Our Mission

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

Our Mission

During the Month of April, we celebrate Public Health Week, April 4-10, 2011
This year’s theme is “Safety is No Accident: Live Injury Free”

The potential for injury is all around us - at home or work, while on the move or even at play. Each year, nearly 150,000 people die from injuries, and almost 30 million people are injured seriously enough to go to the emergency room.

Injuries are not "accidents," and we can prevent them from happening. Taking actions such as wearing a seatbelt, properly installing and using child safety seats, wearing a helmet and storing cleaning supplies in locked cabinets are important ways to proactively promote safety and prevent injuries.

Quick Facts:

* Preventable injuries rank among the top 10 causes of death for people of all ages.
* In 2008, almost 20 percent of all crashes involved some type of distraction.
* Three children die each day as a result of drowning.
* One pedestrian is injured every eight minutes in a traffic crash.
* More than 90% of exposures to poisonous substances happen at home.
* Injuries account for 12% of medical care spending, totaling as much as $69 billion per year.
* Eighteen percent of fatal work injuries are a result of assaults and violent acts such as homicides and self-inflicted injuries, according to the preliminary findings of the 2009 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries.

* Having a working smoke alarm cuts the risk of death from a house fire by 50%.
* Two-thirds of children killed by bicycle-related injuries could have been saved by wearing a helmet. Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85% and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88%.
* Early childhood home visitation can prevent child maltreatment episodes in high-risk families by 40%.  
  (Cont. on page 3)
Safe Food Temperatures and Thermometers

To keep food safe, you must make sure that temperatures are safe. Guessing the temperature of food is not accurate and can cause foodborne illness. There are two questions that you probably don't think about very often that can be crucial to your family's health.

Why do I need to measure food temperatures?
What do I need to know about food thermometers?

Why is measuring the temperature of food important? Because microorganisms (germs, bacteria, and viruses) that can cause foodborne illness grow best on foods in the temperature danger zone. The temperature danger zone includes the temperatures between 45 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit on a food thermometer. Food should be in this temperature range for no more than a total of four hours. This total includes the time food spends in the shopping cart, in the car, waiting to be put away, in preparation, cooking, waiting to be served, and cooling before storage. The rule of thumb is that after food has been prepared and served, it should never sit out for more than two hours before it is put away in the refrigerator or freezer.

Food thermometers take the guess work out of knowing the temperature of the food you will be preparing, serving, and eating. The most common food thermometer (and the least expensive) is called a bi-metallic stemmed thermometer. The stem of these thermometers is placed in the middle or thickest part of the food. The temperature is read from a dial at the other end of the thermometer. These thermometers are available at most grocery and hardware stores. Never leave a bi-metallic stemmed thermometer in food that is cooking in an oven, a microwave, or on a stove top. The bubble that covers the dial is plastic and will melt.

Digital thermometers are also available, although they are more expensive than the bi-metallic types. These measure temperature through a metal tip and show the temperature on a readout panel.

Single-food-use thermometers such as candy, meat, and deep-fry thermometers are used with only the type of food or use specified. The temperature range is designed for these foods and uses. Never use mercury filled or non-heat resistant glass thermometers (ones used for taking a person's temperature) with foods. These thermometers may break when used with food.

All thermometers must be measuring the temperature correctly or they won't help keep food safe. When you buy a thermometer in the store, check the degrees it is registering. Most stores are between 65 and 70 degrees F. inside, the thermometer should be reading about that temperature. If it is reading 120 degrees F. or 40 degrees F., it is a safe bet that something is wrong with the thermometer, so don't buy it. Once you buy a thermometer, you need to check to make sure it keeps reading the temperature correctly.

Here is a simple way to test a thermometer. Stick the sensing tip or stem in a clean, Styrofoam or glass cup that contains half ice and half water. Make sure the tip does not touch the side or bottom of the cup. Wait four or five minutes or until the needle is steady. The temperature should read 32 degrees F. If the thermometer has a calibration nut near the dial, and the dial does not read 32 degrees F, turn the nut until the needle is on 32. Less expensive thermometers do not have calibration nuts. If the dial is reading more than five degrees above or below 32 degrees, you should replace the thermometer. If the dial is reading between one and five degrees above or below 32 degrees, write the amount down and remember to add or subtract the amount when you are reading the thermometer. Or, if you think you may forget to do this, buy a new thermometer.

Now that you know how to check temperatures and how to test your thermometers, you need to learn what temperatures are necessary to make food safe.

