

Public Health

Magazine

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Fall 2007

Safe, Healthy Holidays



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Message from the Director

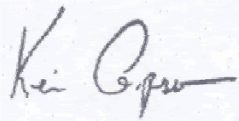


Every year about this time I take some time to reflect on the year that is about to end. I can safely say that 2007 is one I will not soon forget. The year started out with a major ice storm that paralyzed our community and stretched our department's capacity to the limit. However, we were able to respond to all the needs of our community in a way that made me very proud that I chose public health as a career. As 2007 ends we are faced with another challenge, that being the findings in the state audit and even more concerning is the print media's response to those findings. It is really perplexing that in January the News Leader lauds city employees as heroes as they responded to the ice storm and a short 11 months later they are portraying all of us as loose spending, uncaring bureaucrats jetting to Las Vegas, using the city issued purchasing cards for extravagant meals all the time making personal phone calls on city issued cell phones.

Just as we made it through the challenges of the January ice storm we will survive the attacks of the Woodward and Bernstein want-a-bees down at the News Leader. What is really gratifying is that during the past couple of weeks as I talk to folks throughout the community they, to a person, have given me words of encouragement and have commented how blatantly unfair the newspaper has been. It still does not calm the anger that I feel every time one of our employee's names ends up in the paper when all they were doing is following policy. If I didn't have a canary at home I would stop my subscription.

Thanks to all of you to a very successful 2007. I hope 2008 will be a bit quieter but just as productive.

Yours in good health,



News and Technology

Merck voluntarily **recalls Hib vaccine** after bacteria is found on manufacturing equipment. To date bacteria has not been found in any of the vaccine.
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/recalls/hib-recall-faqs-12-12-07.htm>

An alcohol-related motor vehicle crash kills someone every 31 minutes. December is **National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month** (3D Month).
<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/ImpairedDriving/>

The Office of Homeland Security encourages Americans to "**resolve to be ready**" in 2008 by preparing themselves, their families and their businesses for emergencies.
<http://www.ready.gov/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention express concern over an **increase in premature death** among adults age 20 to 29 and 45 to 54.
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/2007/r071213a.htm>

Prevention—Fight off Viruses During the Holidays

By Rinda Dunn, BSN, RN, MPH, Community Health Nurse

During the holidays, added stress can make us more vulnerable to respiratory illnesses. A healthy diet, exercise and rest will help fight off illness, but the best defense we have is hand washing.

Cold and flu viruses are spread from person to person by respiratory droplets created by coughs and sneezes. When a sick person coughs or sneezes, germs fly into the air and can be breathed in by someone standing nearby.

Viruses can also be spread on shared surfaces like faucets, telephones, doorknobs and handrails. Here they can survive for up to two hours, just waiting for another person to come along and pick them up. The person who touches a contaminated surface and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes can easily introduce the germs into their body and become ill.

Cover Your Cough

When we cough or sneeze, germs are released into the air in respiratory droplets. You can prevent your germs from going airborne by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Afterwards, throw the tissue away and wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your shirtsleeve or the crook of your elbow instead of on your hands.

Hand Washing

The most effective way to protect yourself from germs is good hand washing. Always wash your hands before you handle or prepare food. Also, develop a habit of washing your hands after –

- Using the bathroom or changing a diaper,
- Touching your face, hair or body,
- Handling trash, pets or money,
- Eating, drinking, smoking or chewing gum or tobacco, and
- After sneezing, coughing and blowing your nose.

To wash your hands effectively, wet them under running water, apply soap and rub vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Rinse them under running water and dry them with a paper towel or air dryer. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and avoid recontaminating your hands.

For more information contact Rinda Dunn, BSN, RN, MPH at (417) 864-1498. ©

Partnership—Doula Foundation of Mid-America

The health department's Women, Infant and Children's program has launched an innovative partnership with the Doula Foundation of Mid-America to provide a variety of services to WIC clients. The program's goal was to increase the number of mothers who breastfeed and to increase the duration of breastfeeding.

