

Licking Memorial Health Systems Quality Report Card



Volume 27, Issue 10

October 2026

PEDIATRIC CARE

A Proactive Approach to Youth Wellness

Well-child visits are an important part of preventive healthcare because they help parents and healthcare providers monitor a child's growth, development, and overall health over time. These visits begin frequently in infancy and early childhood, when children grow and change rapidly, and continue annually as children get older. Regular appointments give families an opportunity to identify concerns early, stay current on immunizations, and build healthy habits that support a child's physical, mental, and social well-being.

During a well-child visit, the provider typically performs a physical exam, records height and weight, listens to the heart, lungs, and stomach, and may order screenings or tests for issues such as anemia, lead exposure, infections, or developmental delays. The visit also includes immunizations when needed and age-appropriate developmental screenings to make sure the child is meeting expected milestones. Parents can use the appointment to ask questions about sleep, nutrition, behavior, physical activity, prevention, and any family health history that may affect the child.

Encouraging healthy eating is one of the most important ways that providers and parents can help children maintain a healthy lifestyle and lower their risk of obesity and related health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, asthma, bone issues, and heart disease risk factors. Rather than following a strict diet, children benefit from balanced meals that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein foods, and dairy while limiting foods and drinks

high in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

Building healthy eating habits takes time and works best through small, practical changes. Families can encourage children to choose whole fruits instead of juice, add vegetables to favorite meals, use the USDA MyPlate approach to create balanced plates, and teach older children and teens how to read food labels. Making healthy foods fun, involving children in food choices, and offering protein- and fiber-rich snacks can help children develop positive eating patterns that support energy, growth, and long-term health.

Exercise is a vital part of youth wellness, providing physical, mental and cognitive, and social and emotional benefits. Youth, ages 6 to 17, need 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily to build core strength, boost cardiovascular health, and improve coordination. Exercise produces feel-good endorphins, which lowers stress hormones and reduces depression and anxiety. It also aids in memory retention, enhances focus, and promotes healthy sleep patterns. Participating in team sports helps to develop communication, empathy, and conflict-resolution skills.

As children enter adolescence, well visits also become a safe opportunity to discuss topics such as mental health, substance use, and other personal health concerns. Providers will often ask the parent to briefly step out of the room during a portion of the visit. This establishes confidentiality and encourages the child to provide honest

answers without fear of judgement or trouble at home.

Vaping is a rapidly growing health concern among youth, as many believe vaping to be less harmful than smoking. Vaping is the act of inhaling an aerosol produced by a battery-operated device such as an e-cigarette, which heats a liquid containing nicotine, flavorings, and chemicals into a mist. Nicotine is highly addictive and impacts brain development in children and teens by impacting memory, concentration, self-control, learning, and mood. The chemicals in these devices can contain harmful substances such as lead, nickel, and formaldehyde. Vaping devices can also contain marijuana or THC products.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that pediatricians begin screening patients who are 11 years and older for vaping and tobacco use. The screening gives providers the opportunity to present preventive education about the risks of vaping and help them to resist peer pressure.

Well-child visits play an important role in helping children and teens grow into healthy adults. By staying up to date on preventive care, encouraging balanced nutrition and physical activity, and having age-appropriate conversations about topics such as vaping and substance use, families can help children make informed choices about their health. Partnering with a trusted healthcare provider gives parents and children the guidance, support, and resources they need at every stage of development.



Patient Story – Leyah Cook

The Cook family moved to Granville in 2018. Jay Cook has worked in Licking County for over 25 years. Jay and his wife, Sara, have three children. The family has enjoyed the area and being involved in the community. Jay's daughter, Leyah, is in her junior year at Granville Exempted Village School District and plays soccer. In the past, her mother, Sara, would take her to an Urgent Care to receive the physical necessary to participate in the sport. This year, however, a family friend told Sara about the Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) Sports Screening Program, and she made an appointment for Leyah.

LMHS has been offering the annual Sports Screening Program for over 20 years. Students entering grades 7 through 12 who are involved in sports, marching band, and C-TEC's Criminal Justice and Physical Therapy programs receive comprehensive screenings at no cost to help Licking County youth safely participate in physically challenging activities. The LMHS Sports Screening Program consists of three major components: Heart to Play electrocardiograms (EKGs) and echocardiograms, Immediate Post-concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (ImPACT) baseline concussion testing, and state-required pre-participation physical examinations.

EKGs and echocardiograms are provided to students entering grades 7, 9, and 11. These tests can identify heart conditions that place an athlete at risk for a sudden cardiac event even when there are no symptoms. The EKG displays the heart's electrical impulses, and the echocardiogram screens the functioning of the heart's valves and muscles. Since the Heart to Play screenings began in 2008, serious cardiac abnormalities have been detected and treated in 92 students who previously were unaware of their conditions.

