

MAY 2026

NEWSLETTER

OF THE APPLETON PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

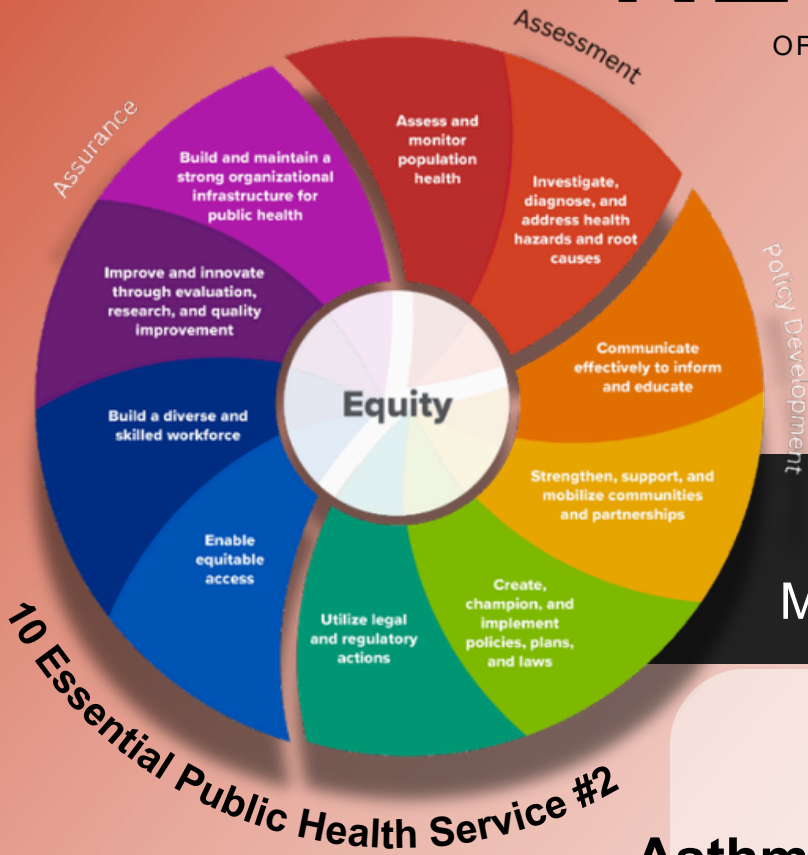
IN THIS ISSUE:

Introducing the Appleton Asthma-Friendly Spaces Initiative

Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population

VISION: Health for all, together.

MISSION: Facilitate equitable community wellbeing through education, health promotion, and response to public health needs.



Clearing the Air: Introducing the Appleton Asthma-Friendly Spaces Initiative

We all deserve to breathe easy, but for many in our community, that simple act is a daily struggle. That is why the Appleton Health Department is thrilled to announce the launch of the Appleton Asthma-Friendly Initiative. Thanks to a recent “Asthma In Action” grant awarded by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the CDC, we are taking major steps to reduce environmental asthma triggers across the Fox Valley.

Why We Need This Program Now

Asthma is a chronic respiratory condition that is common, significantly impacts daily life, and can be life-threatening. In Wisconsin, approximately 582,000 individuals live with asthma, representing about 1 in 9 adults and 1 in 15 children. Unfortunately, a staggering 57% of adults and 41% of children diagnosed with the disease have uncontrolled asthma. This leads to major disruptions in daily life, with 1 in 3 children missing school and 1 in 4 adults missing work each year due to their condition. The economic impact on the state exceeds \$75 million annually, including costs related to emergency department visits, hospital stays, and lost productivity. Tragically, asthma-related deaths occur in Wisconsin approximately once every five days.

A Dual-Strategy Approach: Indoors and Outdoors

Because we are exposed to asthma triggers both inside and outside, our initiative uses a two-part strategy:

Indoor Allergy Trigger Reduction: We spend 90% of our time indoors, where hidden hazards like mold, dust mites, pests, and even harsh cleaning chemicals can spark asthma attacks. To address this, we have developed the Appleton Asthma-Friendly Toolkit, which includes home assessment checklists, guidance on National Healthy Housing Standards, and resources for green cleaning and home remediation.



A Dual-Strategy Approach: Indoors and Outdoors continued

Outdoor Air Quality Awareness: Children and those with respiratory issues are especially vulnerable to outdoor pollutants like ground-level ozone and fine particle pollution (PM2.5). To help the community stay informed, we are launching the **Air Quality Index (AQI) Flag Program**, partnering with the Appleton Parks & Recreation Department and the Appleton Area School District. Participating locations will raise a brightly colored flag each day to match the EPA's AQI forecast. This visual cue will help residents and school staff know when to safely adjust outdoor activities.

A True Community Partnership

We cannot do this alone. The Appleton Health Department is working alongside incredible local partners to make this initiative a reality:

Appleton Area School District: Piloting the AQI flags and adjusting outdoor activities and sports on poor air quality days.

Appleton Parks and Recreation Department:

Displaying flags at public parks so summer visitors can easily check the air quality.

Appleton Public Library: Hosting community workshops and serving as a distribution point for educational materials.

The Building For Kids: Pilot participant in the "Asthma-Friendly Spaces" Badge, and hosting outreach events.

Resources

[Board of Health Calendar](#)

[Appleton Asthma-Friendly Resources](#)



Join Us for Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, and it is the perfect time to get involved. The Appleton Public Library will be hosting a drop-in Community Table with the Appleton Health Department, where we will be available to provide information, answer questions, and you can pick up your own Appleton Asthma-Friendly Toolkit. You will learn how to identify triggers in your home and safely eliminate them. We will be teaching asthma-friendly cleaning methods and integrated pest management.

Thursday, May 7th

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Appleton Public Library

Thursday, May 21st

12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Appleton Public Library

Property owners and residents who adopt these practices can even earn a local "Asthma-Friendly Spaces" Badge to display in their windows. Whether you rent an apartment or own your own home, these library workshops and other upcoming events will empower you to create a safer environment for your family. Come grab your toolkit, learn how to earn your badge, and help us clear the air in Appleton.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

