

## WELLNESS MINISTRIES

### MIND, BODY, SPIRIT NEWSLETTER Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness

October 2025, Volume 10, Issue 10

#### WELLNESS IS A JUSTICE ISSUE

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#### REFLECTION - We must share what we know and not remain silent.

We are living in a time when misinformation and disinformation about health issues are spreading rapidly through social media. People are becoming increasingly confused and worried as once-trusted sources now ignore science-based facts. Mistrust has led to vaccine hesitancy.

If those of us who are part of the more than three generations that have benefited from vaccines and understand the reality don't speak up and share resources to help others navigate this confusion, we become part of the problem.

We must speak up and become part of the solution, just as others have done before us.

#### WELLNESS MINISTRIES FOCUS & TIMELY RESOURCES

**UCC Wellness Ministries offers information on acetaminophen and vaccines,  
and provides helpful resources.**

***Wellness is a Justice Issue***

**September 24, 2025**

UCC Wellness Ministries is committed to supporting the health, safety, and well-being of all congregations and their community neighbors by providing science-based data and evidence-based solutions, and by working to ensure equitable access to vaccines, medications, and healthcare services. We strive to prevent a return to a time seventy-five years ago, when many children died or became disabled because vaccines were not widely available.

For over two centuries, God has blessed medical researchers with the ability to learn about viruses and develop ways to safeguard humanity. As Christians, we are called to care for one another by sharing accurate information and resources with those trying to decide how to balance their personal freedom with the collective responsibility of fighting infectious diseases.

Vaccines are among the safest and most effective tools for stopping the spread of preventable diseases and protecting public health. Since antibiotics are ineffective against viruses, vaccination remains the best way to prevent viral infections and stop viruses from spreading.

### Background information.

In the 1940s and 1950s, many countries, including the U.S., established national immunization programs that required vaccinations for children, initially for smallpox and later for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT), and polio.

Generations raised in the 1950s and 1960s saw the advantages of mandated vaccines, with fewer of their siblings and friends getting sick or dying. As adults, they followed medical advice and vaccinated their children, and the next generation did the same. Today, at least three generations have experienced the benefits of vaccination programs.

Annual updates to childhood and adult immunization schedules, based on medical research, provide guidance for healthcare providers related to new vaccines, recommendations for use, and updates to existing protocols. Unlike childhood vaccines, which are often required for school entry, some adolescent and adult vaccines are usually not mandated.

Unfortunately, confusing messages are being spread about the availability and use of vaccines for children, adults, and the most medically vulnerable among us. This confusion has led to fewer people choosing vaccination, even though this increases their risk of illness and death.

### How to assist others

When individuals have the freedom to make health care choices, they seek a reliable source of information. Currently, the information varies from state to state and region to region. In addition, disinformation complicates vaccine issues and leads to individuals' hesitancy in getting vaccinated.

### To learn the latest recommendations:

- Call the office of your primary care provider
- Call or check the website of your county and/or state Department of Public Health
- Go to the website of one or more of the professional medical organizations and view the evidence-based information that doctors are sharing with their families and in their practices:
  - American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) The American Academy of Pediatrics provides pediatricians with an evidence-based immunization schedule that includes updated guidance for children and adolescents from birth to age 18.
  - American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) [www.aafp.org/](http://www.aafp.org/) Family practice physicians may work with family members across the lifespan. The AAFP [Announces Fall Immunization Recommendations, Reaffirming Commitment to Vaccine Safety and Public Health](#)
  - The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org) offers updated clinical guidance regarding the use of acetaminophen and vaccines during pregnancy against COVID-19, influenza, and RSV.
  - American College of Physicians (ACP) [www.acponline.org](http://www.acponline.org) Physicians mainly working with adults aim to improve adult immunization and patient outcomes. ACP encourages adults to get the recommended vaccinations from trusted sources that develop clinical guidance using transparent, evidence-based methods and safeguards against conflicts of interest. [Resources for adult immunizations.](#)

- The American Medical Association (AMA) provides guidance about vaccines at [www.ama-assn.org/topics/vaccines](http://www.ama-assn.org/topics/vaccines)

Materials at these sites are updated as new information and vaccines become available. However, don't rely on any site for specific, professional medical advice for your or your family's health. Do not use it as a substitute for advice from a physician or other qualified healthcare provider. For medical concerns, including decisions about vaccinations, medications, and treatments, always consult your doctor or seek emergency help if needed.

