



OLAKINO MAIKA'I

To Improve Your Health and Well-Being

Make your Own Luck

How healthy lifestyle choices can stack the deck in your favor

St. Patrick's Day is here, and we're all feeling a little lucky! While unexpected health challenges can pop up, you've got your own four-leaf clover to help keep the odds in your favor. There are no guarantees, but everyday healthy habits can support long-term well-being. You don't need magic! Here are just a few practical steps you can start today:



✿ Move more in ways you enjoy

Regular physical activity like walking, swimming, surfing, or yard work supports heart health, helps manage weight, and lowers the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and some cancers.

Spring break workouts. Story below

✿ Add Veggie and Fruit treasures to your plate

Balanced meals with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and local farm-grown foods provide nutrients that strengthen immunity and reduce long-term disease risk.

Get into greens. Story below

✿ Check in on your health

Routine screenings, vaccinations, and checkups help catch issues early. This is one of the smartest investments you can make in your future.

And get some sleep. Story below

✿ Spring Cleaning

Tidy up your living space to improve both your physical and emotional health. Use this opportunity to refresh your home and habits!

Healthy house tips. Story below

These choices don't guarantee perfect outcomes, but they build a foundation for resilience. This March, instead of wishing for good fortune, create your own pot of gold through small, steady steps toward better health.

MO‘OLELO OLAKINO

History of Health

Health History: Missionaries and the Arrival of Western Medicine in Hawai‘i



Photos courtesy Hawai‘i State Archives

When Protestant missionaries arrived in Hawai‘i in March of 1820, they brought not only religious teachings but also Western medical practices that would influence the islands' developing health systems. Their arrival occurred during a period of immense upheaval. Introduced diseases had already caused devastating epidemics, and continued foreign contact accelerated population decline among Native Hawaiians.

At the same time, sweeping religious and political changes reshaped Hawaiian society, often sidelining traditional healing practices such as *lā‘au lapa‘au* and *lomilomi*. While Western medicine introduced new tools, surgeries, and eventually vaccination efforts, it did not simply replace what came before. Native Hawaiian healing traditions persisted within families and communities and are increasingly recognized today for their cultural and clinical value.



Over time, mission-affiliated physicians such as Dr. Gerrit Judd expanded medical services, performing surgeries and prescribing medicines. They trained Native Hawaiian apprentices, produced a Hawaiian-language anatomy text *Anatomia : he palapala ia e hoike ai i ke ano o ko ke kanaka kino*, written in 1838, and later established a Western medical school.

Pictured: Princes Alexander ‘Iolani Liholiho Keawenu (Kamehameha IV) and Lot Kapuāiwa (Kamehameha V) with Dr. Gerrit P. Judd (center)

Alongside leadership from the Hawaiian Kingdom, these developments helped shape Hawai‘i's public health infrastructure. Today's health landscape reflects a complex history, where Western and traditional Native Hawaiian practices both contribute to caring for Hawai‘i's communities.

