Our Mission

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

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month

(By Carol Thornton, EP Co-Coordinator)

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month. It is time to think of what lies ahead in the winter months. In our communities, we can count on two events that will occur this winter. One is the arrival of seasonal influenza and the other is the arrival of winter weather. Both these events require preparedness on our part.

In preparing for influenza, the most important thing we can all do is get vaccinated. Last winter, we prepared for the H1N1 pandemic influenza in our communities with the distribution of the H1N1 vaccine to the public through our local medical providers, community clinics and school clinics. The H1N1 vaccine has had a very good safety record and this year will be included as part of the seasonal vaccine as H1N1 virus is expected to remain through the coming year. It joins two other vaccines for viruses also expected to cause influenza in the 2010-2011 season: influenza A/Perth/H3N2 and influenza B/Brisbane. It is recommended that ALL persons 6 months and older receive the flu vaccine this year. But it is important that those at higher risk, children, pregnant women and those with underlying medical conditions especially get vaccinated, as was recommended during the pandemic. So, watch for more information on community clinics to be distributed soon.

In preparing for winter weather, we should plan to have emergency supplies for up to three (3) days minimum for each member of the family if utilities should be disrupted. Supplies should include food that does not need refrigeration, preparation, cooking or much water. This food supply should be separate from the usual pantry items. Canned fruit, vegetables, pasta, meat, poultry, and fish are suggested. Drinks should also be stored and include prepackaged beverages, sports drinks, juice in cans or bottles and bottled water. Special consideration should be made for food for infants, the elderly and those on special diets. Also, do not forget food for your pets.

In addition, think about alternative safe heating and lighting that would be available if utilities were affected. Have a supply of batteries for flashlights and oil for lamps. Other items to consider are paper products, diapers, a manual can opener, prescription medications and over the counter medications, and blankets and sleeping bags. To keep informed, have a battery operated or crank radio and a NOAA weather radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.

Be informed and be prepared for whatever the winter might bring.

“Public Health: Protecting you every step of the way.”
Think of eight women who are important to you. Now imagine one of them being diagnosed with breast cancer. In the United States it is estimated that one in eight women can expect to develop breast cancer over the course of their lifetime. Breast cancer is the most common cancer that affects women, other than skin cancer and more than one in four cancers is breast cancer. In 2009, an estimated 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer and 62,280 new cases of non-invasive breast cancer were expected to be diagnosed in women in the United States. Further, about 40,170 women in the U.S. were expected to die in 2009 from breast cancer.

Early detection is very important when it comes to breast health and prevention. Two important practices include monthly self-examinations after age 20 and yearly mammograms after age 40. Following a low-fat diet, regular exercise and being a non-smoker may also reduce your risk. Mammograms are the best method to detect early breast cancer and can cut as many as one-third of related deaths.

A few symptoms that may indicate breast cancer include a lump or dimple in the breast, a change in size or shape of the breast or unusual discharge from a nipple. Even when a lump is detected, eight out of 10 breast lumps turn out to be benign, or noncancerous. It is important for all women to take care of their bodies, especially when it comes to awareness and prevention of breast cancer and other diseases.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department has a Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) for income eligible women between the ages of 40-64. For more information on this program contact your local Health Department at 779-7237 in Dickinson County and at 265-4166 in Iron County.

Nearly 1 in 15 homes in the United States would be expected to have an elevated indoor radon level, and in Michigan approximately 1 in 8 homes would be expected to have a radon problem.

Radon is a tasteless, odorless, colorless, radioactive gas that is naturally occurring in soil and rock. It enters buildings through openings in the foundation floor or walls (sump openings; crawlspaces; floor/wall joints; cracks; space around plumbing, wiring, or ductwork; etc.). Radon has no warning symptoms (it does not cause headaches, nausea, fatigue, etc.); the only known health effect is an increased risk of lung cancer!

