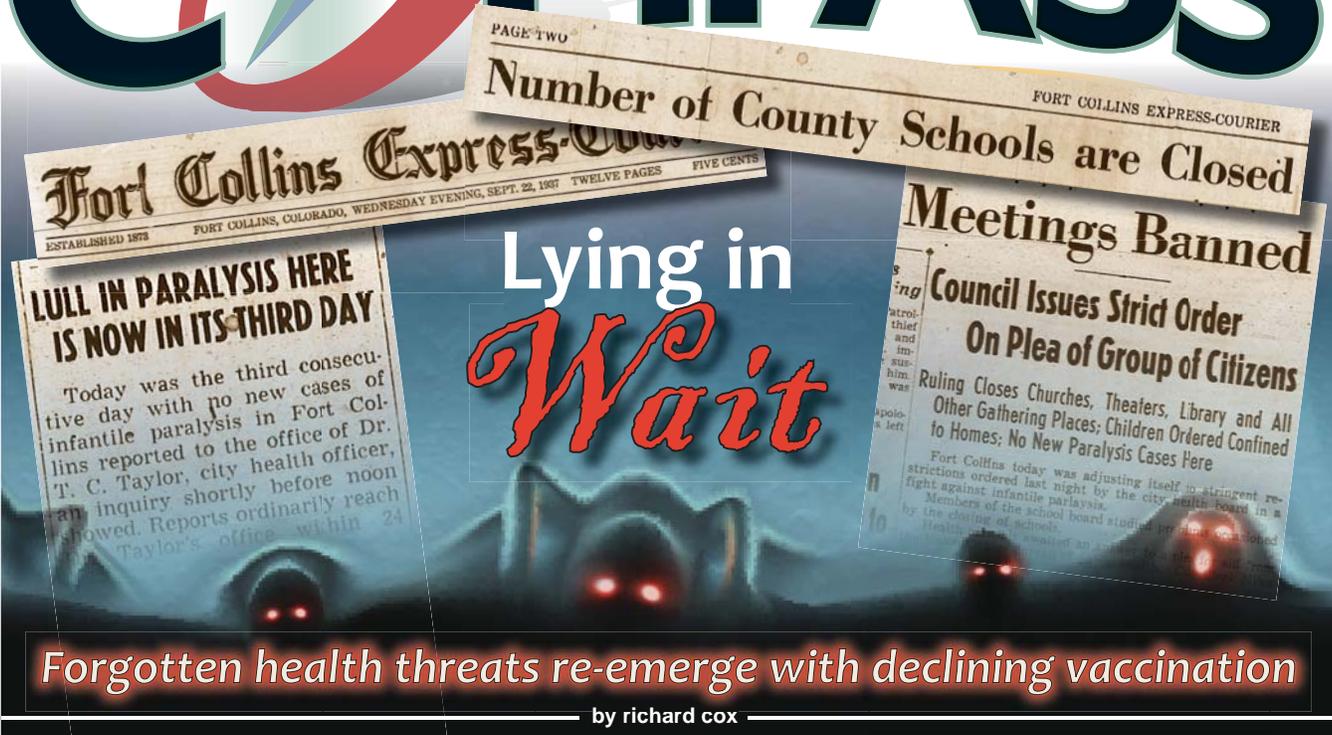


COMPASS



Forgotten health threats re-emerge with declining vaccination

by richard cox

It was the first week of fall 1937 in Fort Collins, and a chilly wind blew through town, signaling a change in season. Anyone who sought warmth in theaters, clubs or churches, however, found the doors locked. The city's health board had ordered nearly all public meeting places closed in the wake of a statewide polio epidemic that had sickened 42 area residents, killing three and leaving as many as 11 paralyzed. City schools also were closed. A week and a half later as the outbreak subsided, the ban was lifted and schools and businesses finally were allowed to reopen.

Fort Collins never experienced another polio scare on that level, but the disease—sometimes referred to as infantile paralysis—haunted the community for years. In 1954, the year before the Salk polio vaccine went into widespread use, sporadic cases of polio still were being diagnosed in area children. What's more, nearly every month that year also saw local cases of measles and mumps. And in 1953—when the population of Fort Collins was less than 15,000—a springtime outbreak of measles sickened nearly 500 city residents.

Such scenarios are almost unthinkable today. Most parents have never lived through a major outbreak of a communicable childhood disease that can cripple or kill. And because of that, we may risk letting down our guard and allowing those diseases to return.

So what happened between then and now to make these childhood diseases largely vanish from our community? Vaccines.

By the 1960s, childhood immunizations were beginning to eliminate or greatly reduce the incidence of communicable diseases that were once a rite of passage for many children—and sometimes the cause of death and disability for others.

Polio was wiped out in this country by 1979. By the 1970s, cases of pertussis (whooping cough) had declined by more than 99 percent from their peak decades earlier. Measles and rubella were declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2002 and 2009, respectively.

"I've been in pediatrics for almost 30 years, and when I was in training, I was seeing 15 to 20 children a year with Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b) or streptococcal pneumonia who died or had devastating illness," says pediatrician Dr. John Guenther of the Fort Collins Youth Clinic. "Those who survived often had severe neurological damage. Fortunately I don't see those diseases very often anymore. That's because the vaccines have proven to be so very effective."

Vaccines are only effective if people use them, however. And many deadly diseases may be forgotten, but they're not gone. They're merely lying in wait. As more parents have skipped shots for their kids, and vaccination rates have dipped, deadly illnesses such as measles and pertussis have come roaring back in this country.

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	SPECIAL PULL-OUT				
	Health Insurance Help				
	Health District				

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meetings Board meetings are usually held monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. at the Health District office. The public is welcome; call 224-5209 to confirm meeting dates and times.

programs and services Cholesterol and Blood Pressure Testing
 Dental Connections
 Family Dental Clinic
 HealthInfoSource.com
A partnership with Larimer County Department of Health & Environment
 Healthy Mind Matters
Mental Health & Substance Abuse Issues & Solutions
 Integrated Primary Care/ Mental Health Program
A partnership with Salud Family Health Centers and Family Medicine Center
 Larimer Health Connect
Connect for Health Colorado and CHP+/Medicaid Outreach Project, Prescription Assistance
 Mental Health Connections
A partnership with SummitStone Health Partners
 Step Free from Tobacco

Give BEETS a chance

Versatile veggie is packed with flavor and nutrients

by **susan skog**



While many of us shunned the mushy, canned beets of old, today's beets have made a trendy comeback after being touted as a super-smart, tasty food choice.

