



# Public Health

*E-Magazine*

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## Table of Contents

Just One Campaign	2
What You Do Not Know	3
Restaurant Inspection Process	4
Putting Yourself First	5
Calendar of Events	6

## Message from the Director



It is really hard these days to pick up the morning paper or turn on the nightly news and find any reason for optimism. Whether it is the economy, the war, health care costs, oil prices, or job layoffs, it seems we are bombarded every day with issues that seem insurmountable and quite frankly downright depressing. On a more local note it is a very difficult time for all of us as employees of the City of Springfield as we struggle with issues related to the underfunded pension during a downturn in the economy that has not been seen for many years. In trying to pull myself out of the malaise created by all these external challenges that seem like they are going to crush us, I try to look back at where we have been as an organization, where we are now and what the future holds.

Last year we celebrated our 135th anniversary as a health department. During this period in our history we have had to deal with two world wars, the depression, an influenza pandemic that crippled our country and many other local, state and national crises that seemed insurmountable. We survived every one of them and are a stronger organization because of these experiences.

I am not sure what the future holds but I am very optimistic about our department, our city, our state and our country. Sure these are difficult times but as the sayings goes, what does not kill me makes me stronger. My challenge to you is to recognize the valuable service you provide every day, continue to serve our community in good times and bad and remember there are better days ahead.

Yours in Good Health,

## News and Technology

A **flu strain** now spreading in the U.S. is resistant to the flu drug Tamiflu, the CDC today warned in an official health advisory to doctors.

<http://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/news/20081219/cdc-warns-of-drug-resistant-flu-bug>

The Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of two new **zero-calorie sweeteners** made from the stevia plant.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=98494964>



## Just One Campaign

In the next two weeks, people across America will begin to make and break New Year's Resolutions - quit smoking, lose weight, be more patient, declutter the house. This year the Springfield-Greene County Health Department encourages people to succeed by taking small steps. With Just One change, Just One step, Just One choice, Just One word, Just One touch - you CAN make a big difference.

We've been doing it for 135 years! The health department is proof that the "just one" things we do everyday make a big difference in public health in our community. The one restaurant inspection protects hundreds of diners. The one presentation on emergency preparedness helps scores of people become better prepared for the next disaster. The one immunization to a child protects all the children he comes in contact with. With Just One, we are making a difference.

But we can't do it alone. We need the public to be involved in improving public health. That's why in 2009 we encourage you to make Just One change, take Just One step, make Just One choice, use Just One word, give Just One touch. It may seem small, but it can make a big difference. You will succeed the same way making just one change in your life will help you achieve your New Year's Resolutions.

Watch our website at [www.springfieldmo.gov/health/](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/health/) for details on the Just One campaign. We'll tell our story with articles, videos and podcasts, and we'll offer you Just One suggestions. But we also want to hear from you. Share your stories on our blog. Tell us the Just One things you are doing that are making a big difference. When you do, we'll send you a Just One bug. Collect all five and your story may be featured on our website or in one of our Medical Minute video segments!

It's been said that the status of a community's health will be as poor as its citizens will tolerate or as good as its citizens will aspire to achieve. Work with us this year to achieve public health excellence in our community. It takes Just One change, choice, step, word or touch to make a big difference!

## What You Do Not Know May Kill You

While many people are nervous visiting their physician on a regular basis, it is important to understand that annual health risk appraisals and physical examinations play a critical role in helping all of us live longer, healthier, happier lives.

We all would like to age gracefully. But, we must take care of ourselves in order to do so, and as we age our chances for being diagnosed with a chronic or a debilitating disease increases. High blood pressure, heart disease, osteoporosis, and cancer can be addressed simply by diagnosing the problem early.



According to the American Heart Association, nearly a quarter of all Americans have high blood pressure and one-third do not even know it. High blood pressure is known as the "silent killer" because there are no signs or symptoms associated with it. The only way to know if you have it is to have your blood pressure checked regularly. Over time, living with undiagnosed high blood pressure could lead to serious life-threatening illnesses.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 700 thousand Americans will die each year from heart disease. The term "heart disease" is very general and usually includes several more specific heart conditions such as the most prevalent in the United States, coronary heart disease, which can lead to heart attack.

Osteoporosis can be a preventable disease for most people. Currently, there is no cure for osteoporosis, which is why prevention is critically important. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF), "building strong bones, especially before the age of 30, can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis, and a healthy lifestyle can be critically important for keeping bones strong."

The NOF also encourages individuals to talk to their healthcare provider about bone health and, when appropriate, have a bone density test.

According to the National Cancer Society, what you eat and drink, where you work and how you live may have an affect on your risk for cancer. Individuals over the age of 20 should talk to their healthcare provider about their risk level, signs and symptoms, and when to begin screenings.

The risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and many other illnesses can be greatly reduced simply by visiting your doctor for age appropriate screenings. Additionally, knowing your family history, practicing a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise and nutrition will help you take just one step toward maintaining your health.

Visit [www.mayoclinic.com/health/health-screening/WO00112](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/health-screening/WO00112) to learn about age/gender appropriate screenings.