The Doula Foundation offers WIC clients childbirth classes, prenatal Yoga and Itsy-Bitsy Yoga (for mothers and their infants up to crawling age). Doulas also provide prenatal support to WIC families. Although they are not medical professionals, the Doulas are familiar with the birthing process. They are able to provide physical and emotional support for the parents and act as their advocate, working with medical staff to ensure the family's birthing plan is carried out.

WIC clients who have participated in the program say they enjoyed the classes, and that working with a Doula really helped them with the birthing process. Each client who had a Doula also choose to breastfeed her infant.

The partnership was funded through an enhancement grant from the US Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Section, funneled through Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' WIC Program.

For more information call Julie Randolph, BS, IBLC at (417) 874-1079. ☺



Under the Microscope



The pneumococcal vaccine, sometimes called the pneumonia shot, protects the body against pneumococcal disease that can lead to serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia) and the covering of the brain (meningitis).

About one of every 20 people who get Pneumococcal pneumonia dies from it, as do about two people out of 10 who get bacteremia and three out of 10 who get meningitis.

Those who should get a pneumococcal shot include people 65 years old or older and people under 65 who have problems with their lungs, heart, liver, or kidneys. People with health problems such as diabetes, sickle cell disease, alcoholism and HIV/AIDS should also consider being vaccinated, as should those who have had their spleen removed.

Most people only need one shot, which offers lifetime protection. Some people may need to get a booster shot after five years. The shot can be given at any time. Ask your health care provider or call the health department's Westside Public Health Center at 417-874-1220.

The shot is very safe and generally does not have side effects. Some people may experience a little swelling and soreness at the spot where they get the shot, but it usually goes away in a day or two.

Medicare and Medicaid generally cover the cost of the vaccination. Call Medicare at 1-800-633-4227 for more information.

For more information on pneumococcal vaccine, call Leslie Davis, RN (417) 874-1220. ☺

Air Quality Control Division

By Doug Neidigh, Air Quality Control Coordinator

The Air Quality Control Division of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department works to protect people and the environment from the effects of air pollution. This is accomplished through enforcement of local and state air quality regulations within the city limits, maintaining a network of local air monitoring stations, and providing educational/outreach programs to reduce air pollution.

Enforcement of local and state regulations includes issuing permits to various emission sources, inspecting emission sources to ensure compliance, conducting asbestos inspections, issuing open burn permits and responding to air pollution-related complaints. The enforcement jurisdiction of the program is limited to Springfield city limits. The Department of Natural Resources enforces air pollution regulations in Greene County.

The division's monitoring section operates a network of 13 air pollution monitors at four monitoring stations in the city. These stations monitor EPA listed criteria pollutants. The results from the monitoring stations are provided to Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for determining compliance with the EPA National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Air quality education/outreach programs are developed and communicated with the assistance of the Health Education Division. Together, these programs work to educate the general public about air pollution sources, health effects, and what strategies to reduce air pollution. These programs also partner with other organizations to implement innovative pollution reduction projects.

For more information contact Doug Neidigh at (417) 864-1086. ☺

Ring in the Holidays with

By Mary Ellison,

Creating Holiday Traditions

Traditions are usually handed down from generation to generation, but each family can also start their own traditions – something the entire family looks forward to each year.

They don't need to be elaborate or time consuming. Consider your family's interests and create a special activity that will bring you all together this holiday season, and many more to come.

Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

- Pick out a tree
- Decorate your tree
- Choose a special ornament each year
- Make cards for friends and family
- Tell a favorite story
- Take family pictures
- Bake cookies and treats
- Adopt a family in need
- Attend a pageant or a parade
- Drive around looking at lights



'Tis the season to decorate for the holidays, but unfortunately, it's also the season that many household fires and unintentional injuries happen. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that about 5,800 people are treated in emergency rooms for injuries that occur from falls while decorating for the holidays.