Beets deliver great nutritional bang for your buck and can be irresistibly delicious, whether juiced, grilled, broiled or steamed, says registered dietitian nutritionist Nicole Eckman.

"Beets have so much to offer. They are hardy, versatile, easy to grow and are high in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory nutrients. They also have tons of B vitamins," says Eckman, founder of Enlightenment Nutrition Consulting.

The other huge thing: beets contain high amounts of betaine, a nutrient that promotes liver health. And don't toss the greens; they're high in iron and can be sautéed with just about anything.

So whether you're drizzling balsamic vinegar onto grilled beets or adding grated beets to a carrot and raisin salad, know you're giving yourself a boost of feel-good minerals and vitamins. There's nothing mushy about that! ✨

Recipe

Oven-roasted Root Vegetables

Ingredients:
 1 large butternut squash (1 1/2 to 2 pounds), halved, seeded and peeled
 3 large Yukon gold potatoes (1 1/2 pounds), scrubbed
 1 bunch medium beets (about 1 1/2 pounds), scrubbed and tops trimmed
 1 medium red onion
 2 large parsnips (about 8 ounces)
 1 head garlic, cloves separated, and peeled (about 16)
 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
 Freshly ground black pepper

Directions
 Place 2 baking sheets in the oven and preheat to 425 degrees F.
 Cut all the vegetables into 1 1/2-inch pieces. Cut the onions through the base core to keep some of the layers in chunky pieces. Toss all the vegetables with garlic, olive oil and salt in a large bowl. Season generously with pepper.
 Carefully remove the heated baking sheets from the oven, brush or drizzle with olive oil. Divide the vegetables evenly between the 2 pans, spreading them out to ensure they don't steam while roasting. Roast the vegetables until tender and golden brown, stirring occasionally, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING:



What everyone needs to know

by kathy hayes

Electronic cigarettes look like cigarettes, glow when inhaled and produce an aerosol commonly referred to by the industry as “vapor,” not smoke. They also pose many of the same risks as cigarettes—and are potentially poisonous in the hands of small children.

What are e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are the most common form of electronic nicotine delivery systems, or ENDS, which are smokeless, battery-powered devices used to inhale aerosolized nicotine liquid, or e-juice. ENDS come in many shapes and sizes and go by such names as vape pens, electronic hookahs, personal vaporizers and hookah pens. Inside the device is a nicotine cartridge that holds a flavored liquid and a heating unit that turns the liquid into an aerosol that is inhaled by the user and exhaled into the environment.

Who uses them?

Many adult smokers have turned to vaping, thinking that it will help them quit smoking. Research is underway to examine potential links between smoking cessation and e-cigarettes; however, no conclusive evidence exists that proves that e-smoking devices can help people quit smoking. Other products have been approved for safety and effectiveness in helping people quit tobacco use.

Exposure to e-liquids can cause shortness of breath, elevated heart rate, nausea and seizures. As little as 1 teaspoon can kill a small child.

~ Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Center

From 2013 to 2014, e-cigarette use, or vaping, among middle school and high school students tripled.

“Most young people know that smoking is bad for them, but may use e-cigarettes because they think they aren’t harmful or are a better alternative to cigarettes,” says Larimer County health educator Jan Moraczewski. “There’s a great deal we don’t yet know about e-cigarettes and vaping, but we do know they can be dangerous, especially to youth whose brains are not fully developed until age 25.”



As high-tech devices, ENDS marketing appeals to the young, technology-driven generation. “Terms like ‘e-hookah’ or ‘vaporizer’ sound less dangerous and more appealing to youth than traditional cigarettes,” says Christa Timmerman, health educator with Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. “Additionally, children and teens are enticed by the many sweet flavors and friendly marketing of e-liquids.”

What do you inhale?

The FDA doesn’t regulate ENDS and e-liquids, which may contain propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, flavoring agents and other potentially toxic chemicals. “Since they are not regulated, you don’t know what chemicals or how much nicotine is in the e-juice or aerosol you’re inhaling,” says Timmerman.

E-cigarettes don’t produce secondhand smoke. But new measurements have shown that the aerosol contains ultrafine particles that enter the lungs and heavy metals that may be harmful to bystanders.

What are the health risks?

One of the greatest concerns about e-cigarettes is their popularity with young people. Youths who vape are inhaling nicotine, an addictive substance that is especially harmful to children’s and teens’ developing brains.

Very small children are attracted to the bright colors and sweetened flavors of the e-juice and may pick up a cartridge lying around—with potentially tragic consequences.

“E-liquid bottles are not required to have a childproof cap,” says Timmerman. “Kids can open these bottles and drink them, or they can absorb the e-liquid through their skin.”

In the last year, the Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Center has seen a dramatic rise in the number of children—most of them under 5—who have been poisoned by e-cigarettes or e-liquids. Exposure to the nicotine-laced liquid can cause shortness of breath, elevated heart rate, nausea and seizures. As little as one teaspoon can kill a small child.

Using or being around e-cigarettes is unsafe for pregnant women, too. According to a World Health Organization report, e-cigarette use by a pregnant woman poses a significant threat to the fetus. The devices also increase the exposure of bystanders to nicotine and a number of toxicants, the report adds.

For information about the Health District’s Step Free from Tobacco program, visit healthdistrict.org/quitsmoking or call (970) 224-5209.

E-cigarette laws and policies

In Colorado, it is illegal to sell Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) to anyone under 18.

Fort Collins has banned the use of ENDS in businesses, places of employment, public indoor areas, restaurants, bars, hotels and motels, outside dining areas, parks, trails, and city property. In January, the ban will extend to events and festivals and a downtown zone that includes Old Town and Oak Street Plaza.