Add More Green to Your Plate



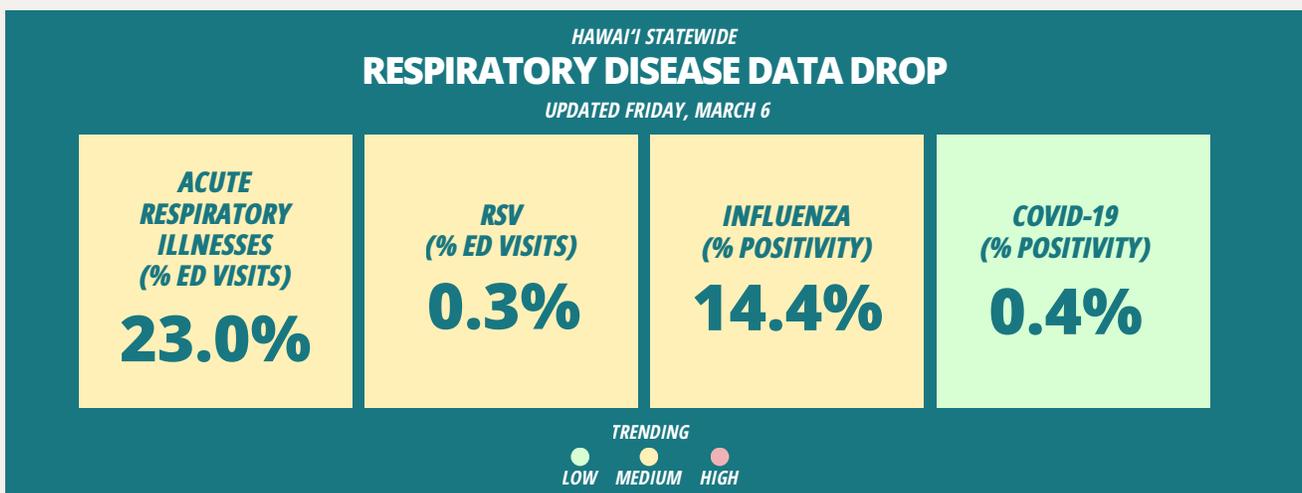
March is National Nutrition Month® and St. Patrick's Day, a perfect time to add a little more green to your plate – and maybe boost your health luck along the way! While no single meal guarantees outcomes, balanced, healthy eating habits can help tip the odds toward stronger hearts, steadier energy, and long-term well-being.

Healthy choices don't have to mean drastic changes. Small swaps that work for you, like adding leafy green vegetables to lunch, choosing water over sugary drinks, and incorporating whole grains, can build momentum over time. In Hawai'i, traditional and local foods offer powerful options: kalo, 'uala (sweet potato), fresh fish, fruits, and locally grown greens support nutrition while honoring cultural connections.

Access and eating local matters too. Exploring farmers markets, community gardens, or nutrition assistance programs can make healthier foods more available for families across the islands.

This month, think simple and doable. A little more color, balance, and variety on your plate today can help grow healthier tomorrows. No luck required.

This Week's RSV and COVID-19 Data



This week's data shows medium activity levels for acute respiratory illnesses (23.0% ED visits) and RSV (0.3% ED visits). Influenza (14.4% positivity) activity level is medium, and COVID-19 (0.4% positivity) activity level remains low.

IS THE RSV IMMUNIZATION FOR YOU?

- ✓ **Infants under 8 months** through maternal RSV vaccination or infant dose of RSV monoclonal antibody, if the mother wasn't vaccinated during that pregnancy.
- ✓ **Pregnant people** 32-36 weeks gestation.
- ✓ **Adults 75+** and adults 50-74 with risk factors.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common virus that circulates year-round in Hawai'i. It can be especially dangerous for infants and older adults.

Who should get immunized?

- Infants should receive an RSV monoclonal antibody if younger than 8 months old and their mother was not vaccinated during that pregnancy.
- Pregnant people should receive the maternal RSV vaccine between 32-36 weeks gestation to protect their newborn. The RSV vaccine is only given once, so for future pregnancies the infant should receive an RSV monoclonal antibody.
- Adults 75+, and adults 50-74 years with risk factors such as chronic heart or lung disease, a weakened immune system, other medical conditions, or living in a nursing home should get vaccinated once.

RESPIRATORY DISEASE DASHBOARD

Spring Into Motion



Spring break isn't just a chance to slow down! It can also be the perfect time to get moving. You don't need a strict workout plan or hours at the gym to boost your health. Small, enjoyable, everyday activities can add up and help support heart health, improve mood, and increase energy.

If you're taking time off or spending more time with family, look for easy ways to weave activity into your day. Walk to the park or the beach or explore a new neighborhood or shoreline. Turn chores like yard work or house cleaning into a mini workout. Play actively with keiki, stretch between errands, or try something new like swimming, hiking, or paddling. Once you're back at work, add a quick stretch or short walk during your lunch break as part of your work routine.