ImPACT testing is also offered to students entering grades 7, 9, and 11 who participate in a contact sport and do not have testing available at their school. The computerized evaluation establishes a baseline of the brain's cognitive functions, such as memory, attention span, and reaction time. If a concussion is suspected, the ImPACT test is re-administered within 72 hours of the injury after a primary care or emergency room physician has evaluated the athlete. When compared to the baseline test, the difference in the scores helps physicians determine the amount of rest and frequency of examinations that will be needed before the student is able to return to competition or activity.

LMHS medical staff also complete pre-participation physical examinations, which the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) requires annually. Students who have had a checkup with a primary care physician within the past year may submit the OHSAA

form to the provider's office to have it signed. In such cases, eligible students may participate in heart or concussion screenings without receiving a pre-participation physical exam. The screenings are performed at the Pataskala Health Campus and at Licking Memorial Pediatrics – Tamarack in Newark during the month of May.

"I was impressed with how organized and precise this program is run," said Sara. "The appointments were on time and quick. The staff were very friendly, helpful, and kind. They made Leyah feel very comfortable, and the process was extremely thorough. We were very pleased with the experience and will participate in the program again!"

It is important to note that LMHS sports screenings are not complete physical exams, which are best performed annually at a primary care physician's office and can take the place of a pre-participation screening. Since individual physician practices are not directly involved with the program, please refrain from contacting their offices for information regarding the sports screenings. For questions or more information about the LMHS Sports Screening Program, please email sportsphysicals@LMHealth.org.

Pediatric Care – *How do we compare?*

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

- 1.** Immunizations are one of the safest and most effective methods to protect children from potentially serious childhood diseases. Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) monitor the percentage of children, aged 19 months to 35 months, who receive the individual and complete set of recommended immunizations. The series is frequently referred to as the 4:3:1:3:3:1 series. It consists of the following vaccines:
- 4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus (lockjaw), and pertussis (whooping cough)
 - 3 doses of polio
 - 1 dose of measles, mumps, and rubella
 - 3 doses of Haemophilus influenzae B (influenza type B)
 - 3 doses of hepatitis B
 - 1 dose of varicella (chicken pox)

	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	LMHP 2025	National
Childhood immunization rate (4:3:1:3:3:1 series)	77%	78%	69%	70% ⁽¹⁾

- 2.** LMHP providers follow Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccinations to prevent cervical cancer, varicella (chicken pox), and meningitis among adolescents. In 2019, the parameters for the HPV vaccination series were changed from females, aged 13 to 17, to persons, aged 11 through 26. The vaccine can be administered to both females and males starting at age 9, and those who have not been adequately vaccinated may still receive the vaccination series until age 26.

	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	LMHP 2025	National
Persons aged 13 through 17 completing HPV vaccination series	52%	55%	55%	62.6% ⁽²⁾
Adolescent children receiving varicella vaccination	94%	95%	93%	90% ⁽²⁾
Adolescent children receiving meningococcal vaccination	84%	85%	83%	88.6% ⁽²⁾

- 3.** Pharyngitis (sore throat) is a common illness in children. Most children's sore throats are caused by viral illnesses. While antibiotics are needed to treat bacterial pharyngitis, such are not useful in treating viral pharyngitis. Before antibiotics are prescribed, a simple diagnostic test needs to be performed to confirm the presence of a bacterial infection. Inappropriate use of antibiotics for viral pharyngitis is costly, ineffective, and contributes to the development of drug-resistant bacterial strains. LMHP monitors and reports how many children with sore throats, aged 2 to 18 years of age, received a Group A streptococcus test before they were given a prescription for antibiotics.

	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	LMHP 2025	LMHP Goal
Children with pharyngitis receiving test before antibiotics	91%	93%	92%	60%

- 4.** Kids' Place is an accredited child advocacy center that provides a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary evaluation of children who are suspected victims of sexual and/or physical abuse and/or neglect. Services are provided in a comfortable and confidential environment. Case management and victim advocate services are also available.

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	LMH Goal
Total number of children served	185	168	164	N/A

Data Footnotes:

(1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Vaccination Coverage by Age 24 Months Among Children Born in 2019 and 2020 – National Immunization Survey-Child, United States, 2020-2022. Published November 3, 2023.

(2) Estimated Vaccination Coverage with Selected Vaccines and Doses Among Adolescents Aged 13-17, by age at interview; National Immunization Survey-Teen (NIS-Teen), United States, 2022.

Check out our Quality Report Cards online at **LMHealth.org**.

Staying Healthy Year Round

When cold and flu season approaches, it is important for children and adults to protect themselves from illnesses that keep them from attending work, school, and other activities. Daily habits such as eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and managing stress can naturally strengthen the immune system. Practicing good personal hygiene is the best line of defense to prevent colds and other viruses. The following tips can help to protect people from getting sick and spreading illness to others.

