Our Mission

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

Inside this issue:

March 27-April 2, 2006 - NATIONAL SLEEP AWARENESS WEEK 2
NUTRITION WISE—Health Benefits of Garlic 2
May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month 3
Smoking is Bad for Your Health—How Addicted are You to Smoking? 3
Get Moving U.P. 4

The American Public Health Association (APHA) and hundreds of partner organizations will explore ways that Americans can build healthier communities and healthier kids during National Public Health Week, April 3-9, 2006.

As part of the weeklong observance, communities across the country will consider how buildings, roads, sidewalks and neighborhood design are affecting the health of children. For example, children who live close enough to school to walk often do not because they have no sidewalks to walk on. Air pollution has contributed to higher rates of childhood asthma, and the lack of access to fresh foods and avenues for activity in some neighborhoods has contributed to rising rates of childhood obesity.

During the eleventh annual event, APHA will reach out to policymakers, public health officials and partner groups across the country to empower them to assess the status of the built environment and children’s health in their communities, identify areas for improvement and implement model programs. APHA will work with select partners to develop a Community Report Card that may be used to evaluate the current state and impact of the built environment on children. The report card will include evaluation of the built environment as it relates to the specific issues of access and equity, physical activity, injury prevention and asthma.

Last year’s National Public Health Week focused on identifying and reducing the barriers that keep older Americans from getting the health care and information they need. More information on National Public Health Week 2005 may be found at www.nphw.org.

Founded in 1872, the APHA is the oldest, largest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world. The association aims to protect all Americans and their communities from preventable, serious health threats and strives to ensure community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and preventive health services are universally accessible in the United States. APHA represents a broad array of health providers, educators, environmentalists, policy-makers and health officials at all levels working both within and outside governmental organizations and educational institutions.

More information is available at www.apha.org.
Sleep Is Important

America is becoming a nation of the sleep-deprived. Are you one of them?

In our 24/7 society, there are many more opportunities to do things other than sleep, such as 24-hour cable TV, the Internet, email, working longer hours, and shift work. More Americans are trading sleep to work and play more.

Getting enough sleep and sleeping well are important to help you stay healthy.

Not getting enough sleep can lead to impaired memory and ability to process information, poor performance in school, decreased work performance, driving and other accidents, relationship problems, and mood problems such as anger and depression. More recently, research suggests that chronic sleep deprivation may also be a contributing factor to obesity.

Healthy Sleep Tips

Make sleep a priority and aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep without interruptions. Here are some sleep tips from the National Sleep Foundation to help you get started:

- Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule throughout the week, including weekends.
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine. Stop working and begin to relax by taking a bath, reading or listening to music. Think about your day and appreciate what you accomplished and the people you touched.
- Create a sleep conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly. It’s best to complete your work out at least a few hours before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine (such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, and chocolate) near bedtime.
- Avoid nicotine (cigarettes, tobacco products) near bedtime. It can lead to poor sleep.
- Avoid alcohol close to bedtime.

Sleep Problems

If you have problems sleeping, keep a diary. Record the problems you have and when you are sleepy at a time you want to be awake and alert. If the problems continue, discuss your sleep diary with your doctor. There may be an underlying cause that you will want to be properly diagnosed and treated.


NUTRITION WISE—Health Benefits of Garlic

Besides adding delicious flavor to food without fat or sodium, the natural plant compounds in garlic seem to stimulate enzymes in our bodies that deactivate cancer-causing substances before they start the cell damage that can lead to cancer. These compounds also seem to help prevent cancer through their effects on cell growth and reproduction.

You don’t need to eat large amounts of garlic to achieve these benefits. Most studies suggest that one or two cloves a week may be enough.

Although the results of other studies are very mixed, regular garlic use may also reduce high blood pressure. Garlic supplements might lower blood cholesterol too. Although the results of these studies also vary, a decrease of 0 to 13 mg/dl in LDL (“bad”) cholesterol is generally observed.

National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month (NTPPM) is an educational campaign designed to help communities recognize that the effects of unintended teen pregnancy and early childbearing are far-reaching. The campaign increases the public’s awareness of and commitment to teen pregnancy prevention. The campaign mobilizes communities to help young people develop responsible positive behaviors and attitudes regarding sexuality.

Here at the health department we have a Family Planning program to help address this issue. Family planning is a preventive health measure that positively impacts on the health and well being of women, children and families. Family planning clinics at local health departments are specifically created to address unmet needs of women and men considered to be below poverty or with special needs. Services provided through family planning clinics allow women and men to make well-informed reproductive health choices thereby reducing the numbers of unintended pregnancies and abortions.

According to data on “Estimated Teen Pregnancy Rates and Teen Female Population” from years 1989 to 2003, in both Dickinson and Iron Counties, the teen female population is increasing (830 to 905 Dickinson County) and (365 to 418 Iron County) however the pregnancy rate per teens has decreased. In 1989 there were 41 births to teens as opposed to 31 in 2003 in Dickinson County; and 29 in 1989 as opposed to 14 in Iron County in 2003. Both state and national statistics indicate a decline as well.

Factors that contribute to teen pregnancies include lack of health and sex education, alcohol and drug use, history of sexual abuse, lack of, or inconsistent birth control practices, low self-esteem, and low self-determination. Family Planning Services actively work to prevent teen pregnancies.

We estimate serving between 910-950 clients over the next calendar year. The majority of the clients we serve are typically teens, aged 15-19. Our priority is to serve teens as they are at highest risk for unintended pregnancies.

Is smoking “just a habit” or are you addicted? Many smokers are unsuccessful at quitting because of their addiction to nicotine. Every person has a different level of nicotine addiction. The more dependent you are on nicotine the more severe the withdrawal symptoms are when you try and quit.

Take this mini assessment—Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence*—to find out how addicted your body is to nicotine. Check your total score for your dependence level in the table at the end of the assessment.

1. How soon after you wake up do you smoke your first cigarette?
   A. After 60 minutes (0 points)
   B. 31-60 minutes (1 point)
   C. 6-30 minutes (2 points)
   D. Within 5 minutes (3 points)

2. Do you find it difficult to refrain from smoking in places where it is forbidden?
   A. No (0 points)
   B. Yes (1 point)

3. Which cigarette would you hate most to give up?
   A. The first in the morning (1 point)
   B. Any other (0 points)

4. How many cigarettes per day do you smoke?
   A. 10 or less (0 points)
   B. 11-20 (1 point)
   C. 21-30 (2 points)
   D. 31 or more (3 points)

5. Do you smoke more frequently during the first hours after awakening than during the rest of the day?
   A. No (0 points)
   B. Yes (1 point)

6. Do you smoke even if you are so ill that you are in bed most of the day?
   A. No (0 points)
   B. Yes (1 point)

Your Total Score _________

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<th>If Your Score Is</th>
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<td>8-10</td>
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Get ready, set, go! Starting April 2, 2006, WELCUP (Wellness Council of the Upper Peninsula) will be “kicking - off” its Fifth Annual “Get Moving U.P.” worksite and community physical activity incentive program. Over a 9-week period, participants will learn how to incorporate more moderate and/or vigorous activity into their daily routine. Participants will record their daily minutes of physical activity at www.fitup.org. Worksites and community members are encouraged to form teams of four each who log their minutes of activity on the website. Participants will have a chance at winning cash incentives held throughout the program and be eligible for the final grand prize drawings if they complete 1,080 minutes/individual or 4,320 minutes/team of physical activity by the end of the program which is June 3, 2006. The program is free to WELCUP members; otherwise the cost is $10/team and $5/individual for non-members. WELCUP membership information is also available at the fitup.org website.