Poudre School District prohibits the use of tobacco products and ENDS on all PSD property.

Pertussis, a respiratory disease that can be life-threatening for infants, has been increasing in recent years. In 2012, a pertussis epidemic was declared nationally and in Colorado. Cases in Larimer County more than quadrupled.

Measles outbreaks also have been occurring more frequently in the U.S., with last year recording the highest number of cases in more than a decade. The highly contagious disease—whose complications include pneumonia, inflammation of the brain and death—made headlines earlier this year when a major outbreak was traced to Disneyland in California. That outbreak sickened more than 300 people and spread to a half-dozen states, as well as Canada and Mexico.

“After the measles outbreak in California, many people were shocked that these diseases were still around,” Guenther says. “They are, and they always have been.”

Although officially stamped out in the U.S., diseases such as measles and rubella continue to rage in other parts of the world. Foreign visitors, as well as travelers returning from abroad, can bring infections into this country, where they take hold among unvaccinated children.

“Immunization rates have been declining for the past 10 years,” says Nancy Tippin, a registered nurse and supervisor of the immunization program at the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

After years of steadily increasing, childhood vaccination rates have stalled and in some places declined. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colorado ranks last in the nation in the percentage of kindergartners (82 percent) who are vaccinated against measles. A low vaccination rate increases the risk for an outbreak. Poudre School District scores significantly better at 90 percent. The national average is 95 percent.

Children who go unimmunized not only risk illness for themselves, but they also contribute to a reduction in “herd immunity.” Herd immunity is the phenomenon by which high immunization rates in a community provide indirect protection for people who are not immunized, including those who must forego vaccination due to a medical condition. “As you have a decrease in the number of people immunized, it puts everyone at more risk,” says Guenther.

“It used to be that the barriers to getting immunized were financial, or that people didn’t know how,” Tippin says. “Now people think these diseases are no longer a threat and are deciding not to immunize their healthy children. They fear the vaccine more than the disease.”

Concerned over a sensational, but now-discredited study on vaccine side effects, or swayed by unfounded theories on everything from the timing of vaccination to the composition of vaccines, some parents have exercised the “personal belief” exemption to childhood immunization allowed by Colorado law. Colorado is one of 18 states with a personal belief exemption, although a recent change to state law next year will require parents to file statements annually instead of only once.

Vaccines and vaccination schedules are constantly being modified as new research points toward more effective and fine-tuned approaches to protecting children from illness, Tippin and Guenther note. Compared to the past, certain types of vaccines now contain far fewer of the active ingredients—proteins and sugars—designed to provoke an immune response. And single-dose vaccine vials have mostly eliminated the need for preservatives that were of concern to some parents.

As to the timing and number of recommended vaccines for children, Tippin and Guenther say both are designed to offer children maximum immunity to illness at a critical time in their lives.

“There is a timeframe in the first two years of life when children are most at risk for getting the diseases we immunize against,” Guenther explains. “We try to develop immunity before children have significant exposure to those diseases and their devastating effects.”

“It’s sort of ironic,” Tippin says. “We’ve done such a good job in public health that people don’t see the threat of these diseases anymore unless they travel to someplace in the world where they still exist. Nobody wants to go back to that time again, when children died or were disabled by vaccine-preventable disease.”

After years of steadily increasing, childhood vaccination rates have stalled and in some places declined.

Vaccines: Not Just Kids’ Stuff



Immunization doesn’t end with childhood. Adults need a variety of vaccinations at various times in their lives.

Influenza (flu) – for all adults on an annual basis.

Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis – a one-time booster for pertussis (Tdap), and then a tetanus booster (Td) every 10 years.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) – for men and women up to age 26 who have not already been vaccinated.

Zoster (shingles) – for adults 60 and older.

Pneumococcal – for adults 65 and older and all other adults with certain medical or lifestyle factors.

Hepatitis A and B – for certain adults depending on certain medical, occupational or lifestyle factors.

Meningococcal – for certain adults depending on certain medical and other factors. Recommended for college students living in dorms as well as military recruits.

Varicella and measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) – for adults not already vaccinated in childhood.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an online quiz that helps you determine which vaccines you need: www2a.cdc.gov/nip/adultimsched.

Immunization resources

▶ **American Academy of Pediatrics**
aap.org/immunization/

▶ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
cdc.gov/vaccines/

Talk with your health-care provider if you have questions about your child’s recommended immunizations.

Concerned about cost?

Recommended vaccinations for children and adults are covered at no cost under most private insurance plans, Medicare Part B and Medicaid. Confirm coverage with your health-care provider. In addition, the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program offers vaccines at no cost to eligible uninsured or underinsured children through participating doctors or clinics.

HEALTH INSURANCE

No health insurance?

Many people have discovered there are plans they can afford that they never knew about! Remember: Plan providers can't deny or charge more for coverage due to pre-existing conditions.

Don't miss out!

- **Health insurance plans are available for different needs and budgets**—and they change every year.
- **Check with an experienced guide to see how low the cost can be. Lots of people have been surprised when their guide helped them find options for affordable plans they hadn't discovered on their own.** Special new discounts make health insurance affordable for many more people!
- **It's a relief to have health insurance.** It may change—or save—your life.
- **Most people in Larimer County now have coverage—join them!** A new survey shows that 94% of us are covered by health insurance. See if it can work for you, too!
- **It's the law.** Most people are now required by law to have health insurance or else pay a fee, and **the fee increases yearly.** Get something for your money that protects your family.
- **We can help.** Larimer Health Connect can **help you** determine your options and get signed up.



Don't miss the January 31 deadline!
Open enrollment begins Nov. 1, 2015,
and ends Jan. 31, 2016.

Have it but need to renew?

REVIEW before you RENEW—It's IMPORTANT!

If you bought a health plan through the **Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace**, your plan renews soon for 2016.

CHECK to see if your plan still meets your needs—it might be a MISTAKE to let your plan renew automatically. Don't get stuck with a plan that isn't right for you.

