to note that no single food or healthy lifestyle behavior can prevent illness. Rather you can only support your immune system by engaging in a variety of healthy lifestyle behaviors.

How our immune system works

Our immune system is quite complex! We were born with innate immunity, the part of the immune system with physical barriers, such as skin, sweat, and the sneeze and cough reflex, to prevent foreign substances from entering the body. If the antigen (foreign substance that triggers an immune response) passes through the innate level, it goes to the acquired or adaptive level. This is where our B-cells are triggered to make antibodies, which with the help from our T-cells, locks onto antigens and destroys them. (B-cells and T-cells are immune cells called lymphocytes made in the bone marrow.) Antibodies can be developed naturally in response to an infection or are developed in a response to a vaccine. Antibodies usually stay in our bodies in case we must fight the same antigen again. However, as immunity may begin to wear off, or as certain viruses can have different strains, such as influenza (also known as the flu), we may need a new vaccine or booster each year.

Eat a healthy diet

Certain vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and probiotics play a critical role in immune function. Eating a variety of foods like poultry, seafood, dark leafy greens, citrus fruits, berries, yogurt, whole grains, and nuts may help foster a healthy digestive tract and immune system. While there are a plethora of herbal remedies and supplements touting immune support, there isn't much evidence that any of these products do any good. Save your money and instead focus on a healthy balance of nutrient-rich foods, adequate sleep, physical activity and managed stress.



Engage in other healthy lifestyle behaviors

Regular physical activity helps to regulate the immune system. Aim for at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity five days a week and two or more days a week of muscle-strengthening exercises. Sleep is also an essential component to a healthy immune system. During sleep, the body releases cytokines to fight infection and inflammation. Without adequate sleep, the body produces fewer cytokines making you more susceptible to illness. Lastly, when we're stressed, the immune system's ability to fight off antigens is reduced. Managing stress isn't easy, but eating well, being physically active, getting adequate sleep, spending time with friends or family, prioritizing tasks, and perhaps getting help from a qualified mental health professional are all strategies to reduce stress levels. While you can't always prevent illness from occurring, you can take steps to give your immune system what it needs to do its job.

Join us Sept 9th to learn more!

To learn more about how you support a healthy immune system, register to attend our free webinar: "Healthy Behaviors for a Healthy Immune System" Sept 9 at 10 AM.

Register at go.illinois.edu/DiscoverWellness



Encourage Volunteering in your family

Judy Schmidt, 4-H Educator

Volunteering together can be a great way for families to spend time with each other. Additionally, volunteering as a family has been shown to significantly impact the amount teens volunteer. America's Promise found that 81% of teens who had one adult family member or role model who volunteered reported volunteering themselves (Child Trends, 2006).

If volunteering is new to your family, be sure to take some time to discuss each other's interests and what you might be interested in doing. Take time to learn about some of the needs in your community from your local schools, libraries, animal shelters, non-profits, and park districts.

Once you learn about some local needs, brainstorm ways you could help. Be sure to think about the time you have available, the abilities and interests of your family members, and the logistics of the project you would like to help with. Once you have identified and made a plan for your project, make sure to carry it out. For more specifics on how to get your family involved in volunteering, check out the "Volunteering: A learning opportunity" article from Minnesota Extension.



4-H Has Great Volunteer Opportunities!

*Talent is Everywhere.
Opportunity is Not.*

Volunteer for 4-H to make sure our local youth have great opportunities to succeed!!

Become a 4-H Club Leader!

Consider starting a 4-H Club of your own with 5 or more youth. Share your time and talents as a 4-H Club leader and help prepare youth for their future! 4-H clubs generally meet once a month and are open to boys and girls ages 8 to 18 (4-H Cloverbuds is for ages 5-7). At meetings, 4-H members can work on projects, give presentations, have a lesson, plan community service projects, and prepare for their summer 4-H fair exhibit opportunities. It's a great way for parents or grandparents to foster the growth and development of their own kids/grandkids while creating a great learning environment for other youth in their community.

Lead a 4-H Special Interest (SPIN) Club!

Do you have a special talent - fishing, sewing, cooking, crafts, science, Legos, robotics - that you would like to share with youth in your community? Sign up to lead a 4-H SPIN Club! They meet 6 or more times to give youth the chance to develop skills in a specific topic area as they complete hands-on projects.

**For these and other 4-H Volunteer Opportunities, contact Jennifer Peterson, 4-H Educator at: 217-300-7348
Email: jpetersn@illinois.edu**

ONLINE MASTER GARDENER TRAINING STARTS IN SEPTEMBER

This fall, take your love of gardening to the next level by becoming an Illinois Master Gardener. Training is available through two online options - self-paced or hybrid with live sessions.



The hybrid course: September 14 - November 30. It includes 12 weeks of online materials and live sessions on Tuesday mornings. The live sessions can be accessed remotely or in person at a local Extension office. [Register by Sept 7th @go.illinois.edu/MGHybridTraining](https://go.illinois.edu/MGHybridTraining)

The self-paced course: September 27 - December 31. This online, self-guided course can be completed anytime of day or night. Set aside about 4 hours per week for videos, reading manual and completing quizzes and the training will be completed in 14 weeks. [Register by Sept 13 @go.illinois.edu/MGOnlineTraining2021](https://go.illinois.edu/MGOnlineTraining2021)

Master Gardeners get to share their knowledge and experiences volunteering in their community. Here are a few examples of Master Gardener volunteer projects:

- Create and maintain demonstration gardens.
- Conduct gardening programs for school-age children, senior citizens or disabled persons.
- Perform home-based garden research testing new varieties or gardening techniques.
- Participate in informational booths, clinics or speakers bureaus.
- Give talks or classes to groups interested in horticulture.
- Answer telephone questions at the County Extension Office.
- Assist in the production of newsletters, web pages or handbooks.
- Help to mentor new Master Gardeners.

