Our Mission

“To assure the highest possible level of health for the people of the communities we serve.”

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WIC – More Than Just Food! It’s Healthy Food!

The Health Department has been providing the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) health and nutrition program to qualifying women (pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum), infants, and children (age 1 to 5 years) for more than 34 years! The minute a new WIC client walks in the door, they realize that the WIC office is more than just a place to get baby formula or to go for help with food!

WIC has evolved and changed with the times. WIC has stayed current with advancements in technology, in the area of nutritional science and breastfeeding, and in promoting effective behavior change. Today, more than ever, WIC offers the support that clients need to live healthy life-styles.

The WIC program has always provided healthy food benefits to its participants. The shopping lists for WIC participants identify the specific foods that the participants are allowed to purchase. Historically, the WIC food package has always provided good foods like cheese, milk, eggs, fruit juice, breakfast cereal, and peanut butter.

Over recent years, the WIC food package has been evolving to keep up with advancements in nutritional science. The WIC food packages, now give participants a defined number of dollars each month to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. Whole grain foods, like oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain tortillas, and whole grain breads have been added. Participants have a choice between peanut butter and dry or canned beans. Soy beverage is an available alternative for WIC participants who have an intolerance or allergy to dairy milk. Low fat milk and low fat cheese options are encouraged. Fruit juice remains on the food packages, but participants receive less juice per month. Infants continue to receive infant cereal, but now receive pureed fruits and pureed vegetables instead of fruit juice.

Another big change in WIC over recent years is that WIC is now known as a breastfeeding program, rather than a program where you can get infant formula for a baby. In Dickinson and Iron counties, breastfeeding is initiated immediately after birth for more than 90% of newborn babies! A breast pump program has been introduced and is available to all breastfeeding post-partum moms enrolled in the program. Our local WIC agencies also have, on staff, an experienced breastfeeding mom who is available to teach all WIC women about breastfeeding and to support them thru their experience.

Food choices matter! So if you thought WIC was just a food program, think again. WIC provides healthy food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals, so that all participants can have better health and meet their individual nutritional goals.

To get help with healthy food and more, call the WIC office at 779-7212 or 265-4173.

Public Health: “supporting our clients and community to live a healthier lifestyle.”
Protect Your Eyes From UV Rays

With Summer fast approaching, the Health Department encourages all residents to protect their eyes from the sun. Protecting eyes from ultraviolet (UV) rays may help save vision today and in the future.

Exposure to UV rays can be very harmful to the body. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Yet the most preventable cause of this type of cancer is exposure to UV light.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that basal cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer to affect the eyelids and may appear on the lower lid, in the corners of the eye and under eyebrows. Many people may also not be aware of the damage that UV rays can have on the eyes and vision as well.

Prevent Blindness, the nation’s oldest eye health and safety organization, helps educate the public on the dangers of UV and steps to take to protect vision today and in the future. Because UV damage to the eyes can be immediate and cumulative, it is imperative to learn how to protect sight today.

Eye problems that UV rays can cause include:

**Cataract** - UV rays, especially UV-B rays, may also cause some kinds of cataracts. A cataract is a clouding of the eye’s natural lens, the part of the eye that focuses the light we see.

**Corneal Sunburn** - Corneal sunburn, called photokeratitis, is the result of high short-term exposure to UV-B rays. Long hours at the beach or skiing without proper eye protection can cause this problem. It can be very painful and may cause temporary vision loss.

**Macular Degeneration** - UV rays may lead to macular degeneration, a leading cause of vision loss for older Americans.

**Pterygium** - A growth that begins on the white of the eye and may involve the cornea. Eventually, the growth may block vision. It is more common in people who work or spend extended periods of time outside in the sun and wind.

**Skin Cancer** - Skin cancer around the eyelids is also linked to prolonged UV exposure.

There are different types of UV rays. UV-A radiation has lower energy and penetrates deep into the eye which may injure the macula, the part of the retina responsible for sight in the center field of vision. UV-B radiation is presumably more dangerous and is mainly absorbed by the cornea and lens of the eye and can damage those tissues.

Prevent Blindness strongly recommends that both adults and children always wear both a wide-brimmed hat or cap and the proper UV-rated sunglasses. Wrap-around sunglasses are best as they protect the eyes and the skin around the eyes. There are also many types of sports eye protection glasses that offer UV protection as well. Ask an eye doctor for his or her recommendations.