### 10 Critical Symptoms to Take to Your Doctor...

1. Unexplained weight loss
  - 5% *within one month*
  - 10% *within six-twelve months*
2. Persistent fever
  - over 100.4F *lasting more than a week*
3. Shortness of breath
4. Unexplained changes in bowel habits
  - *Severe diarrhea lasting more than two days*
  - *Mild diarrhea lasting a week*
  - *Constipation lasting more than two weeks*
  - *Unexplained urges to have a bowel movement*
  - *Bloody diarrhea*
  - *Black or tarry-colored stools*
5. Mental status change
  - *Sudden or gradual confused thinking*
  - *Disorientation*
  - *Sudden aggressive behavior*
  - *Hallucinations*
6. New / more severe headaches  
(*especially if you're over age 50*)
7. Short-term loss of vision, speaking or movement control
8. Flashes of light
9. Feeling full after eating very little
10. Hot, red or swollen joint

Source: [mayoclinic.com](http://mayoclinic.com)

Violations found during an inspection fall into the critical or non-critical category. Critical items can have a direct impact on the safety of the food.

Examples of critical violations include:

- Improper food temperature
- Direct handling of ready-to-eat foods
- Poor personal hygiene and employee health
- Food from an unapproved source
- Cross contamination between raw and ready-to-eat food
- Lack of food safety knowledge by the person in charge

Non-critical items play an important role in the overall performance of the facility, however, by themselves, they do not directly affect food safety.

Examples of non-critical violations could include:

- Dirty floors
- Workers not wearing hair restraints
- Dirty non-food contact equipment
- Outside trash cans not covered
- Grease on the floor
- Sticky tabletops



## Restaurant Inspection Process

Most people are aware that restaurants do get inspected, but what a restaurant inspector does during an inspection is somewhat of a mystery. Restaurants are routinely inspected one to three times per year depending on their priority level. This level is determined by answering a series of 10 questions. The questions pertain to the menu, the steps taken to prepare foods, the number of customers served on average and inspection history. Routine inspections are unannounced and take place while food preparation is being done.



When the inspector walks in the door, the first question they ask is, "Who is in charge today?" The food code emphasizes the need to have someone in

"I eat out a lot and it makes me feel safer to know the health department is looking out for my best interests."  
-Concerned Citizen

charge who is familiar with food safety and supervises the rest of the employees to make sure they are using safe food handling practices. Once this person is identified the inspector will assess what is taking place in the present moment; which foods are cooking, cooling, being reheated, being hot held for service. The menu is checked for any changes from the previous inspection. Restaurants

will frequently change how they prepare foods depending on labor costs and availability. Foods that were once prepared from scratch may now be purchased frozen and reheated. Temperatures of foods held will be monitored by the inspector in all stages of production. Questions are asked about the food in the walk-in cooler; when was it prepared, how was it cooled, when will it be served, how long will it be kept before discarding. The person-in-charge must be able to answer these questions or could risk being cited a violation for lack of demonstration of knowledge.

As the inspector tours the kitchen and asks questions they must also observe what is taking place in the background. Are employees washing hands when necessary, are they using gloves when touching ready-to-eat foods, do they have a hair restraint on?

Once the inspection is complete the paperwork process begins. The inspection form consists of two pages. The first page lists all the critical stages of operation from hand washing to proper cooling and the inspector denotes what they were able to observe during the inspection. The second page is a blank slate for documenting violations and denoting whether they were "critical" or "non-critical" in nature. A re-inspection will take place to make sure critical violations are corrected if they cannot be corrected on site.

## Freedom from Smoking

The American Lung Association reports that within 20 minutes of smoking your last cigarette, your body begins a series of changes that continues for years.

The Health Department is offering a "Freedom from Smoking" program, developed by the American Lung Association to help you stop smoking for good. Participants will learn how to create a personalized plan to overcome tobacco addiction and start enjoying the benefits of better health. Topics will include:

- Medicines that can help you stop smoking
- Lifestyle changes that make quitting easier
- Preparing for Quit Day
- Managing stress
- Avoiding weight gain
- Developing a new self-image
- Staying smoke-free for good



This program will be offered Tuesday evenings beginning January 13, 2009 from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Westside Public Health Center (660 S. Scenic). The cost is \$30.00. Please call Karen James, RN at 417-864-1687 to register.

Sign up today and get started on your way to a healthier, smoke-free life.

## Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions is a workshop designed for people who have one or more chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis or heart disease. In the workshop, participants will learn ways to self manage their condition in partnership with their healthcare team, as well as receive general information on topics such as physical activity, nutrition, medication, relaxation, symptom management and communication. In addition, the workshop includes practical strategies and skills for coping with the problems that arise from having a long term health condition.

This workshop is a six week course, with one two-hour session per week beginning Thursday, January 15. The workshop will be held at the Springfield-Greene County Health Department and is free to participants. The course is led by two facilitators in a friendly and supportive environment.

To register for this workshop, please contact Tammy Burnett at 864-1432.