- **Your plan costs may change.** Monthly premium and other costs might change—check! Some people who didn't check last year found themselves with unexpectedly higher rates.
- **There may be a plan that costs less and works better for your needs.** Your total costs could be very different depending on which plan you choose. A guide may be able to help you find better options. Nationally, more than one in four people who qualify for lower costs don't receive them—largely because they aren't aware of key information.
- **Your situation may have changed.** Be sure your income and family information is up to date.
- **We can help** you review options. Do it between **NOVEMBER 1 and DECEMBER 15** in order to keep continuous coverage.



Don't miss the December 15 deadline!
If you don't make a choice by then, you may be **automatically re-enrolled in your current plan,** but you could be surprised at how much the price or features may change.



“I am turning 30. I take care of myself; I eat right and exercise daily. I also put off getting insurance because I figured, “I'm a ‘strapping’ young man.” In the midst of pondering the possibility of having a backup plan, I fell off my bike. **HARD.** My lesson was that it's much easier taking care of business when you're not having to take care of yourself...”

~ Larimer Health Connect client

“I had heard wonderful things, but I thought I would not qualify. My apprehension was unfounded... I left my appointment from Larimer Health Connect knowing more about insurance than before. Even if you think you don't qualify—you may! I did!”

~ Larimer Health Connect client

Health District
OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY



LARIMER HEALTH CONNECT

Your LOCAL resource. All appointments are FREE.

For an appointment for in-person assistance, call
(970) 472-0444 or visit **larimerhealthconnect.org**

Free local help

Larimer Health Connect is a free service that helps people find the best options for health insurance to meet their family's health needs and budget. It is a project of the Health District of Northern Larimer County, a public special district dedicated to improving the health of our community. Our trained staff provides free, impartial, in-person assistance with new free and lower-cost health insurance plans, including plans from the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace. We can:

- Answer your questions
- Explain how health insurance works, and help you sort through and understand your options so you can make an informed choice that's best for your situation
- Assist with enrollment

We cannot offer advice on what plan to choose. If you need help making a final decision, see the Connect for Health Colorado website for a list of certified brokers.

“Before I came in I was on a plan with very high deductibles. After I converted [to a different plan], my premiums decreased to an affordable level with much more to offer, and much lower deductibles. I have benefitted from having a guide to walk me through the options. Otherwise I would pay a whole lot more and get less.”

~ Larimer Health Connect client

Who we can help

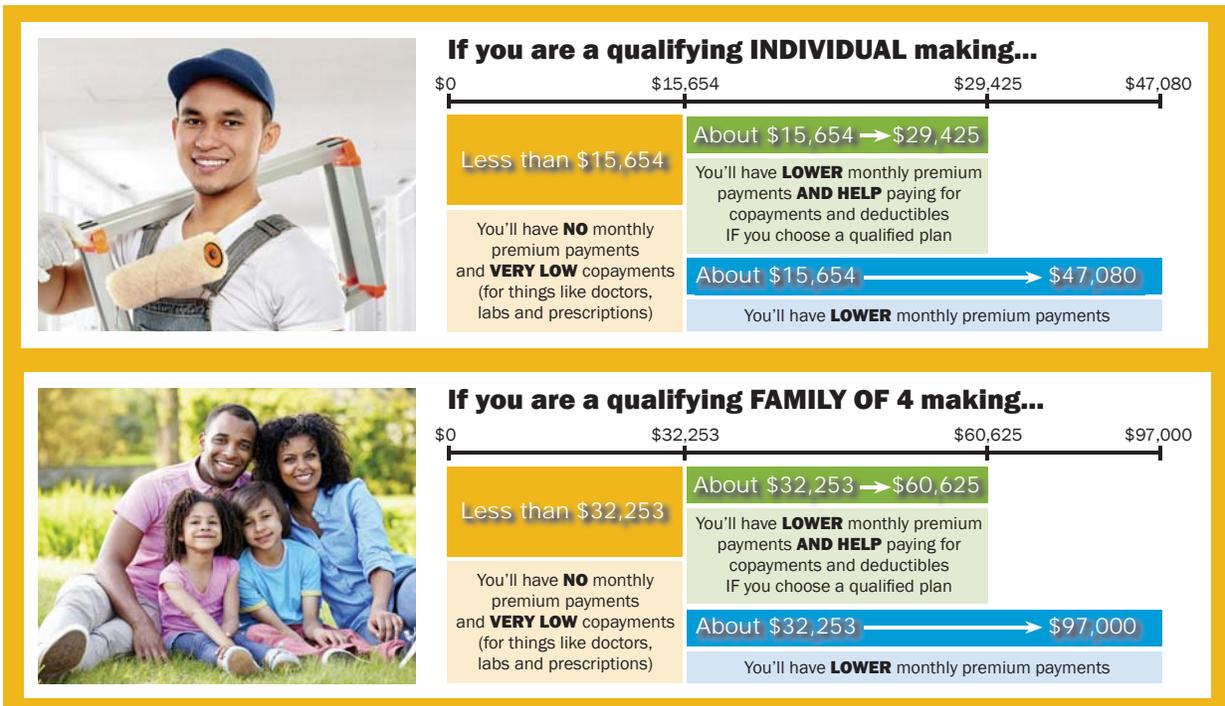
Individuals and families who currently:

- Have no health insurance
- Bought insurance through the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace and need to review their plan before renewing
- Buy their own health insurance
- Have Medicaid or CHP+ and need help with redetermination or reporting changes in income or household size
- Get health insurance from an employer, but the cost for the covered employee is more than 9.5% of household income

Small businesses and nonprofit organizations

- If you are interested in group coverage, contact a certified broker to explore your options; lists are on connectforhealthco.com. If that doesn't work for you, we can help your employees get covered individually—contact us to discuss how.

Discounts may apply to you



“I am shocked that I have qualified for a credit based on my income. Today we have signed up and are paying a quarter of the cost. Today is a GREAT DAY!”