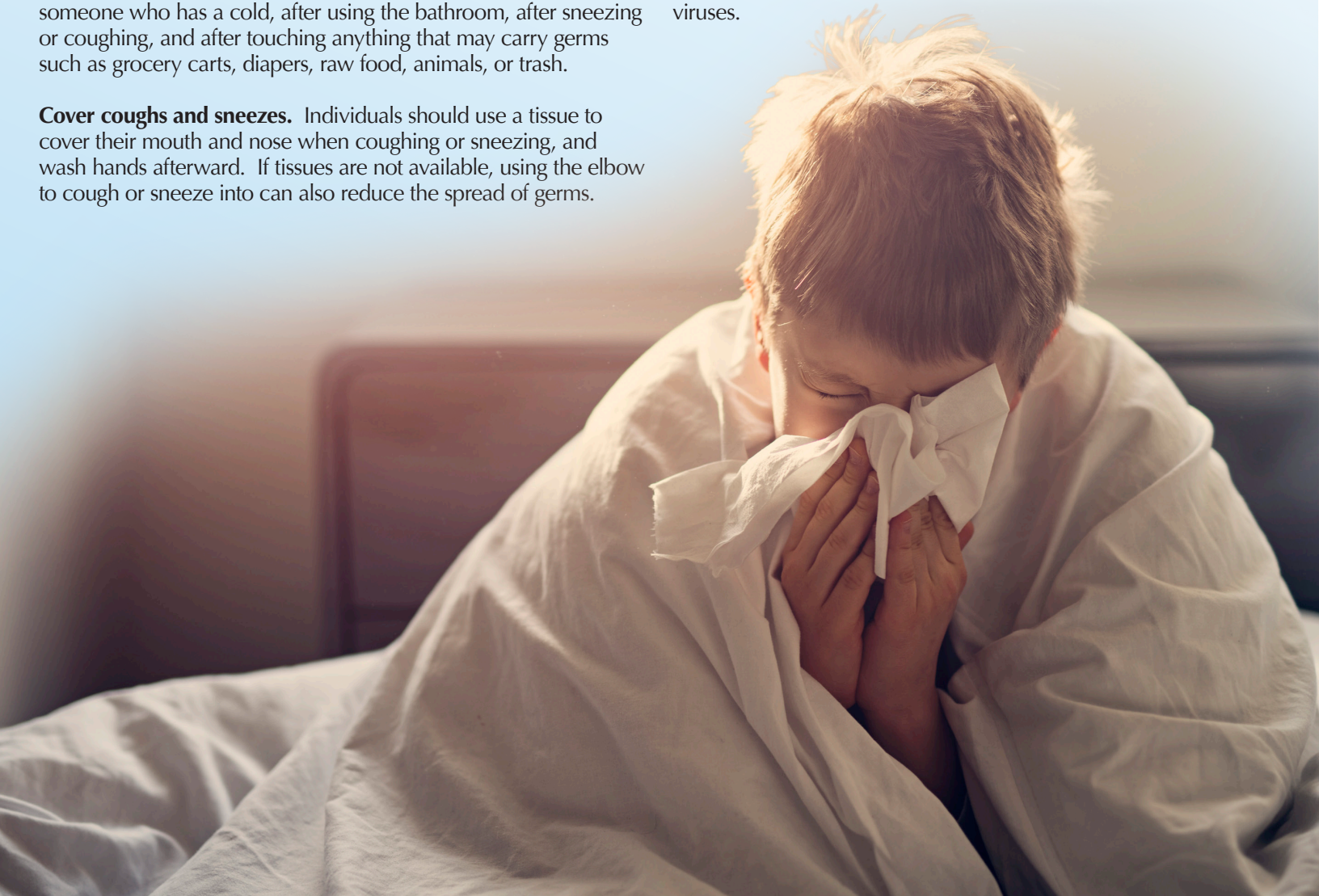
Handwashing. Wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available. Wash or sanitize hands before preparing food, before eating, before and after caring for someone who is sick or around someone who has a cold, after using the bathroom, after sneezing or coughing, and after touching anything that may carry germs such as grocery carts, diapers, raw food, animals, or trash.

Cover coughs and sneezes. Individuals should use a tissue to cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and wash hands afterward. If tissues are not available, using the elbow to cough or sneeze into can also reduce the spread of germs.

Get vaccinated. Vaccines remain one of the safest ways for individuals to protect themselves and prevent the risk of spreading viruses to others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that children and adults receive vaccinations for the flu, COVID-19, and RSV in late summer to early fall before the viruses start spreading widely within the community.

Disinfect shared surfaces. Wipe down doorknobs, counters, and phones regularly.

Stay home when sick. Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick. While ill, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from spreading infection. Wearing a mask around others can also help provide protection against circulating viruses.



**Licking Memorial
Health Systems**

1320 West Main Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

Visit us at [LMHealth.org](https://www.LMHealth.org).

Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Pediatric Care**. You will soon discover why Licking Memorial Health Systems is measurably different ... for your health!

The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department. Please contact the Public Relations Department at (220) 564-1572 to receive future mailings.

The articles contained in this publication should not be considered specific medical advice as each individual circumstance is different. Should you need medical advice, consult your physician. Entire publication copyrighted 2026 Licking Memorial Health Systems. All rights reserved.