Taking a few precautions when you decorate will help keep your family and guests safe this holiday season.

Before you begin, make sure your tools and equipment are suitable for the job and in good working order. When possible, have another adult help you when you are decorating the outside of your house or other spaces where a ladder is required.

Here are some safety tips to consider when decorating this year.

Lights and other powered decorations

- Always follow the manufacturers' recommendations when putting together trees, lights and other decorations.
- Use only holiday lights that have been tested by Underwriters' Laboratories. Look for the UL seal on every set of lights and every extension cord you buy and use.
- Use no more than two strings of lights attached together, per wall outlet.
- Outdoor lights should be designed for outdoor use.
- Always check light sets for frayed cords, broken or loose wires and faulty plugs. Do not use damaged lights.
- Wrap up your loose cords so that your pets (or guest pets) will not be tempted to play with them or chew on them.
- Be aware that miniature bulbs are small enough to go in children's mouths and may pose a choking hazard.
- Unplug all of your indoor lights before going to bed or leaving the house.

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Baking Up Goodness

No family gathering or holiday celebration seems complete without the tasty traditional dishes we love, like roast turkey and stuffing, cranberry sauce and fruitcake. But are these mouth-watering treats actually safe? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 76 million Americans suffer from food borne illness each year. Following a few simple guidelines will help ensure your guests enjoy the safe and healthy holiday feast you serve.

Store refrigerated foods at 41° F or less, and frozen items at 0° F or less. Avoid thawing meat on the kitchen countertop. Thaw it instead on the lowest shelf of the refrigerator, with a tray or plate under it to catch any drips. Some items may be thawed in the microwave or as part of the cooking process. Other items can be thawed in the sink under cool running water. Foods should always be cooked as soon as possible after being thawed.

Clean food preparation areas, tools and utensils, and wash your hands with soap and water before handling food. When your holiday meal is finished, remove the leftover turkey from the bone and place the meat in small, shallow

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Safe and Healthy Practices

Health Educator

Fire Safety and Air Quality

- Be sure smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly. Install fresh batteries if you did not do so during the fall daylight savings time change.
- Have working fire extinguishers in your home, and make sure everyone in your family knows how to use them correctly.

Candles

- Keep candles away from children and flammable materials.
- Never leave candles unattended.
- Trim candle wicks to ¼ inch before lighting the candle. Trim them again every 2-3 hours to prevent high flames.
- Teach your children to be careful around open flames. Remind them candles are not toys, or something they can eat or drink.
- Blow out all candles before you go to sleep or leave the house.
- Use well-ventilated candle holders that are sturdy and will not tip over. Avoid wooden or plastic holders, as they can catch on fire. Be careful with glass candle holders, which can break when they get too hot.
- Do not burn candles that have lead in the wicks. When you buy candles, ask the retailer if the wicks contain lead.

Trees and Decorations

- If you purchase a live tree, be sure it is fresh. Needles should be green and bend. Trees that are too dry can be a fire hazard.
- Use a sturdy stand to prevent the tree from tipping over.
- Never leave children or pets alone near the tree.
- Do not use heavy, breakable ornaments.
- Use caution with ornament hooks, which can be easily swallowed by a child.
- Unplug lights before you go to bed or leave the house.

For more information, call Mary Ellison at (417) 864-1685. ☺

Selecting Safe Toys

Help prevent injuries this year by giving the children on your holiday list toys that are safe and age-appropriate, following these guidelines:

- Anything small enough to fit inside a toilet paper tube can pose a choking hazard for young children.
- Be sure strings, straps or cords are shorter than 7 inches, to prevent strangling accidents.
- Electrical toys can pose a burn hazard. Children under age 8 should not use toys with electrical plugs or batteries.
- Don't let children under age 8 blow up balloons. Store latex balloons out of a child's reach and deflate them and dispose of all pieces when a child finishes playing with them.
- Don't allow children to use riding toys near stairs, traffic or swimming pools.
- Be sure children wear appropriate protective gear such as helmets, elbow pads and knee pads when operating bicycles, skates, skateboards and scooters.
- Always supervise children at play.

