



Public Health

E-Magazine

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Message from the Director



I think it is important at times to step back and look at some of the public health challenges that face us at the local, state and national level. As I think of specific challenges, and they are great, I look at three general areas that we need to work on to assure the healthiest nation in the world.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS – Today 45 million Americans are uninsured. Every day thousands of individuals and families live without the health care that they need. All too often the uninsured’s health problems go untreated until they face a crisis and costly interventions. They live sicker, shorter, less productive lives. In a country that spends the most per capita of any country on health care (more than \$8 thousand per person annually) we must develop a national solution to assure every person has access to affordable quality health care.

LIFESTYLE CHOICES – Americans eat too much, smoke too much, drink too much and don’t exercise enough. The consequences of these lifestyle choices are increasing the number of people who are obese and have chronic diseases that must be managed. These diseases such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, high blood pressure and heart disease often have debilitating effects on the individual and lead to shorter, less productive lives. Simple changes of behavior related to diet, exercise and other risk reduction strategies could greatly improve our nation’s health.

EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES - Throughout history infectious disease has always been one of the major influences on society’s health. The history of public health is firmly entrenched in the control and elimination of infectious diseases. Diseases such as cholera, yellow fever, malaria and dysentery still kill millions of people worldwide. Re-emerging diseases such as drug resistant TB and the possibility of a wild strain of influenza reminds us that we must be vigilant in our disease control efforts.

I believe these public health challenges must be aggressively addressed at all levels of government. Our society collectively must address these issues if we are to become and remain the healthiest nation in the world.

Yours in Good Health,

News and Technology

Drugmaker Wyeth is seeking U.S. approval to sell a new version of its blockbuster infant vaccine **Prevnar** that protects against more strains of a germ that causes pneumonia.
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102552997>

Federal health officials say a **potential blockbuster diabetes drug** from Novo Nordisk appears to work. But it says questions remain about its effect on the heart and other organs.
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102554877>



Bike, Bus, Walk to Work Week

While most of us would agree driving a car has its advantages, some of us have often wondered what it would be like just to ditch the keys for a day and use human power (biking, walking, etc.) to reach our destination. Every year, Ozark Greenways provides us an opportunity to do just that by sponsoring Bike, Bus, Walk Week in an effort to create a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly Springfield.

This year’s event will be held May 11-15 and everyone is encouraged to use alternate transportation at least one day during the week. You may register as an individual, workplace or school by visiting <http://www.ozark-greenways.org/bike-to-work/registerCheck.jsp>.

Besides the self-satisfaction of accomplishing something new, there are additional benefits both to the environment and to your personal health.

Some of these benefits include:

1. Conserves resources
2. Non-polluting
3. Inexpensive
4. Relieves traffic congestion
5. Businesses get attention for participating
6. Save time by combining exercise and commuting
7. Arrive at work or school invigorated
8. Experience nature
9. Improve your health, energy and productivity
10. Free breakfast at Panera (coffee and bagel)

take the challenge . . . leave your car behind!

Public Health Week April 6-12, 2009

Despite our best efforts, Americans are not as healthy as they should be. According to the American Public Health Association (APHA), Americans spend more money on health care than any other country in the world. The life expectancy in the United States has reached a record high of 78.1 years but still ranks 46th — behind Japan and most of Europe. A baby born in the United States is more likely to die before its first birthday than a child born in almost any other developed country. Among developed nations, only Latvia has a higher death rate for newborns than the United States. We're among the top 10 countries that have the most people with HIV/AIDS, and chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer are continually on the rise.

While there are many important ways to become and stay healthy, our residents are quickly falling behind in the knowledge and actions it takes to prevent health risks. Now is the time we must re-evaluate our health care approach and what we can do as individuals to overcome the current obstacles.

National Public Health Week, sponsored by APHA, is dedicated to improving the health of our population. The week of April 6, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department is leading this effort by encouraging residents to recommit to support the nation's public health system. While public health has made great strides in impacting the health of our world as a whole, it is important that we as individuals take Just One small step to make a difference in the health of our local community.

Please join us in celebrating National Public Health Week 2009 and supporting public health efforts aimed at "Building the Foundation for a Healthy Greene County." Building a healthy county will require a renewed emphasis on the very strategies that all public health professionals employ, regardless of discipline: prevention and intervention. To kick off this renewed dedication of prevention, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department will be hosting a contest with several community members who are dedicating to making Just One small change in their lives over the next five weeks.

As community members and residents, you can visit our website (www.springfieldmo.gov/health) to keep track of their progress, and vote for your favorites. Each week, a winner will be announced based on voter outcome and the contestant who receives the most votes throughout the six week period will win a grand prize and the title of Public Health Hero.