The key is consistency, not intensity. Even short bursts of movement can make a difference over time. This spring break, think of physical activity as an opportunity, not an obligation. Use the season to refresh your routine and build habits that last well beyond the week off.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Don't take chances with your sleep



If you're looking to improve your odds of feeling focused, calm, and resilient, don't overlook one powerful habit: sleep. **During Sleep Awareness Week (Mar. 8-14)**, we're reminded that quality rest isn't just downtime. It's one of the best ways to stack the deck in your favor. Research consistently links healthy sleep to lower risk of depression and anxiety, sharper thinking, improved immune function, and better weight management.

Insufficient sleep is a significant public health concern in our state. In Hawai'i, 45.6% of adults report sleeping less than 7 hours a night and up to 77% of high school students say they get less than 8 hours.

The good news? You don't need perfect conditions or lucky timing to sleep better. Small choices help tip the odds:

- **Keep a steady schedule** - going to bed and waking up around the same time supports mood and energy.
- **Create a wind-down routine** - dim lights, limit screens, and give your mind space to settle.
- **Stay active during the day** - movement and sunlight promote deeper rest at night.

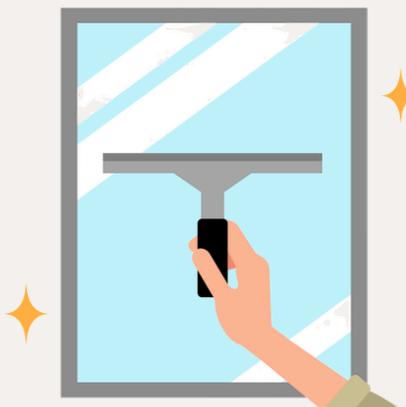
You can't guarantee tomorrow's challenges, but investing in sleep today builds mental strength to meet them. Consider it one of the simplest ways to grow your everyday luck.

LEARN MORE

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP FOR TEENS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Spring Cleaning for Health: Refreshing Homes and Habits



As the spring equinox arrives around March 20, longer days and shifting weather make it a natural time to reset our living spaces. In Hawai'i, "spring cleaning" isn't just about tidying up. It's an opportunity to protect health and safety at home.

Start with moisture control. Recent wet weather can encourage mold growth, which may trigger allergies or respiratory symptoms. Improve ventilation, fix leaks promptly, and wipe down damp surfaces to reduce risk. A quick home check now can prevent bigger issues later.

Check your household equipment. It's also a good time to safely sort through household items like electronics, tools, and devices powered by lithium-ion batteries, including e-bikes or power equipment. Store batteries properly, avoid damage or overheating, and use approved recycling programs rather than placing them in household trash.

Round out your refresh with healthy cleaning habits. Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces can help reduce the spread of germs as seasons change. Practice safe use of cleaning products, wash hands after handling materials, and declutter to lower hazards and create a healthier home environment.

SAFE CLEANING PRACTICES

PUBLIC HEALTH

45 is the new 50: The Screening That Saves Lives



March is **Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month**; a reminder that one of the most effective tools in protecting health is also one of the simplest: getting screened. Colorectal cancer (also known as colon cancer) doesn't always cause symptoms, especially at first. This makes screening even more important.

A colonoscopy can prevent colon cancer by finding and removing polyps before they turn into cancer. There are other test options too. Talk to your doctor about which test is right for you. The best colon cancer screening test is the one that gets done.