Check the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site at www.cpsc.gov for information on recent toy recalls. ☺

containers in the refrigerator to cool quickly and uniformly. Refrigerate dressing and gravy in separate containers. Use leftovers within three days and be sure to reheat them to at least 165° F.

When giving food as a gift, choose items that do not require refrigeration, such as cookies, candy, cakes or fresh fruits from reputable companies. Hard salami or dry-cured country hams are another safe alternative.

Make this festive season a healthy, happy holiday for all your guests with these tips on thawing, preparing, serving, storing and giving food. Remember the best rules of thumb are: "when in doubt, throw it out" and "keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold."

Taking these simple precautions will ensure you and your guests enjoy a safe and healthy, holiday feast this year.

For more information, call Jodi Daniel at (417) 864-1583. ☺



Pandemic Influenza—Caring for Yourself at Home

In the event of a large scale disease outbreak, bioterrorist attack, influenza pandemic or other public health emergency, your health care provider may request that you care for yourself or ill family members at home.

You can do that safely by monitoring your symptoms, including any fever, and keeping your health care provider informed about your progress. Rest, eat small, healthy meals and drink plenty of water. Avoid alcohol and tobacco products. Check with your health care provider for a recommendation on taking antiviral or comfort medications.

Your symptoms may vary, depending on the illness, so ask your health care provider for a list of specific symptoms to monitor. Write down the date and time symptoms develop. Update your notes every four hours or when your symptoms change or disappear. Note your temperature and any medications you take, including the dosage.

Avoid spreading illness to other family members by washing your hands frequently with soap and water and by using respiratory etiquette when you cough or sneeze. Don't share personal items, like utensils or toothbrushes and clean common surfaces often.

For more information contact Jaci McReynolds at (417) 874-1205. ☹

Dealing with a Fever

A fever may be uncomfortable, but it plays an important role in helping your body fight off infection.

For adults a fever usually isn't dangerous unless it measures 103°F or higher. For very young children and infants, though, even a slight temperature may be a warning sign of serious illness or infection. Newborns may even develop a subnormal temperature when ill. Contact your health care provider if a fever goes beyond—

- 102°F for adults
- 102°F for infants and children older than 3 months
- 100.4°F for infants up to 3 months old (rectal temperature)

Check with your health care provider to see if you should try to relieve the fever. At times this can hide symptoms and actually interfere with your body's immune system. ☹



Emergency Tip:

Plan ahead for pets. Most American Red Cross shelters will accept service animals, but not pets. Be sure you know where you can safely take your animals if you are displaced from your home. Have food and water stored for them as part of your emergency go kit.

Ice Storm—Solemn Reminder

This month Springfield and Greene County received a solemn reminder of the importance of being prepared for disaster as we narrowly escaped a major ice storm that pounded the Ozarks. Less than a year after the January ice storm of 2007 crippled our area for several days, are we, as individuals, better prepared? In an informal survey, approximately 850 people who received flu vaccinations from the health department this year were asked several questions about their level of personal preparedness. Approximately 65% of respondents said they have stockpiled a three-day supply of food for their family, while 55% said they have enough disaster supplies for three days.

While 67% percent said they have an emergency plan if they are at home when disaster strikes, only 36% said they have a plan if they are away from home, and even fewer (34%) said they have a plan if they cannot return to their neighborhood.

Today is the day to start preparing. The health department encourages residents to take three simple steps now to get ready for any disaster. Step 1—sit down with your family today and **make a plan**. Figure out where you will go and what you will do. Decide how you will get back in touch with each other if you are separated.

Step 2—put together a disaster supplies kit. Experts now recommend a 14-day supply of food, water, medicines, comfort items, a first aid kit, a battery powered radio, a flashlight and extra batteries. The ice storm in January taught us that sometimes a 3-day supply is just not enough, and the threat of pandemic influenza reinforces the importance of preparing for longer stretches of time without available supplies or assistance.