Weekly winners will receive prizes such as a yoga kit, emergency preparedness kit, healthy cookbook and day passes to the YMCA. The grand prize winner will receive a value card (worth 15 visits) to Chesterfield Family Center.

It is our hope that by following the contestants' stories, community members will decide to make little changes in their lives as well, and that together, these small changes will help build a healthy foundation for public health in our community.

Ten Great Public Health Achievements United States, 1900-1999

- Vaccination
- Motor-vehicle safety
- Safer workplaces
- Control of infectious diseases
- Decline in deaths from coronary heart disease and stroke
- Safer and healthier foods
- Healthier mothers and babies
- Family planning
- Fluoridation of drinking water
- Recognition of tobacco use as a health hazard



source: MMWR Weekly

Ground Level Ozone and Your Yard

There are many ways that you can help reduce ground-level ozone everyday. Here are some tips for reducing air pollution while maintaining your lawn and garden.

- Consider using less polluting gas-powered equipment.
- Consider purchasing electric equipment such as lawn mowers, weed eaters, and leaf blowers.
- Use manual tools such as push reel mowers, rakes and hedge clippers when possible.
- If you need to use gas-powered equipment, purchase equipment with a four-cycle engine. Four-cycle engines emit less air pollution than two-cycle engines.
- Properly maintain your equipment by following the manufacturers guidelines.
- Reduce your mowing time by planting low maintenance turf grasses that grow slowly and require less mowing.
- Decrease your mowing area by planting more trees, shrubs and flowers.

source: www.showmecleanair.com/lawn_care_clean_air.php



Living with Ozone

What Causes Ground-Level Ozone?

Ozone at ground-level forms when air pollutants that are emitted by cars, power plants, industrial plants, and other sources react chemically in the presence of sunlight. Ozone pollution is more of a concern during the summer months when the weather conditions needed to form ground-level ozone occur. Sometimes ground-level ozone is also called the "bad ozone" or "smog".

Ground-level ozone is an air pollutant that causes human health problems even at very low levels. It also damages crops and other vegetation.

What Are The Health Effects?

Ozone can irritate lung airways and cause inflammation much like a sunburn. Other symptoms include wheezing, coughing, pain when taking a deep breath and breathing difficulties during exercise or outdoor activities. People with respiratory problems are most vulnerable, but even healthy people who are active outdoors can be affected when ozone levels are high.

Something as simple as refueling your car after 6 pm can have a positive impact on the air we breathe.

Who Is At Risk?

Several groups of people are particularly sensitive to ozone especially when they are active outdoors because physical activity causes people to breathe faster and more deeply.

- Active children are the group at highest risk from ozone exposure because they often spend a large part of the summer playing outdoors. Children are also more likely to have asthma, which may be aggravated by ozone exposure.
- Active adults of all ages who exercise or work vigorously outdoors have a higher level of exposure to ozone than people who are less active.
- People with asthma or other respiratory diseases that make the lungs more vulnerable to the effects of ozone will generally experience health effects earlier and at lower ozone levels than less sensitive individuals.
- People with unusual susceptibility to ozone.

What Are The Environmental Effects?

Ground-level ozone damages the leaves of trees and other plants, diminishing the crop and forest yields and increases plant vulnerability to disease, pests, and harsh weather.

What Can We Do During High-Ozone Days?

On days when ozone levels are forecast to be very high, we can take these steps to help reduce ozone forming pollution:

- Share a ride to work, walk, use a bicycle or public transportation.
- Combine errands and reduce trips when possible.
- Avoid excessive idling of your car.
- Refuel your car in the evening.
- Do lawn and gardening chores that use gasoline-powered equipment in the evening.
- Conserve electricity and set air conditioners no lower than 78 degrees.

Remember, we can reduce the effects ozone has on our environment and our personal health.

The Family Table

Family meals are making a comeback. Shared family meals are more likely to be nutritious, and kids who eat regularly with their families are less likely to snack on unhealthy foods and more likely to eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Teens who take part in regular family meals are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use marijuana and other drugs, and are more likely to have healthier diets as adults, studies have shown.

Beyond health and nutrition, family meals provide a valuable opportunity to reconnect. This becomes even more important as kids get older.

Making Family Meals Happen

It can be a big challenge to find the time to plan, prepare and share family meals, then be relaxed enough to enjoy them. Try these three steps to schedule family meals and make them enjoyable for everyone who pulls up a chair.

1. Plan

To plan more family meals, look over the calendar to choose a time when everyone can be there.

Figure out which obstacles are getting in the way of more family meals - busy schedules, no supplies in the house, no time to cook. Ask for the family's help and ideas on how these roadblocks can be removed. For instance, figure out a way to get groceries purchased for a family meal. Or if time to cook is the problem, try doing some prep work on weekends or even completely preparing a dish ahead of time and putting it in the freezer.