- Poultry, stuffed meats, and stuffed pastas should be brought to 165 degrees F., measured at the thickest part of the flesh if not stuffed or measured in the middle of the stuffing.

- Ground beef, game, and pork should be cooked to 155 degrees F. or until no pink is visible in the meat or juice.

- Pork, ham, sausage, and bacon should measure 155 degrees F. at the thickest part and away from any bones.

- Beef roasts should be cooked to 145 degree F. at the thickest part and away from any bones.

If you are using a microwave, add at least 25 degrees F. to each of the above internal cooking temperatures.

It is just as crucial that you measure cold temperatures correctly. Hold cold food at 41 degrees F. or lower and never mix warm food in with cold food to cool it off. To cool large quantities of foods, like a thick stew or chili, pour into shallow pans. Try to keep the food no more than two inches deep. Place the pans on top shelves of the refrigerator and cover the pans when the food has cooled.

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During the Month of April, we celebrate Public Health Week, April 4-10, 2011
This year’s theme is “Safety is No Accident: Live Injury Free”  (Cont. from front page)

Some Things You Can Do:

At Home:
- Assess your home for potential hazards such as poor lighting and uneven surfaces to prevent falls.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
- Establish a plan for how you would evacuate from your home in the event of an emergency.
- Program emergency numbers, such as the Poison Control Hotline (1-800-222-1222), into your phone to call in the event of a poisoning emergency.
- Store cleaning supplies and medicines in locked cabinets out of the reach of children.

At Work:
- Wear all personal protective equipment required or recommended for your occupation.
- Participate in worksite safety trainings programs and follow all workplace laws and safety rules.
- Hold a brown-bag lunch at work to focus on workplace safety.

At Play:
- Wear a helmet and other properly fitted protective gear.
- Use proper form and accept your body’s limits.
- Play it safe and strictly enforce rules that prevent injury.
- Monitor children while they are at play to ensure safety.

On the Move:
- Wear a seat belt on every trip, no matter how short.
- Make sure children are buckled up in a car seat, booster seat or seat belt.
- Walk facing traffic and make yourself visible when walking at night.
- Avoid texting, eating, using the phone or grooming while driving.

During Public Health Week 2011, the American Public Health Association (APHA) needs your help to educate Americans that "Safety is No Accident". We all need to do our part to prevent injuries and violence in our communities. Join us as we work together to create a safer and healthier nation.

Source: American Public Health Association (APHA)

For additional public health information, please visit these websites:

American Association of Poison Control Centers: http://www.aapcc.org
Centers for Disease Control: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh
National Safety Council: http://www.nsc.org
Safe Child: http://www.cdc.gov/safechild

March is Parenting Awareness Month

Parenting is for a lifetime and in honor of this commitment the State of Michigan has designated March as Parenting Awareness Month. During this very special month, people who raise children will be celebrated and the importance of effective parenting in nurturing children to become healthy, caring and contributing citizens will be the focus.

Effective parenting is not easy. In fact some people think that parenting “is the hardest job on earth.” With patience, care, love, a good sense of humor, and good parenting, however, much can be accomplished. And what exactly does good parenting include?

Good Parenting Includes:
* Showing children love, concern and respect at all times.
* Giving children a safe place to live and play.
* Helping children express their feelings appropriately, and listening to what they say.
* Giving children appropriate choices whenever possible.
* Having reasonable rules that are understood by all.
* Being responsible and teaching children to be responsible.
* Spending time with children.
* Setting an example by what we say and do.
* Working with our schools and communities to make them better for children.
* Asking for help when we need it.

Remember, parenting is for a lifetime and the investment you make in your children today, will reap great rewards for everyone in the future. For more information or materials on parenting, please visit www.preventionnetwork.org. For more information about parenting support services, please call the health department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

“Public Health: Safety is No Accident: Live Injury Free”
Safe Food Temperatures and Thermometers (Cont. from pg. 2)

Take the temperature of foods cooling in the refrigerator to make sure large quantities will cool to 41 degrees F. as rapidly as possible. Stir food to cool it more quickly and evenly.

- Reheat foods to 165 degrees F. within two hours.
- Do not mix reused food with fresh portions.
- Keep food only two days before reheating, and reheat only once.

Measuring food temperatures using a thermometer is an important part of food safety. If you have additional questions about safe food handling, contact one of the environmental health sanitarians at the health department at 779-7239 (Dickinson County) or 265-9913 (Iron County).

For more information about measuring food temperatures, go to the USDA site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/types_of_food_thermometers/index.asp.

Source: State of Alaska Food Safety & Sanitation Program