Step 3—know where to get information. In the survey, 96% of respondents said they get emergency information from television and 76% said they use a battery-powered radio. Know where to get specific information about your community and have a backup source of information. Start preparing today—you never know when the next disaster may strike.

For more information contact Jaci McReynolds at (417) 874-1205. ☹

Community Heroes—Meaningful Holiday Volunteering

Adapted from an article found at www.VolunteerMatch.com

It's holiday season once again — and it seems to be here sooner than ever. In this busy world we live in, VolunteerMatch is your partner for finding meaningful ways to give back in no time at all. Here are just a few tips to make your holiday volunteering great in 2007.

Make It a Family Thing—Give as a family unit. Studies show family volunteer experience for children leads to greater community involvement as adults. Use the VolunteerMatch search engine and select Great for Groups and Great for Kids check boxes to find family-friendly opportunities.

Choose Wisely—Many nonprofits are closed or lightly staffed over the holidays. Look for a charity with special holiday programs. Agencies working to combat hunger and housing problems are always a good bet — and their need is always high.

Get Started Now—Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are some of the busiest days of the year for volunteering. Sign up now to ensure you'll have time to be screened quickly.

Consider the Other 364 Days—With so much interest in holiday volunteering, it's easy to overlook that nonprofits can use your help the rest of the year. Ask your favorite agency how you can help after the holidays.

Bring Along Your Jingle Bells—Give money as well as your time. Philanthropic donations can lighten your tax burden.

Most importantly, consider creating a new holiday tradition for yourself and your family this year. VolunteerMatch can help make it happen, so start your search today!. ☺

Volunteer Spotlight—Sarah Muegge



Q: What is your current job?

I am a nurse. My title is Instructor, Educational Service. Specifically I work with the Regional Services Clinics at Coxhealth.

Q: Where do you live?

Springfield.

Q: Why did you decide to become a Community Hero?

I've always been involved with community organizations such as the American Cancer Society, National Head Injury Foundation (now called Brain Injury), PTA, church activities, etc. Our children are out of the home now so I have regained flexibility in my off hours schedule.

Q: Why would you encourage others to volunteer (as a Community Hero)?

It's a great way to meet people and give back to the community

Q: What is your philosophy on life?

Enjoy each day, serve others.

Q: What is your family like?

My husband Dave and I have been married for 30 years. He is a physician and works at Missouri State Taylor Health and Wellness Center. Our son and his wife live in St. Louis and both are completing graduate studies at Washington University. Our daughter is a nurse at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Q: What are your hobbies?

I like to play golf, read and cook. Over the last several years I've been completing a Masters of Public Health Nursing and anticipate a graduation date for May 2008. ☺

Calendar of Events

Dec. 1 –24, DCO Gift Wrap Booth. The Developmental Center of the Ozarks needs volunteers to wrap gifts at the Battlefield Mall. Last year, more than 6,500 gifts were wrapped, raising \$26,000. To help, contact Danielle at (417) 829-0896.

Dec. 1 –21 Toys for Tots Drop Off. The Nixa Fire District is collecting toys for the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program. Since 1947, Marines have provided toys to millions of disadvantaged children during the holiday season. Drop off a new, unwrapped toy at the Nixa Fire District Station #1 at 711 North Main or 301 South Nicholas Road in Nixa before December 21. For more information contact Bryan Newberry, at (417) 725-4025 or (417) 353-1982 cell.

Jan 10. American Red Cross New Volunteer Orientation. 4:30 p.m. Volunteers must be trained before assisting with disaster response. To register, e-mail frontdesk@redcross-ozarks.org and include your name, name of the training you wish to attend and your phone number.

Jan 19. Public Health Training (Tier 1 – Entry Level). 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. American Red Cross, Springfield. Volunteers who wish to help during a public health emergency will learn the role of public health in a disaster, how they fit into the overall response, personal preparedness and stress management.

