

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

While we're focusing on women's health this month, it's important to remember that physical and mental health are equally important. According to Morgan Drake, director of Ringgold County Hospital's Senior Life Solutions, women are twice as likely as men to experience symptoms of depression. "There are a variety of reasons," said Morgan. "But often it's related to hormones."

Although hormonal changes may be inevitable, they don't have to lead to depression. "Physically taking care of ourselves with a healthy diet and some exercise is a great place to start," she said. "Studies show that even 30 minutes of walking each day can be as effective as taking anti-depression medication."

Along with basic diet and exercise, it's important to get adequate sleep and practice keeping stress in check. "We suggest learning relaxing techniques and making time to do things you enjoy," said Morgan.

Morgan invites the entire community to participate in Wear Green Day on May 21 to bring attention to Mental Health Awareness.



May is Women's Health Month!

Everyone who has ever flown on an airplane has heard these instructions: "Secure your own oxygen mask before trying to help others." It's also true when it comes to your health. You can't take care of your loved ones if you haven't cared for yourself first.

Women have traditionally filled the roles of caregivers for their families. Which makes it even more important to attend to their own health. Erin Leonard, ARNP at the Mount Ayr Medical Clinic, encourages the basics, "A healthy diet and exercise is so important for women of all ages." Additionally, as women move through the different stages of life, there are screenings and routine exams that can potentially be lifesaving.

Screenings and specific exams are often based on age. For instance, a pap smear is recommended beginning at age 21, and then every three years until the age of 30. "After 30, we do a Pap smear with HPV testing. This can be done every 5 years, as long as previous testing has been normal," said Erin. Screening intervals can change depending on previous results. "One size does not fit all. The best approach is shared decision making between a woman and her primary care provider."

Even if a woman does not need a pap smear, Erin recommends a wellness exam every year. Wellness exams can include breast exams, pelvic exams, lab work, and immunizations. "As women age, they need to add mammograms and colonoscopies to the list, too!"

The healthcare providers at the Mount Ayr Medical Clinic encourage younger women and girls to discuss what's happening with their bodies during well child and well adolescent visits. Pelvic



exams are often not necessary in women under 21.

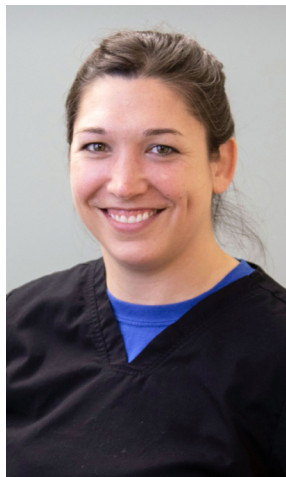
Top of mind this year is how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone, especially women who are pregnant, or may be trying to get pregnant. "There have been a lot of questions surrounding the vaccine, and whether or not women should get it," said Erin. The CDC, World Health Organization, and American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommend vaccinating pregnant women against COVID-19 due to the increased risk of complications should they contract the virus. Additionally, the vaccine has not been tied to adverse outcomes related to pregnancy or fertility. Recent studies have shown immunity passed on to babies in moms who have been vaccinated during pregnancy and lactating mothers. Erin added, "If you have any concerns, you should discuss these with your healthcare provider."

No matter what her age, particularly in stressful times like a pandemic, mental health is as important as physical health. "We screen for depression and anxiety in all our annual visits," said Erin. "Mental health concerns can span across our entire lifetime. We're here to help when it's needed."

RINGGOLD COUNTY HOSPITAL

We appreciate our nurses!

We are celebrating the hard work, compassion, and dedication of nurses everywhere. Here at Ringgold County Hospital, our thanks go out to all the nurses in our hospital and clinic who care for our community every day. In this month's newsletter, we're profiling two more outstanding nurses for their contributions.



Julia Quigley

Julia Quigley began her nursing career when she was small child. She may not have been an official employee, but she was helping her mother with an infant brother who needed specialized care when she was just eight years old. She figures it was that experience, along with her mother as a role model, that guided her to nursing.

After growing up in Omaha, NE, she went straight into

nursing school at Creighton University and graduated in 2004. Her first four years as a nurse were spent in the hematology and oncology special care unit at the Nebraska Medical Center. "I worked with all ages. We did chemo and bone marrow transplants and critical care when it was needed," she said. "Patients there are going through the hardest time of their lives, and they're often there for a long time. When you're a nurse, you try to make it better for them while they're going through their struggles."

After marrying in 2008, she and her husband moved to Chicago where she continued to work. When her daughter was born, she slowed her schedule and did agency nursing when she was needed. She took time away from nursing when her second child came along. "Life was just too busy, so I stayed home with them for a while," she said.

In 2013, for a variety of reasons, the family moved from Chicago to Lamoni. "God just wanted us to move there! And we wanted to be closer to both of our families who are now only three hours away." In addition, they wanted a lifestyle that is impossible in a big city. "We're hobby farmers with lots of fruit trees, chickens, and goats. We wanted to have the freedom to do that and create a better spot for our kids."

Five years ago, she decided to go back to work full time. She interviewed at a hospital in Missouri, and with Denise Coleman at Ringgold County Hospital. "Once I met the staff here, it was no contest," she said. "I knew this was the place for me." She no longer works full time, but does one, 12-hour shift every Monday on the acute care floor.

"I think RCH is a wonderful place to work," said Julia. It's a really healthy and positive environment with good leadership. We all feel like we're part of the family and we look out for each other."



Tara Gilmore

Inspiration can come from many places. Sometimes it's found in a book or a movie. Sometimes it comes from a teacher or church leader. And sometimes it's a person close to you who inspires you to follow in their footsteps.

For Tara Gilmore, it was her older sister who inspired her to become a nurse. "She's done it all, from patient care to management," said Tara. "I watched her and learned from her perspective every step of the way," said Tara. Although she was inspired to pursue nursing, "life got in the way," so it didn't end up being Tara's first career. The mother of two girls, she started working in the medical field as a pharmacy tech after her children were born. "Back then, you didn't need to be certified to start. I studied and passed all the tests so I could be hired. I became a Certified Pharmacy Tech while I was working," she said.

When the pharmacy where she worked closed, she took the opportunity to go back to school, and graduated with her RN degree in 2014. A native of Creston, she started working at the hospital there, did a short stint with a hospice, and has been at Ringgold County Hospital for the past five years. "I really like working in surgery," said Tara. "It's my passion to 'fix' people and make them better. Most of the surgeries we do are elective, and I love seeing people go home better than they were when they came in."

It's her coworkers and the atmosphere at RCH that Tara loves. "We have the best team. It truly helps coming to work every day when you love the people you work with. We're like a family!"