~ Larimer Health Connect client

Get started now

Choosing and signing up for the right health insurance sometimes takes awhile, even if you have help. **Don't put it off—beat the rush!**

If you already have insurance in the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace:

It's important to review your options again. Although it's tempting to let your plan automatically renew, it might not be your best option and may cost you more. (Automatic renewal can happen only if your current plan is still available, you have not aged into Medicare, and Connect for Health Colorado tells you that you qualify for automatic renewal.) **Check again** to see:

- What plans are available to you and which providers
- What help you can get to lower costs

Don't delay—you have only a short time to decide! **If you want our help, call NOW to be sure you can reserve an appointment between November 1 and December 15 in order to keep your coverage continuous in 2016.**

Did you know the average cost of a three-day hospital stay is \$30,000?

Having health coverage can protect you from high, unexpected costs like these.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

If you don't have health insurance or want to check on low-cost options:

Check anytime during the year to see if you might qualify for the lowest-cost plans: Medicaid and Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+). Both programs allow **enrollment year-round**. We can help you determine if you qualify,

enroll, report changes in your income or household size and complete redetermination paperwork.

If those plans don't work for you, we can help you understand the Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace, which offers significant discounts on health insurance for many people. **You can enroll in the Marketplace only during open enrollment (unless you have a life change event—such as marriage or divorce, a new child, loss of other health coverage, some moves—that qualifies you for special enrollment anytime in the year). The next open enrollment period is Nov. 1, 2015 to Jan. 31, 2016.** Start early to be sure you don't miss it!

If you have Medicaid or Medicare:

If you have health insurance from **Medicaid**, and your 12-month renewal date is coming up soon, we can help if you have questions about what you need to do next.

The Marketplace is **not for Coloradans age 65 or older who are eligible for Medicare** or for those looking for supplemental health insurance. If you have questions about Medicare, you can call (970) 495-8560 to talk to a trained Medicare counselor with the Aspen Club at UCHHealth.

If you're not sure what's right for you or have questions, contact us! We can help you sort it out. You can schedule as many free appointments with Larimer Health Connect as you need. We'll work with you until you are covered.

Important dates for 2016 enrollment*

Connect for Health Colorado Marketplace

November 1, 2015: Open enrollment starts; First day you can enroll in a 2016 Marketplace plan

December 15, 2015: Last day to enroll for coverage to start January 1, 2016

January 1, 2016: First day 2016 coverage can start if you enrolled by December 15, 2015

January 31, 2016: 2016 open enrollment ends

If you don't enroll in a plan by Jan. 31, 2016, you can't enroll in Marketplace health insurance for 2016 unless you qualify for a special enrollment period. A special enrollment period is a time outside of open enrollment during which you and your family may be able to sign up for health coverage. In the Marketplace, you qualify for a special enrollment period 60 days following certain life events that involve a change in family status (for example, marriage or birth of a child or loss of other health coverage).

Medicaid, CHP+ and SHOP

Apply any time: There's no limited enrollment period for Medicaid and CHP+. There's also no limited enrollment period for small businesses to enroll in group coverage for their employees. As an employer, you can set your enrollment period for any time of the year.

* Dates as published by Connect for Health Colorado at printing; dates could change.



“Life, at times, throws everybody curve balls. Everyone deserves the opportunity to know that their health matters and they will be cared for in times of need.”

~ Larimer Health Connect client

Good health insurance = more peace of mind

All new lower-cost health plans must include*:

- Visits to the doctor
- Preventive care (including certain tests and shots, often for free)
- Maternity, newborn and pediatric care
- Hospitalization and emergency care
- Prescription drugs and lab services
- Mental health services
- Rehabilitative and habilitative care

* A patient's share of the costs will vary depending on the plan selected.

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What to bring to your appointment

- Home and/or mailing addresses for everyone applying for coverage
- Social Security numbers/cards of each member of the household (If a legal immigrant, please bring your documentation, such as a green card or other official documentation.)
- Photo ID (A passport may be used in place of the birth certificate and photo ID.)
- Birth certificate(s) (an original or certified copy—not the souvenir copy provided by a hospital at birth)
- Information on how you file your taxes
- Employer and income information for each member of the household (for example, wage and tax statements such as pay stubs or W-2 forms)
- If self-employed, a ledger indicating your revenue and expenses (Schedule C from last year's tax filing may be helpful for estimating 2016 income.)
- Information about any other income earned by household members (If you have income from rental property, please bring in a copy of the lease agreement.)
- Your best estimate of what your household income will be in 2016
- Information and policy numbers for health insurance plans currently covering members of the household
- Information about any job-related health insurance that anyone in the household may be able to get, even if they are not enrolled in it
- If anyone in the home is disabled, information about assets and expenses for the household (This may allow you access to additional programs.)
- Names of preferred health-care providers
- Documents verifying your authorized representative (if you choose to have one)
- A valid email address to create an account (If you do not already have an email address for your account, you can sign up for a free Gmail or Yahoo email account.)
- User name and password for PEAK and/or Connect for Health Colorado, if already created**

NOTE: If you have received a Medicaid denial already, you will need the 1B or 5B Case Number to move forward with Connect for Health Colorado. The number can be located on correspondence the Department of Human Services has sent you or by contacting the Larimer County Department of Human Services. Please make sure to bring that number with you to your appointment. If you don't have your number, call us at least two days before your scheduled appointment so we can help track it down.

If you have questions about what to bring, call us at (970) 472-0444.

Options for in-person assistance

Larimer Health Connect - (970) 472-0444; larimerhealthconnect.org
Certified Connect for Health Colorado Assistance Site; services funded by the Health District of Northern Larimer County and grants from Connect for Health Colorado and the Colorado Health Foundation. Appointments available by phone or online. **Limited evening and Saturday hours available by appointment.**

Brokers - Experienced in selling insurance and paid a commission. Brokers certified by Connect for Health Colorado are listed on connectforhealthco.com.

Sign up for health insurance yourself online

Connect for Health Colorado
connectforhealthco.com

Medicaid and CHP+
colorado.gov/PEAK

“Having a real person help me to apply has been of immeasurable value. So many people are afraid to ask for help, and I was one of them—until now. The staff have been friendly, helpful and competent. Thank you!”

