



Aitkin County Public Health

PartnerSHIP News!

November 2025

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Aitkin, Itasca, Koochiching, Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties make up Northeast SHIP

Stay updated with the latest news and events from the northland, the Northeast Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP). Read about our health initiatives, community success stories, and upcoming events promoting healthy living in the region.

[Our Work](#)

[Quick Facts](#)

[Reports](#)

[Minnesota Department of Health SHIP Newsletter](#)

Check out the Northeast SHIP Website!

(formally called Healthy Northland)

<https://www.northeastship.org/>



[NE SHIP Community Newsletter](#)

FIND FOOD
Aitkin County

Featured Recipe of the Month!

Pumpkin Blondies

These Thanksgiving - inspired pumpkin blondies are soft, chewy, and bursting with cozy autumn flavors. Pumpkin purée, warm pumpkin pie spices, and a touch of brown sugar come together with sweet white chocolate chips to make a dessert that's perfect for holiday gatherings or a festive treat any time.



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Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, melted
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup canned pumpkin puree
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fine salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white chocolate chips, additional 3 tablespoons for topping

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Mist a rimmed quarter sheet pan or 9 x 13 baking pan with cooking spray or line with parchment paper; set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the melted butter and brown sugar. Add the egg, pumpkin puree, and vanilla; whisk until smooth.
3. To the same bowl, add the flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking powder, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Stir until well combined. Fold in the white chocolate chips.
4. Transfer the batter into the prepared pan, spreading it evenly and smoothing the top with a spatula. Sprinkle additional white chocolate chips over top of the batter.
5. Bake until the center is set, 20-25 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool before cutting into 24 bars.
6. Store leftovers in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 4 days.

www.findfoodaitkincounty.org

<https://findfoodaitkincounty.org/recipes/>

Aitkin County Public Health Receives Funding to Launch Stroke Prevention Pilot Program

By: Hannah Sovinski, RD, LD, CLS - Aitkin County Public Health

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Stroke Team announced that Aitkin County Health and Human Services has been awarded funding through the Stroke Team - Based Care request for proposal process. This funding marks an important step in addressing stroke disparities and improving health outcomes in Aitkin County, a rural community where stroke remains a leading health concern.

Stroke in Aitkin County: The Data

Stroke and cardiovascular disease continue to be critical health priorities in Aitkin County, according to Riverwood Health Care Center's 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and MDH data:

- Stroke mortality in Aitkin County is 72.6 per 100,000 residents, significantly higher than the Minnesota state average of 41.4 per 100,000.
- High blood pressure, a major risk factor for stroke, affects 47.6% of adults in the county.
- Heart disease and stroke were identified as one of the top "Areas of Opportunity" for health improvement.
- Approximately 14% of adults reported having had a stroke or heart attack, highlighting the ongoing need for prevention and care coordination.
- Crude stroke prevalence in Aitkin County is 4.6%, higher than the Minnesota average of 3.4% and neighboring counties: 3.7% in Itasca

County and 3.3% in Carlton County.

These data illustrate that Aitkin County faces a significantly higher burden of stroke and cardiovascular disease than the state and surrounding counties, underscoring the urgent need for targeted prevention, early screening, and coordinated care.

Pilot Stroke Prevention Program

This new pilot program will focus on early identification and prevention of stroke risk among county residents. Participants will have the opportunity to be screened for key risk factors such as high blood pressure and other indicators. Early detection will allow public health professionals to connect individuals with interventions and/or services designed to reduce their risk before a stroke occurs.

Community Awareness Campaign

In addition to screenings, the program will include a community-wide awareness campaign to educate residents about stroke prevention. The campaign will focus on recognizing stroke warning signs, managing blood pressure, adopting healthy lifestyle habits, and accessing local resources for care.

This effort empowers the community with knowledge, screenings, and resources to take proactive steps against stroke.

Aitkin County CHATs Meeting Schedule

Cultivating Healthier Actions Toward Sustainability (CHATs)

The 2026 quarterly meetings for the year are scheduled as follows:

- The Q1 meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on January 27th from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM. [Aitkin County CHATs Q1 Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)
- The Q2 meeting is scheduled for April 28th, also virtually on Microsoft Teams, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM. [Aitkin County CHATs Q2 Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)
- The Q3 meeting will take place on July 28th from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM via Microsoft Teams. [Aitkin County CHATs Q3 Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Finally, the Q4 meeting is set for October 27th, running from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM, and will be held virtually on Microsoft Teams. [Aitkin County CHATs Q4 Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

These meetings are open to anyone interested in joining, and we encourage you to share this with others who may want to participate.

Find Food Aitkin County Network Meetings

The 2026 quarterly meetings for the year are scheduled as follows: All meetings start at 9:00 AM.

- Q1: Thursday, Feb 5, 2026 | 9:00 – 10:30 AM [Thursday Local Food Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Q2: Thursday, May 7, 2026 | 9:00 – 10:30 AM [Thursday Local Food Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Q3: Thursday, Aug 6, 2026 | 9:00 – 10:30 AM [Find Food Aitkin County Network - Q3 Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Q4: Thursday, Nov 5, 2026 | 9:00 – 10:30 AM [Find Food Aitkin County Network - Q4 Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

These meetings are open to anyone interested in joining, and we encourage you to share this with others who may want to participate.

www.findfoodaitkincounty.org



Healthy Schools, Thriving Students

How Public Health Can Partner

This menu offers ideas for how Public Health can work alongside schools to support student health and well-being. From health education to creating welcoming and inclusive environments, there are many ways to make a positive impact.