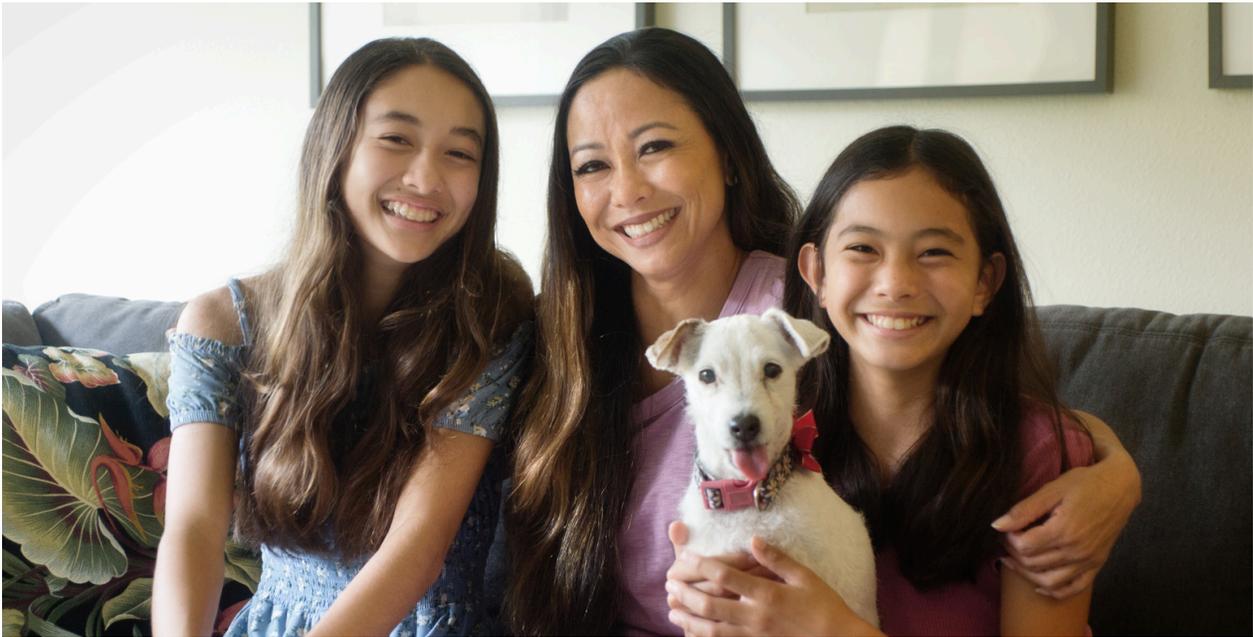
The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends adults at average risk begin screening at age 45 and continue regularly as advised by their healthcare provider. According to the American Cancer Society, colon cancer is now the leading cause of cancer death in people under 50.

This month is a good time to start the conversation, whether scheduling a screening, encouraging a loved one, or learning more about risk factors and symptoms. Prevention and early detection can make a life-saving difference.

GET SCREENED HAWAII

SHORT TAKES

International Women's Day (March 8)



International Women's Day is a time to recognize the achievements of women and reflect on the importance of health across the lifespan. From preventive screenings and heart health to maternal care and mental well-being, access to supportive services helps women thrive in their families and communities. In Hawai'i, public health programs continue working to improve outcomes and reduce disparities. This March, consider scheduling a checkup, supporting the women in your life, or learning more about resources that promote lifelong health and resilience.

World Oral Health Day (March 20)



World Oral Health Day reminds us that a healthy smile is about more than appearance. Oral health is linked to heart disease, diabetes, pregnancy outcomes, and overall well-being. Daily brushing and flossing, limiting sugary drinks, and regular dental visits are simple steps that make a lasting difference. Community prevention programs and education across Hawai'i help residents protect their oral health at every age. This March, take a moment to refresh your routine and remember: caring for your mouth supports your whole body.

***Please note that our DOH Punchbowl offices will be closed on Thursday, March 26, in observance of Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole Day.**

INFORMATION HOTLINES

DOCD Disease Reporting Line

Oʻahu (808) 586-4586

Maui (808) 984-8213

Kauaʻi (808) 241-3563

Hilo (808) 933-0912

Kona (808) 322-4877

Hawaiʻi CARES 988 Hotline

Local crisis counselors are available to help 24/7

Call or Text 9-8-8

or Call (808) 832-3100

or Call 1-800-753-6879

DOH Hotline

Get information & resources

Call (808) 586-4400

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Hawaii

The go-to source for Medicare Fraud Prevention

Education and referral assistance for related scams.

Toll Free: 1-800-296-9422

info@smphawaii.org

Big mahalo to everyone who shared story ideas with us. We love to hear from you! If there's a topic you'd like us to cover, please let us know at doh.comm@doh.hawaii.gov.

In Hawaiian, the word olakino refers to the state of health and well-being. The word "ola" means life and health, and the word "kino" means body. Olakino is generally considered to be the greatest wealth and great health that one can attain, not just of the body but holistically. Maika'i in Hawaiian means good or wellbeing.

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