~ Larimer Health Connect client

Larimer Health Connect locations

Old Town



144 N. Mason St., Unit 7
Fort Collins

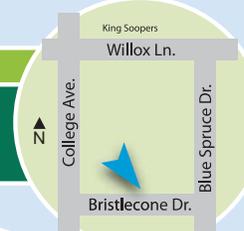
Regular Hours:
M-F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Open Enrollment Hours
(Nov. 1, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016):
M, W, F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
T, Th 8 a.m.–8 p.m.

Occasional Saturday hours will be available. Call (970) 472-0444 or check larimerhealthconnect.org for dates and times.

Appointments strongly encouraged. Walk-ins may be accommodated depending on staff availability.

FC North



Health District
120 Bristlecone Dr.
Fort Collins

By appointment only.

Loveland



Community Life Center
1511 E. 11th St.
Loveland

Open T, W, Th
(Nov. 1, 2015–Jan. 31, 2016)

By appointment only.
Call (970) 472-0444 or check larimerhealthconnect.org for available appointment times.

Additional locations and times may be added throughout Larimer County. Please call (970) 472-0444 or check larimerhealthconnect.org for more information or to schedule an appointment at any of our locations.

Still have questions?

Larimer Health Connect
(970) 472-0444
larimerhealthconnect.org

Connect for Health Colorado
(855) PLANS-4-YOU (855-752-6749)
connectforhealthco.com

Back Pain Sufferers

Rejoice.

Surgery **last step** on path to relief

by lisa marshall

T.J. Tomlin was working in his Greeley yard in the fall when he lifted up on a loaded wheelbarrow and heard an alarming pop in his lower back. By evening, the pain was excruciating. By morning, he couldn't tie his shoes.

"It hurt to do anything," says Tomlin, a 38-year-old college professor. When the pain persisted, he couldn't help but wonder if surgery was in his future. Instead, his primary care physician recommended physical therapy, anti-inflammatory injections and a routine of stretches, core strengthening exercises and massage. "By spring, I felt completely healed," says Tomlin, who was diagnosed with a herniated disc. "I feel so fortunate to have gotten the advice that I did."

Tomlin is among the 80 percent of U.S. adults who suffer low back pain at some point in life. It's the second most common reason people go to the doctor, and among the top reasons they miss work, studies show. The Health District's 2013 Community Health Survey found one in five local residents had low back pain. Many opt for back surgery: Colorado ranks second in the nation for its prevalence and Fort Collins ranks among the top cities, according to the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care. But even back surgeons stress that much can be done without going under the knife.

"The last person you want to see for advice about back pain is a surgeon," says Dr. Vikas Patel, chief of orthopedic spine surgery at the University of Colorado Hospital. "There are many non-surgical spine specialists out there who can help people get better. Often patients don't realize that."

Tomlin's therapist, Silvia Sorensen of Fort Collins Physical Therapy and Sports Center, explains that low back pain is often caused by degeneration of discs, the shock-absorbing pillows between vertebrae. Pressure from sitting, excess weight or heavy lifting often causes tiny cracks to form in the discs over time without us realizing it. Trauma, such as lifting a heavy wheelbarrow, can hasten damage. Once the cracks extend into the nerve-filled outer wall, pain ensues. If the jelly-like fluid inside the disc leaks out, irritating nearby nerves, pain can extend to the leg and joints may also become inflamed.

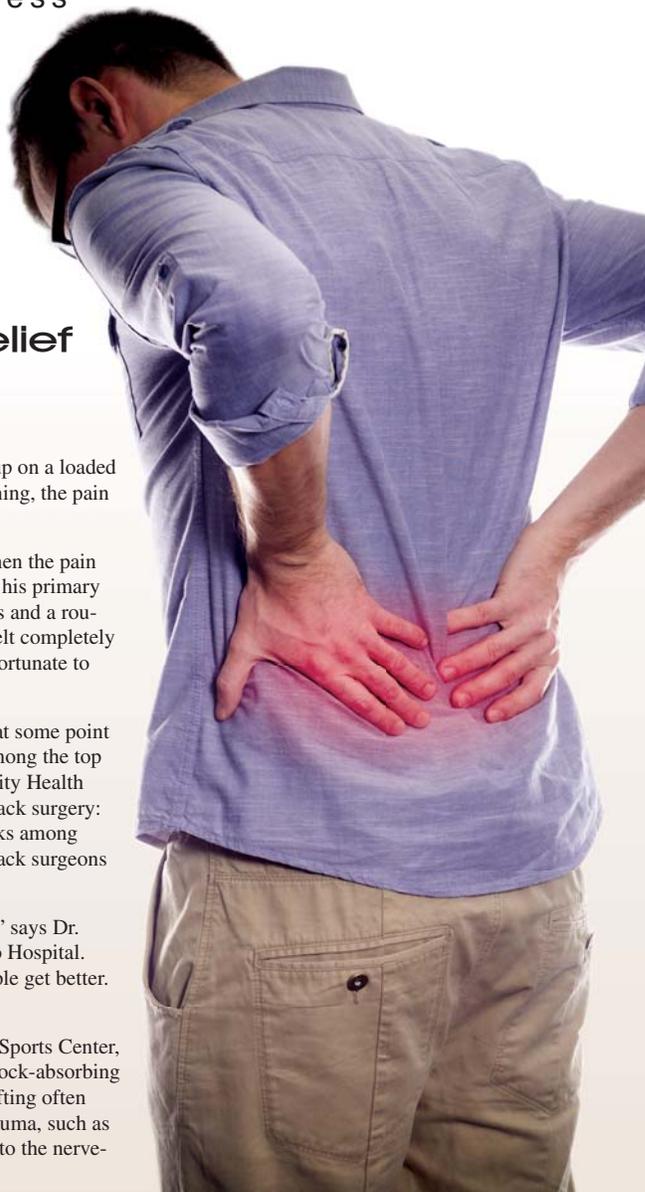
Key to recovery, says Sorensen, is to strengthen core muscles—abs, lower back, pelvic floor—to take pressure off of discs. She also uses laser treatments to quell inflammation and promote disc regeneration, "electro-acupuncture" (which uses a fine probe) to stimulate neural pathways and gentle traction to open up the space between the discs and bones.