## Under the Microscope

### *What is rabies?*

Rabies is a disease caused by the rabies virus and results in an infection and swelling in the brain (encephalitis) that is almost always fatal.

### *How does rabies spread?*

*High Risk:* A bite from an animal with rabies virus in its saliva.

*Lower Risk:* Exposure to saliva, brain tissue, or spinal fluid from an infected animal into the eyes, nose, mouth, or a break in the skin.

### *What animals are most likely to be infected and transmit rabies in Missouri?*

Bats, skunks and unvaccinated dogs or cats that have had an exposure to a rabid bat or skunk.

### *How can you tell if an animal is rabid?*

If a biting dog, cat, or ferret is alive and healthy 10 days from when the bite occurred then the animal was not capable of spreading the rabies virus at the time of the bite. The situation may require the biting animal to be placed into quarantine. Rabies testing, which requires the animal to be destroyed, is also available. The animal to be tested for rabies should never be killed by shooting in the head or smashing/crushing the head.

### *What can we do to prevent rabies?*

Make sure pets (dogs, cats, ferrets) are current on their rabies vaccine. Avoid handling bats and contact with other wild animals. Persons involved in "high-risk" occupations, activities, or travel to high-risk areas should be vaccinated against rabies and persons with exposure to a rabid animal or "high-risk" animal should receive the rabies post exposure series of shots.

## Calendar

Jan. 13	Food Handlers Safety Class	227 E. Chestnut Expwy	2:00pm-4:00pm	Register at 864-1667
Jan. 13	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N. National, 4th Floor	7:00pm	Learn more 864-1303
Jan. 13	Childcare Provider Education			
	“Think First! Brain and Spinal Cord Injury”	660 S. Scenic	7:00pm-8:00pm	Register at 864-1571
	“Fetal Alcohol Syndrome”	660 S. Scenic	8:10pm-9:10pm	Register at 864-1571
Jan. 19	<b>CLOSED for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>			
Feb. 10	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N. National, 4th Floor	7:00pm	Learn more 864-1303
Feb. 10	Childcare Provider Education			
	“Making the Healthy Choice”	660 S. Scenic	7:00pm-8:00pm	Register at 864-1571
	“Food Safety in the Child Care Setting”	660 S. Scenic	8:10pm-9:10pm	
Feb. 11	Food Handlers Safety Class	227 E. Chestnut Expwy	8:30am-10:30am	Register at 864-1667
Feb. 16	<b>CLOSED for President’s Day</b>			
Mar. 10	Food Handlers Safety Class	227 E. Chestnut Expwy	2:00pm-4:00pm	Register at 864-1667
Mar. 10	Childcare Provider Education			
	“Challenging Behaviors in Young Children”	660 S. Scenic	7:00pm-8:00pm	Register at 864-1571
	“Basic Meal Planning”	660 S. Scenic	8:10pm-9:10pm	
Mar. 10	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N. National, 4th Floor	7:00pm	Learn more 864-1303

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

## Women and Heart Disease

Many women when asked what disease they fear the most respond breast cancer. While this disease can have devastating effects, heart disease is the leading cause of death for American women. In fact, the American Heart Association reports that cardiovascular disease kills women at a rate of one per minute, claiming 460 thousand female lives each year.

However, while some of the risk factors for heart disease can not be changed such as increasing age, gender, heredity and history of previous heart attack or stroke, there are other risk factors that can be modified, treated or controlled by focusing on lifestyle habits and taking medications if needed.



- Tobacco smoke** Smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of cardiovascular disease in women.
- High blood cholesterol** Studies show cholesterol levels are higher in women than men beginning at age 55.
- High blood pressure** Women are at increased risk if they are obese, have a family history of high blood pressure, are pregnant or take certain types of birth control pills.
- Physical inactivity** Heart disease is almost twice as likely to develop in inactive people.
- Obesity and overweight** Too much fat, especially in the waist area increases risks for health problems including high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, high triglycerides, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.
- Diabetes** Adults with diabetes have death rates from heart disease that are two to four times those of adults without diabetes.

We encourage you to evaluate your risk factors, modify those you can and manage the others with the assistance of your physician so that you may live a longer, healthier and happier life.

Resource: American Heart Association

Public Health E-Magazine is a publication of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. Kevin Gipson, Director of Health; Clay Goddard, Assistant Director of Health; Kendra Williams, Administrator of Community Health and Epidemiology; Pam Bryant, Administrator of Maternal, Child and Family Health. Story contributions made by: Tammy Burnett, Cathy Gaw, Karen James, Jaci McReynolds, Karen Prescott and Rebecca Ray. Springfield-Greene County Health Department, 227 E. Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, MO 65802, (417) 864-1658. Copyright © 2005 SGCHD. All rights reserved. Information in this publication is not intended for the purpose of diagnosing or prescribing. Consult your physician or health care provider before undertaking any form of medical treatment and/or advice contained in this publication. For additional information, contact Rebecca Ray, 874-1297.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Services are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is committed to helping people live longer, healthier, happier lives.