Some initiatives, like promoting body confidence or teaching resilience, help nurture student mental health. Others, such as school food pantries and food security programs, support students' physical health. Policies that encourage tobacco-free schools and regular physical activity further contribute to the overall well-being of students.

Click [HERE](#) to review the Supporting Schools, Supporting Schools "Menu", which outlines how Public Health can partner with school districts.

If your school has a wellness team, Public Health would love to be part of that team!

THE VITAL ROLE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

This menu offers a comprehensive approach to collaborating with schools on student health and wellbeing. Public Health can play a key role in supporting schools across several dimensions, from health education to creating an inclusive, safe environment for all students.

Some of these initiatives, like promoting body confidence or teaching resilience, can have a significant positive impact on student mental health, while others like food security programs (e.g., school food pantries) directly address physical health. Efforts to implement policies that support tobacco-free schools, physical activity, and even breastfeeding support reflect a broad commitment to students' overall well-being.

HEALTH EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Lets Eat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's Eat Education - Changing the way nutrition is taught to reduce body dissatisfaction, prevent eating disorders and better nourish everyone! Four-Part Lesson Plan taking two 50-minute class periods. Appropriate for Middle School & High School students Body Kind Education - Promote positive body image and self-esteem in students through educational programs and awareness campaigns. Three part lesson plan taking two 50 minute class periods. Appropriate for High School students <p>*9th - 12th grade students</p>
Nutrition Programs	Provide nutrition education and cooking demonstrations for students and staff.
Tobacco and Vaping Prevention Education	Assist in educating students and teachers on the importance of tobacco-free environments, including prevention strategies and cessation resources. One part lesson plan taking place during a 50 minute class period or an assembly.
Substance Use Prevention	Support schools with evidence-based programs to educate students on the risks of substance use, including alcohol, drugs, opioids and vaping.

Explore SHIP in Your Community

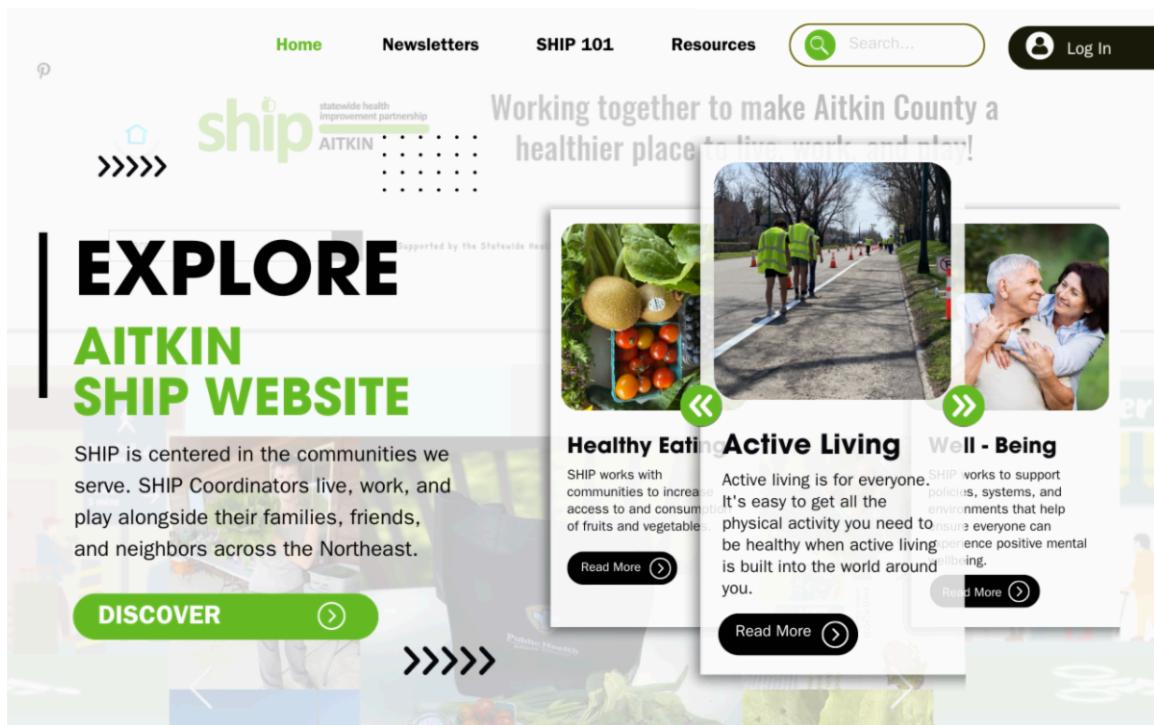


SHIP STORY MAP

The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) creates wellness across Minnesota's communities through community-driven, evidence-based, and equity-focused programs that tackle the root causes of chronic diseases.

The image above and the link below will take you to the storymap to explore work across Minnesota.

We are SHIP



<https://www.aitkincountyship.org/>

Have An Event Coming Up?

Don't forget Aitkin County Public Health has a Mother and Infant Rest Area Canopy that is available for everyone to check out. This pop-up canopy provides a private space for mothers to nurse their little one/s. You can check out the canopy and supplies via the [Aitkin County SHIP website](https://www.aitkincountyship.org/).



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Send

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Aitkin County

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm





SHIP is making a difference.

Aitkin County Public Health | 204 1st Street NW | Aitkin, MN 56431 US

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