2. Prepare

Once you have all your supplies on hand, involve the kids in preparations. Recruiting younger kids can mean a little extra work, but it's often worth it. Simple tasks such as putting plates on the table, tossing the salad, pouring a beverage, folding the napkins, or being a "taster" are appropriate jobs for preschoolers and school-age kids. Older kids may be able to pitch in even more, such as getting ingredients, washing produce, mixing and stirring and serving. If you have teens around, consider assigning them a night to cook, with you as the helper.

If kids help out, set a good example by saying please and thanks for their help. Being upbeat and pleasant as you prepare the meal can rub off on your kids. If you're grumbling about the task at hand, chances are they will too. But if the atmosphere is light, you're showing them how the family can work together and enjoy the fruits of its labor. Tell them, "Mmm, something smells delicious!"



Under the Microscope



Hay fever (allergic rhinitis) is an allergic response to indoor or outdoor airborne allergens. Hay fever is one of the most common allergic conditions and affects about one in five people.

Symptoms of hay fever usually develop immediately after exposure to specific allergy-causing substances and can include:

- Runny nose/nasal congestion
- Watery or itchy eyes
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Itchy nose, roof of mouth or throat
- Sinus pressure and facial pain
- Swollen, blue-colored skin under the eyes (allergic shiners)
- Decreased sense of smell or taste

Seasonal Hay Fever Triggers

- Tree pollen (common in spring)
- Grass pollen (common in late spring and summer)
- Weed pollen (common in fall)
- Spores from fungi and mold, which can be worse during warm weather months

Minimize Your Exposure

- Close doors and windows during pollen season
- Don't hang laundry outside, pollen can stick to sheets and towels
- Use air conditioning in your house and car
- Avoid outdoor activity in the early morning when pollen counts are highest
- Stay indoors on dry, windy days
- Wear a dust mask when doing outdoor activities such as gardening

There are a number of over-the-counter and prescription medications available that help relieve hay fever symptoms. Speak with your doctor about which is best for you.

For more information, visit MayoClinic.com

source: MayoClinic.com

Calendar

Apr. 8	Food Handlers Safety Class	227 E. Chestnut Expwy	8:30am-10:30am	Register at 864-1667
Apr. 14	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N. National, 4th Floor	7:00pm	Learn more 864-1303
Apr. 14	Childcare Provider Education			
	"Autism and Vaccines"	660 S. Scenic	7:00pm-8:00pm	Register at 864-1571
	"Hot Shots"	660 S. Scenic	8:10pm-9:10pm	Register at 864-1571
May 12	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N. National, 4th Floor	7:00pm	Learn more 864-1303
May 12	Childcare Provider Education			
	"Radon: The 2nd Leading Cause of Lung Cancer"	660 S. Scenic	7:00pm-8:00pm	Register at 864-1571
	"Melanoma, Skin Cancers, Prevention and Treatment"	660 S. Scenic	8:10pm-9:10pm	
May 12	Food Handlers Safety Class	227 E. Chestnut Expwy	2:00pm-4:00pm	Register at 864-1667
May 25	CLOSED for Memorial Day			
June 9	Childcare Provider Education			
	"Danger Signals in Infants and Children"	660 S. Scenic	7:00pm-8:00pm	Register at 864-1571
	"Safe Sleep for Infants"	660 S. Scenic	8:10pm-9:10pm	
June 9	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N. National, 4th Floor	7:00pm	Learn more 864-1303
June 10	Food Handlers Safety Class	227 E. Chestnut Expwy	8:30am-10:30am	Register at 864-1667

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Family Meals (Continued from page 5)

3. Enjoy

Even if you're thinking of all you must accomplish after dinner's done (doing dishes, making lunches, etc.), try not to focus on that during dinner. Make your time at the table pleasant and a chance for everyone to decompress from the day and enjoy being together as a family.

They may be starving, but have your kids wait until everyone is seated before digging in. Create a moment of calm before the meal begins, so the cook can shift gears. It also presents a chance to say grace, thank the cook, wish everyone a good meal, or to raise a glass of milk and toast each other. You're setting the mood and modeling good manners and patience.

Family meals are a good time to teach civilized behavior that kids also can use at restaurants and others' houses, so establish rules about staying seated, passing items instead of grabbing them, putting napkins on laps, and not talking with your mouth full. You can gently remind them when they break the rules, but try to keep tension and discipline at a minimum during mealtime. The focus should remain on making your kids feel nurtured, connected, and part of the family.

Keep the interactions positive and let the conversation flow. Ask your kids about their days and tell them about yours. Give everyone a chance to talk.

For more information or for conversation starters, visit www.kidshealth.org

source: www.kidshealth.org



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: Brian Adams, Cathy Gaw 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.

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