- Check with your insurer. On Sept. 18, 2025, AHIP, the national trade association representing the insurance industry, said health plans would commit to “maintaining and ensuring affordable access to vaccines”. However, they didn’t commit to how long that would happen.
- Avoid online offers of preventative and curative substances to treat viruses. Don’t purchase before checking their benefit with your health care provider.

Please be in contact with [WellnessMinistries@UCC.org](mailto:WellnessMinistries@UCC.org) if you have any questions. We will update this information as needed in our monthly newsletter [Mind, Body, Spirit - Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness](#).

Shalom,

*UCC Wellness Ministries Leadership Team*

[WellnessMinistries@UCC.org/](mailto:WellnessMinistries@UCC.org/)

### ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE UCC CALENDAR - For October

- Thurs. Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3:30 pm ET - [Disability Justice in Congregational Contexts Part I: What is Disability and What is Ableism?](#)
- Tues. Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> 3:30 pm ET - [Understanding Gender: Beyond the Binary](#)
- Thurs. October 9, 3:30 pm ET - [Disability Justice in Congregational Contexts Part II: What is Disability and What is Ableism?](#)
- Sun. Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> - Access Sunday/Disabilities Awareness Week - This is a celebration of the gifts persons bring to the church community and the joys of being in an accessible community. For more information, contact [Sarah Lund, Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice](#). Or go to [UCC Disabilities Ministry Access Sunday](#)
- Mon. Oct 13<sup>th</sup> - Indigenous Peoples Day - is a national holiday in the U.S. The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) serves as the voice for American Indian people within the UCC. Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and collaborated with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak communities in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska. Today, there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Additionally, CAIM aims to be a resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations. Contact [Libby Fairchild, Interim Exec. Director](#) for more information.

- Sun. Oct 19<sup>th</sup> - Laity Sunday - Celebrate the ministry of all those who assist with programs of your Wellness Ministries.

#### LINKS TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS - For November

- **American Diabetes Month** dedicates efforts to raise awareness and support those affected by diabetes. [American Diabetes Assoc.](#) provides free downloads and print flyers, a toolkit, and a risk test in English and Spanish.
- **National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month** aims to heighten awareness about Alzheimer's disease and show support for the more than 6.2 million Americans living with it. [Alzheimer's Foundation of America.](#) Offers free general information about Alzheimer's Disease and healthy aging. Educational videos covering a variety of topics are available on-line.
- **COPD Awareness Month:** A time to raise awareness and support over 16 million people living with COPD. [The American Lung Asso.](#) provides free to download and print general information about COPD and other lung diseases. [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#) provides educational and fact sheets in English and Spanish. They also offer a free download of a Caregivers Toolkit.
- **Great American Smoke-out** provides a platform for individuals, communities, and organizations to come together in the fight against tobacco addiction. [The American Cancer Society](#) provides [Smoke-out Tools and Resources](#) that may be downloaded for free in English and Spanish.

#### UPDATE FROM THE UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES LEADERSHIP TEAM -

We meet as a group monthly. And as needed, in small discussion groups of members who want to explore a topic in more detail.

- The sub-group discussion of *Who do we say we are?* continues. We welcome your input.
- Wellness Ministries is the only Team among the National Ministries that integrates spirit, mind, and body. A subgroup remains attentive to how we can offer specific information that may assist congregations and the neighborhoods they serve.
- We welcome any and all ideas. We want to assist you. E-mail us [WellnessMinistries@UCC.org](mailto:WellnessMinistries@UCC.org)

#### CONNECTING AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Ministry is often lonely work. You have a network of colleagues who will support you and your ministry. Connect with us on:

- Facebook - [Wellness Ministries UCC](#)
- Instagram - [wellness.ministries.ucc](#)
- Linked-In - [Wellness Ministries UCC](#)

Please send information to post or questions to Debbie Ringen, MS, FCN, [wellnessministries@ucc.org](mailto:wellnessministries@ucc.org)

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.