For more information on the dangers of UV exposure and how to choose the best UV protection, please visit the Prevent Blindness dedicated Web page at [preventblindness.org/uv](http://preventblindness.org/uv) or call (800) 331-2020.
Thirty-three years ago, on June 5, 1981, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published the first mention of what later became known as HIV. We view this anniversary with sadness, for the nearly 30 million people worldwide who have lost their lives to the epidemic. Another 34 million currently live with HIV.

Each year, on June 27, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), AIDS.gov, and other national and local entities across the country organize National HIV Testing Day. This unique initiative sends the message, "Take the Test, Take Control," to those at risk from HIV.

National HIV Testing Day was launched in 1995 by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) in response to the growing number of HIV infections in communities of color and other heavily impacted communities. Nearly 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the U.S., and almost one in six (15.8%) don't know they are infected. HIV testing is a critical first step in taking control and responsibility over one's health.

According to CDC data released in 2011, an estimated 49,000 Americans were diagnosed with HIV infection in the U.S. In that same year, an estimated 32,000 people were diagnosed with AIDS. Overall, an estimated 1,156,000 people in the U.S. have been diagnosed with AIDS, and an estimated 15,500 people with an AIDS diagnosis died in 2010.

NAPWA realizes that lack of access to treatment and care along with social stigma can make living with HIV difficult. With early diagnosis, individuals will know their HIV-status, in turn, allowing them to seek appropriate treatment and care.

Locally, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department offers HIV testing and counseling services. In observance of National HIV Testing Day, the Health Department will offer free HIV testing in each of its offices on Monday, June 9th at the Iron County office and on Monday, June 16th at the Dickinson County office. Testing is anonymous and confidential. Orasure testing is available which is non-invasive and involves no blood drawing. Those wishing to be tested may call the Health Department at 779-7237 or 265-4166 to make an appointment.

For additional information on HIV testing please visit http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HIVtesting/.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department wants to remind the community that while bats are associated with Halloween and scary movies, they provide a useful service in controlling the insect population. Bats can also be carriers of rabies and other diseases that can put our families and pets at risk. It's important to know what to do to reduce the risk of coming into contact with a bat and what to do if there is one in your living quarters.

Reducing Exposure to Bats Outdoors
Some bats roost in tree cavities or foliage, and might be spotted in areas where outdoor activities take place, such as hiking or camping. While there have been instances of humans exposed to rabid bats, most bats in a natural setting are not rabid and, in many outdoor situations, the presence or sighting of bats is common and normal. When possible, prevent bats from entering outdoor living quarters and other occupied spaces.
Reduce Risk of Exposure to Bats

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- Screens or mosquito netting can provide a useful barrier against direct bat contact.
- Teach children never to handle live or dead bats, as well as any unfamiliar wild or domestic animals (even if they appear friendly).
- In some settings, materials contaminated with bat droppings may have to be disposed of or decontaminated. Clean-up of areas contaminated with bat droppings should not be attempted by non-trained personnel. Proper personal protective equipment (PPE), including respirator, mask, gown, and gloves, should be worn by anyone handling the potentially infectious material.

Reducing Exposure to Bats Indoors

Some bats live in buildings, and may continue to do so with little risk to inhabitants if they are unable to access living areas and the chance of contact with people is low. However, bats should always be prevented from entering rooms of your home. Bat proofing your home or living quarters can prevent them from entering.

Here are some suggestions to “bat-proof” your home:
- Carefully examine your home for holes that might allow bats entry into your living quarters.
- Any openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch should be caulked.
- Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics.
- Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking.
- Ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

Some considerations if you find a bat in your home:
- It may be important to capture the bat for rabies testing, especially if a potential bite or exposure has occurred.
- Put on leather work gloves.
- Gather the following supplies: small box or coffee can, piece of cardboard, and tape.
- When the bat lands, approach it slowly, while wearing the gloves, and place the box or coffee can over it.
- Slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside.
- Tape the cardboard to the container securely, and punch small holes in the cardboard, allowing the bat to breathe.

If a bat is found in a room with a sleeping child, an intoxicated person, or a sound sleeper, the bat should be tested. Also a bat that has been killed by a pet or found in a room with a pet should also be tested. If a bite or exposure to saliva (e.g., into a person’s mouth, eyes, or a fresh wound) has occurred, you will need to contact the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at the numbers below to arrange for rabies testing of the bat. If no potential exposure has occurred, the bat can be safely released outside.

For more information about bats, please call the Health Department at 779-7239 or 265-4172 or visit the CDC website at CDC.gov/features/bats.