For some, spinal manipulation—in which a therapist applies controlled force to realign bones and joints—can also relieve pain, says Terry Gebhardt of Colorado Physical Therapy Specialists. A 2010 study by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found spinal manipulation to be as effective as medication in treating low back pain. "It resets the nervous system to help dial down the pain," says Gebhardt.

Managing stress, which can slow healing and make us more sensitive to pain, is also key. And anti-inflammatory injections may help.

Once all options are exhausted, as many as 10 percent of patients may inevitably require surgery, according to the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. But there's good news, says Patel.

"Surgery today is dramatically different than it was 10 years ago," he says. "It has progressed from being a brutal and traumatic operation to often being minimally invasive. Depending on the surgery, patients can be back to full activity within a few months, or even a few weeks." 



Preventing back pain

- ✓ **Quit smoking:** Nicotine constricts blood vessels, preventing nutrients from reaching discs.
- ✓ **Stretch daily:** 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes at night. Focus on hamstrings (tight hamstrings put pressure on lower back), your piriformis (when it's tight it squeezes your sciatic nerve), and your psoas—a hip flexor key in stabilizing the low back.
- ✓ **Keep weight in check:** Excess weight in the midsection puts extra pressure on joints and throws off balance.
- ✓ **Never sit more than 30 minutes:** Use correct posture; slouching is hard on discs.
- ✓ **Fix your workstation:** Knees and hips should be bent at 90 degrees. Screen should be at arm's length. Top of screen should be level with eyebrows.



boosts **quality of life** for parents and kids



Program serves children with developmental disabilities

by susan skog

When you're parenting a child with developmental disabilities, finding a moment to get a haircut, grab a nap or watch a movie can make a world of difference for your physical and emotional health.

Respite Care, a nonprofit program started in 1982, offers families that well-earned break, as well as reassurance that their children are cared for by compassionate, skilled staff and volunteers.

Respite Ball

Don your finest black tie fashion for Northern Colorado's largest formal event that supports the children and families of Respite Care.

Saturday, November 21, 6 p.m. Embassy Suites, Loveland

Tickets & info: respiteball.com

"We give families peace of mind," says executive director LeAnn Massey. "Parents know they won't have to worry about their child's medication, dietary needs and other needs. They also know their kids are having fun, too."

Respite Care offers trained staff and volunteers to support

135 to 145 kids or young adults with developmental disabilities each year. Located in southeast Fort Collins, the homey center serves residents of Larimer County 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It also provides a much-needed sense of normalcy with special events such as Wilderness Camp, field trips, horseback riding and even a prom. "We recently held a Princess Party for the under-10 girls," Massey smiles, holding up a pink tiara. "And you know what has to come next, of course: the superheroes party with capes and masks."

Young adults at Respite Care connect and make new friends at the teen center. There they have access to computers, art supplies and a kitchenette, where they learn to make meals and snacks, as well as do laundry. "Our teens are engaged, active and doing things," says Massey.

She's grateful Larimer County's community has generously rallied around the program, which gives families well-deserved time to recharge, Massey says. Research shows that couples who have children with special needs have an 84 percent divorce rate, she notes. Siblings are also vulnerable if their needs often have to take a back seat.

"We want families to succeed. Parents can spend time on their marriage or relationships with other children, all the while knowing their child will be in excellent care."

Fort Collins parent Ann Hood says her 17-year-old son, Brady, who is on the autism spectrum, enjoys going to Respite Care so much that, "sometimes I think Brady would rather live at Respite than at home. He gets to spend one weekend a month there and looks forward to it every time."

A program regular since he was 6, Brady has ridden on the Respite Care/CSU Homecoming Float and participated in the prom, Wilderness Camp,

Day Camp and "just about everything else that Respite Care has to offer," Massey says.

"Respite has made such a difference in our family over the last 12 years," Hood adds. "We know we have a place that is safe, fun and loving to send our child after school, during the summer and on weekends. Brady even spent over a week there a couple of summers ago while my husband and I were on our honeymoon."

The local Respite Care program isn't just admirable, it's rare. "What makes us unusual is that we are here 24/7. There are fewer than 24 facilities like us in the United States," Massey says.

A native of Fort Collins, Massey joined Respite Care in 1997 as its assistant director, and in 2010 she became executive director. Over the years, the kids and families she's served and her staff and volunteers have become like family, she says.

The way in which kids often surpass all expectations continues to inspire her, Massey adds. "For instance, we never say a child won't walk. Some may have different milestones. Some may not start walking until 4 or 5, but they are always working to that goal. They never disappoint me. Hundreds of times over the last 17 years, kids have done things others said they couldn't do.

"The ones that touch me the most are those kids from a disadvantaged background who, according to the odds, shouldn't excel. But even with a developmental disability, they beat those odds." ✨



What:	Respite Care provides short-term care to children and young adults with developmental disabilities and respite care to their families. respitecareinc.org , (970) 207-9435
Where:	Located in a spacious 10,000-square-foot, home-like setting at 6203 S. Lemay Ave., Fort Collins
Hours:	Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week
Cost:	Families pay on a sliding scale based on income

New CDDT/ACT building opens for business

A sunny hang-out room with comfy couches and chairs greets visitors to the new shared home of the Community Dual Disorder Treatment (CDDT) and the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) programs on South Shields in Fort Collins.

Several months of extensive renovations transformed the former doctor's office into a large, airy and functional space for staff and around 40 clients. Among the additions are new kitchen, laundry and bathroom facilities that enable program participants to take care of daily needs, as well as develop skills for independent living. Clients can do a load of wash in the laundry room or grab a shower in a private bathroom during the day before going back out into the community.

CDDT is a partnership between SummitStone Health Partners, the Health District and the Fort Collins Housing Authority that serves people with severe and persistent mental health issues, as well as chronic substance dependence. It provides participants with intensive case management that allows them to gain stable housing and employment, while avoiding high-cost community services such as the jail or hospital. ACT also works with clients who are severely mentally ill.