Feeding My Baby

from cradle to table

New parents faced with the responsibility of caring for a baby often wonder how often to feed a newborn, when to wean babies from breastmilk or formula, when to introduce baby to solid foods, and whether homemade baby food is better than store-bought.

Babies may not come with a care manual, but Feeding My Baby, a comprehensive website developed by educators at University of Illinois Extension, delivers a collection of best practices for navigating feeding milestones so that any new parent can feed their baby with confidence at every stage.

“We know that parents have a lot to figure out,” says Jenna Smith, nutrition and wellness educator with Illinois Extension. “It can be overwhelming for tired and busy new parents to sort through the multitude of resources available, so we’ve done the work to make that process easier.”

From food allergies to baby-led weaning, Illinois Extension’s Feeding My Baby website offers practical advice about nutritional needs and healthy feeding habits for babies. Parents can find trusted answers to common questions about feeding infants and learn about a variety of baby feeding topics, including:

- Moving to solid foods
- Preventing choking
- Introducing new foods
- Making and storing homemade baby food
- Identifying possible food allergies
- Understanding baby-led weaning
- Encouraging healthy eating habits

Parents and caregivers visit the site at go.illinois.edu/FeedingMyBaby

WHAT ARE POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (PCES)?

James McCombs, SNAP-Ed Educator

PCES provide relationships and environments that are steady, safe, and nurturing. The CDC recommends the following for parents/caregivers to provide children PCES:



- **Establish a routine.** Children feel secure and thrive when the environment is structured for them.
- **Praise your child when she does something right.** The more you praise a behavior, the more likely it is your child will behave the same way again.
- **Pay attention to your child when he is trying to communicate with you.** Giving him your full attention will make him feel like you care about what he has to say.
- **Set aside time each day to talk and play with your child.** Creating a special time lets your child know she is important and strengthens the bond between the two of you.

You can learn more on the CDC webpage on [Creating Positive Childhood Experiences](#).

Sign up for these helpful and take charge of your health!



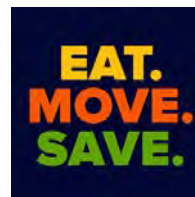
Find Food IL Map

Visit the site at: go.illinois.edu/ILFoodMap

To help Illinois residents and families meet their basic food needs, University of Illinois Extension launched a new Illinois community food map that allows individuals to search by Illinois zip code for all food resources in that area.

Sign-Up for the EAT.MOVE.SAVE. Healthy Text Program!

Choose ONE of three ways to sign up to get 1-2 text messages per week! *Text message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to unsubscribe at any time.*



Use a smartphone camera to scan and sign-up with an online form.

OR

If you live in Rock Island or Mercer County:
Text "rockisland7" to (833) 369-2916

If you live in Henry or Stark Counties
Text "henry7" to (833) 369-2916

Check out these FREE online workshops



Four Seasons of Gardening: Garden Tool Maintenance, Sept 14, 1:30 p.m.

Make gardening less of a chore by maintaining your equipment. Sharp, rust-free tools are easier on the body and make whatever task is at hand quicker to finish. Horticulture Educator Richard Hentschel will cover care for hand tools and small engine equipment commonly used in the garden and home landscape.

Register at go.illinois.edu/fourseasons

Other topics in the series include:

The Nuts and Boles of Tree Identification, Oct 19, 1:30 p.m.

Gain confidence in your tree ID abilities and learn how to recognize tree species based on the size, shape, and appearance of tree parts and their scientific names.

Register at go.illinois.edu/fourseasons



Soils, Climate, and Carbon: Everyday Environment, Sept. 9, 1 pm

Carbon storage is a hot topic. Some soils contain huge amounts of carbon, mostly in the form of organic matter. Soils also have the ability to store additional amounts of carbon quickly, but can just as easily lose it. Extension Educator Duane Friend discusses why Midwest soils contain large amounts of organic matter, changes that have occurred over the last 150 years, and ways that carbon, in the form of organic matter, can be increased in these soils.

Register at: go.illinois.edu/SoilsEverydayEnvironment



A monthly webinar series to help you learn how to save on food expenses

Healthy Cents, 2nd Mondays on Zoom September - December 2021, 5:30 - 6:30 pm Topics Include:

- Making Healthy Choices on a Budget (Sept 13)
- Decreasing Food Expenses Oct 11)
- Developing a Food Budget (Nov 8)
- Planning a Meal & Food Shopping on a Budget (Dec 13)

Register at go.illinois.edu/healthycentsrockisland

Making Healthy Choices on a Budget (Sept 13)

Extension educators cover making healthy choices on a budget. Learn more about: What is Healthy Food? How can you afford it? How can you smart shop for fruits and vegetables?



Keys for Embracing Aging Series

This free series is designed to help aging adults develop strategies for taking care of themselves through the years. Each session is from 10 - 11 am (CST).

Register at go.illinois.edu/KeysforAging

September 9, 10 am | Know Your Numbers

Certain health numbers can save and extend your life. These numbers are associated with cholesterol, triglycerides, blood pressure, blood sugar, body mass index (BMI), and waist circumference. A lifestyle including regular visits to a health-care provider, proper nutrition, and physical activity promote these numbers and contribute to healthy aging throughout the lifespan.

September 16 | Stress Management

Learning what causes stress and how to manage it in positive ways helps you cope and live a more balanced, healthy life.

September 23 | Financial Affairs

Explore good financial management strategies.

September 30 | Sleep

Learn about the importance of sleep and tips and habits to help you achieve it.

October 7 | Taking Time for You

Taking time for you is good for your mind, body, and soul.