Jan. 22. Volunteer Tax Class. Springfield. 5:30 p.m. Deana Parsick, a Tax Professional/Instructor for H&R Block, will answer questions and explain changes in tax laws. All attendees will receive a gift from H&R Block. To register, contact Rebecca Ray at (417) 874-1297 or rray@springfieldmo.gov.

February 20—March 1. Greene County CERT. 6 p.m.—9 p.m. Greene County CERT Classes will be held at 833 Boonville. The class will consist of four 3-hour sessions starting on Wed. Feb. 20th. Consecutive classes will be Feb. 21, Feb. 26 and Feb. 28. The final session will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 1. Bring a lunch. Drinks will be provided. To register, contact Kathy Reich at (417) 869-6040.

For more information, visit www.beacommunityhero.com or contact Rebecca Ray at (417) 874-1297 or rray@springfieldmo.gov.

Calendar

Dec 25	Closed for Christmas			
Jan 1	Closed for New Year's Day			
Jan 8	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N National, 4th Fl	7:00 pm	Learn more 864-1303
	"Live Like Your Life Depends on It"	660 S Scenic	7:00 pm-8:00 pm	Register at 864-1496
	"Operation Us"	660 S Scenic	8:10 pm-9:10 pm	Register at 864-1496
	Food Handlers' Food School	227 E Chestnut Expy	2:00 pm—4:00 pm	Learn more 864-1685
Jan 21	Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day			
Feb 12	Ozarks HELP (Herpes) Support Group	3850 N National, 4th Fl	7:00 pm	Learn more 864-1303
	"Love Your Heart"	660 S Scenic	7:00 pm-8:00 pm	Register at 864-1496
	"The ABC's of Secondhand Smoke"	660 S Scenic	8:10 pm-9:10 pm	Register at 864-1496
Feb 13	Food Handlers' Food School	227 E Chestnut Expy	2:00 pm—4:00 pm	Learn more 864-1685
Feb 18	Closed for President's Day			

* No charge for events unless noted.

Training—Online Interactive Game Offers Training to Public Health Staff

by Rebecca Ray, Educator/Volunteer Coordinator

A new online game trains public health staff and volunteers to work at a POD, or point of dispensing site. The game was developed by the Chicago Department of Public Health and the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health Center for the Advancement of Distance Education (CADE) through CDC funding. The game is a wonderful way to train staff at no cost, in triage, forms management and dispensing, all within the safety of a simulation. Workers can train in multiple roles and practice as often as needed.

The game transports players into the middle of a dispensing center with all the distractions of a frightened and confused public. The player must remain calm and focused and process as many people as possible through the center, while maintaining adequate supplies and correctly answering questions.

To play the game, visit www.thepodgame.com and click on the "Play" tab for instructions. Click the "Play Game" link to select a role and a training module. Returning players can bypass the training module and begin play immediately.

The POD Game was created to give public health staff and volunteers the opportunity to feel the stress of what it will be like working in a POD, but in a safe environment.

After you play, please take the time to share any feedback by sending comments, questions or suggestions to Rebecca Ray at (417) 874-1297 or r-ray@ci.springfield.mo.us. ☺



Winter Issue—

- Remembering the January 2007 Ice Storm
- Cold Weather Safety Tips
- Plan Ahead for Safe Travel
- Fresh Start to Life

Public Health E-Magazine is published by the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. Kevin Gipson, Director of Health; Clay Goddard, Assistant Director of Health; Pam Bryant, Administrator of Maternal, Child and Family Health; Kendra Williams, Administrator of Community Health and Epidemiology; Jaci McReynolds and Rebecca Ray, Managing Editors. **Springfield-Greene County Health Department, 227 E Chestnut Expwy, Springfield, MO 65802, (417) 864-1658, <http://health.springfieldmo.gov>.** Copyright © 2005 SGCHD. All rights reserved.

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



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