Any home could have a radon problem. It doesn’t matter whether it’s old or new; energy efficient or drafty; or built over a basement, over a crawlspace, or built slab-on-grade—it could have a problem, so ALL homes should be tested. The only way to know if your home has a radon problem is to test it! Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, resulting in more than 21,000 new lung cancers each year (more than 600 of those in Michigan alone!). EPA and the Surgeon General recommend that all homes be tested for radon. For more information call 1-800-RADON-GAS or visit www.michigan.gov/radon.
November is Kick Butts Month

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is recognizing November as ‘Kick Butts’ Month. During this month, health officials are encouraging local community members to live a tobacco-free life and reduce their risk of the leading causes of preventable deaths in Michigan.

In 1982, the United States Surgeon General’s Report on the Health Consequences of Smoking stated that “Cigarette smoking is the major single cause of cancer mortality in the United States.” Today, smoking is responsible for nearly one in five deaths in the United States. In Michigan, cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke are the two leading causes of preventable deaths. Because smoking is an activity that an individual chooses to do, smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death in our society.

According to the 2008 Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, about 21.1 percent of adults in Michigan are current smokers. Smoking kills more people each year than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined.

Smoking contributes to the development of many kinds of chronic conditions including cancers, respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular diseases. It has been estimated that smoking costs the United States $167 billion in annual health-related economic losses and over 5.5 million years of potential life lost each year.

Cancer
Cigarette smoking accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths. It is a major cause of cancers of the lung, larynx (voice box), oral cavity, throat, esophagus, and bladder, and a contributing cause in the development of cancers of the pancreas, cervix, kidney, stomach, and also some leukemias. Smoking causes about 87% of lung cancer deaths. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among both men and women, and is one of the most difficult cancers to treat.

Other Health Problems
Smoking is the major cause of heart disease, aneurysms, bronchitis, emphysema, and stroke, and it contributes to the severity of pneumonia and asthma. Smoking can also be associated with reduced fertility and a higher risk of miscarriage, early delivery (prematurity), stillbirth, infant death, and is a cause of low birth weight in infants. It can also be linked to sudden infant death syndrome.

Secondhand Smoke
The smoke from cigarettes (called secondhand smoke or environmental tobacco smoke) has a harmful health effect on those exposed to it. Secondhand smoke is as dangerous as smoking, especially if a person is exposed on a daily basis. When nonsmokers are exposed to secondhand smoke, it is called involuntary smoking or passive smoking. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke absorb nicotine and other compounds just as smokers do. The greater the exposure to secondhand smoke, the greater the level of these harmful compounds in the body.

Throughout the year, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department works to reduce the number of smokers and the exposure of secondhand smoke by offering assistance with smoking cessation resources, participating in tobacco-free coalitions, celebrating national observances like the “Great American Smokeout,” and working with communities on smoke-free policies.

“‘The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is always working to guard and protect against threats and illness caused by exposure to cigarette smoke, because saving lives saves dollars,” said Kelly Rumpf, Health Educator.

Are you ready to quit tobacco for good?

1) Do you want to quit tobacco for yourself?
2) Do you believe that tobacco is bad for your health?
3) Will family, friends, and/or coworkers support you?
4) Are you willing to change your daily routine to become tobacco free?
5) Are you prepared to deal with some challenging moments once you make the commitment to quit?
6) Will you be patient with yourself if you slip up?

If you said yes to three or more questions, you’re ready to quit!

Call the Michigan Tobacco QuitLine at 1-800-QUIT-NOW for help today!
Wellness Fun Facts

- Each square inch of human skin consists of twenty feet of blood vessels.
- Babies are born with 300 bones, but by adulthood we have only 206 in our bodies.
- Wearing headphones for an hour increases the bacteria in your ear 700 times.
- Dentists recommend that a toothbrush be kept at least six feet away from a toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush.
- The average person falls asleep in seven minutes.
- We shed 40 pounds of skin in a lifetime.
- Brains are more active sleeping than watching TV.
- The first owner of the Marlboro Cigarette Company died of lung cancer.
- When the moon is directly overhead, you weigh slightly less. Remember that next time you check your diet success.
- Like fingerprints, everyone's tongue print is different.