Shared work "pods" invite collaboration among staff members, and several counseling rooms provide confidential meeting spaces. All programs and counseling sessions are provided during the day or evening, with no overnights.

The new facility, purchased last year by the Health District, opened in September.

"We are really enthused by how great it turned out," says Stephanie Madsen-Pixler, therapist with SummitStone Health Partners. "The new space gives us a lot of options for classes and programming."



Health District staff did more than just join bicycle commuters on Bike to Work Day on June 24. This year they lent support to fellow riders by helping cohost one of the city's 42 breakfast and bike tune-up stations at Jax Outdoor Gear. Other local groups joining Jax and the Health District as station cosponsors were the Food Bank for Larimer County and the Fort Collins Bike Co-op.



**Many dental services,
One phone number:
(970) 416-5331**



You can reach all Health District dental services—including the Family Dental Clinic and Dental Connections—by calling one phone number, M-Th 7 a.m.–6 p.m.; F 7 a.m.–5 p.m.

CSU Extension offers free health insurance classes

Deciphering health insurance lingo and figuring out the best plan can be confusing, but a new health insurance class offered by Colorado State University Extension gives people the tools to make wise choices.

Smart Health Insurance Decisions workshops teach participants key health insurance terms, how to estimate costs for health care, what questions to ask and how to find information about a health plan that best fits individuals and families. The class is offered three times at different locations during October. Medicare supplement plans are not discussed.

Certified Health Coverage Guides from Larimer Health Connect will be present at all classes to answer questions and/or schedule appointments for free one-on-one sessions to assist with enrollment in a health insurance plan.

These workshops are also a great chance for you to prepare for an upcoming appointment with Larimer Health Connect!

Smart Health Insurance Decisions Classes:

Thurs., Oct. 22 — 6:30-8:30 p.m., Fort Collins Council Tree Library
Mon., Oct. 26 — 6:30-8:30 p.m., Fort Collins Old Town Library
Wed., Oct. 28 — 6-8 p.m., Loveland Public Library

For class registration or more information, contact Marsha Dooley at (970) 498-6018.

classes, screenings and services

cholesterol tests

Find out your total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides and blood glucose numbers; learn what they mean and what to do about them.

Health District residents who have never received our test are eligible to receive their first test for free. Health District boundaries include Fort Collins, Laporte, Wellington, Red Feather Lakes, Livermore, Bellvue and Timnath.

Cost for all others is \$15. Sliding fees available.

Cholesterol tests are 8:15-10:30 a.m. unless otherwise indicated. Appointments **strongly** recommended; call (970) 224-5209. Walk-ins accepted only as space allows. An 8-hour fast is recommended; water and medications are permitted.

Visit healthdistrict.org/heart for more information.

October

- Thurs., Oct. 1** – Spirit of Joy Church, 4501 S. Lemay
- Tues., Oct. 6** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Tues., Oct. 13** – Larimer County Courthouse offices, 200 W. Oak
- Thurs., Oct. 15** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Tues., Oct. 20** – Health District, 120 Bristlecone

November

- Tues., Nov. 3** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Tues., Nov. 10** – Larimer County Courthouse offices, 200 W. Oak
- Tues., Nov. 17** – Health District, 120 Bristlecone
- Thurs., Nov. 19** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Tues., Nov. 24** – Harmony Library, 4616 S. Shields

December

- Tues., Dec. 1** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree
- Tues., Dec. 8** – Larimer County Courthouse offices, 200 W. Oak
- Tues., Dec. 15** – Health District, 120 Bristlecone
- Thurs., Dec. 17** – Senior Center, 1200 Raintree



blood pressure checks

OFFERED MONTHLY!

Free, 5-10 minute walk-in blood pressure reading and consultation with a registered nurse.

The consultation includes discussion and materials on:

- What does blood pressure mean?
- How can I keep my blood pressure where it needs to be, lowering my risk of heart attack and stroke?
- What's the right way to monitor my blood pressure?
- Follow-up suggestions

Checks are the second Monday of each month, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree. No appointment necessary.

Visit healthdistrict.org/heart for more information.



thinking of quitting tobacco?

We can help!
Hundreds of
Fort Collins
residents have quit
by using our Step
Free from Tobacco
program and
YOU CAN, TOO!

Call today:
(970) 224-5209

INDIVIDUAL
COUPLES/BUDDIES
GROUP SESSIONS

- Free nicotine patches / gum / lozenges
- Free first session
- Positive, supportive approach
- Sliding fees for those who qualify

Upcoming Wednesday group classes:

Oct. 21 – Dec. 2, 2015 (6 p.m.)
Jan. 20 – Feb. 24, 2016 (6 p.m.)

Call in advance to register—space is limited!
Please arrive 30 minutes early for the first session.

WE CAN HELP!

Free support groups meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. For more information, please call the Health District at (970) 224-5209.

healthdistrict.org/quitsmoking

additional services

Dental Connections

Referrals to dentists and help finding affordable care
202 Bristlecone • (970) 416-5331

Family Dental Clinic

Affordable dental care for children and adults
202 Bristlecone • (970) 416-5331

HealthInfoSource.com

A comprehensive online guide to local health information

Larimer Health Connect

Connect for Health Colorado and CHP+/Medicaid Outreach Project,
Prescription Assistance
144 N. Mason, Unit 7 • (970) 472-0444 • larimerhealthconnect.org

Mental Health Connections

A partnership with SummitStone Health Partners
Mental health and substance abuse resources
525 W. Oak • (970) 221-5551

Health District
OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY
healthdistrict.org

Got Medicaid?



Colorado Medicaid
now covers dental
care for **adults***

Current benefits
(as of Oct. 2015):

- **\$1,000 annual benefit** (no limit for dentures or emergency care)
- Includes routine cleanings, X-rays, fillings and extractions, as well as approved root canals, crowns and partials
- No copays

Health District
OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY
healthdistrict.org/dental

* Medicaid also covers children's dental care. Benefits are different.

Call Health District Dental
Services to find a Fort
Collins Medicaid dentist

(970) 416-5331