

National Public Health Week

April 11-17, 2010



A Healthier America: One Community at a Time

What does public health mean to you? Of course the public health department provides services for individuals who don't have health insurance such as immunizations and family planning. But the health department does so much more... and affects every citizen of Berrien County, whether you know it or not!

A day in the life...



7 a.m. Your alarm clock rings and you roll out of bed. You brush your teeth with fluoride-enriched water. The U.S.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) listed water fluoridation as one of the ten great public health achievements of the 20th century

7:30 a.m. Before you leave, you have a balanced, nutritious breakfast. The milk, juice, and food you prepare have all been inspected and approved as ready for human consumption. The paint on your walls no longer contains harmful lead, banned by public health agents in 1978. If you do notice chipped paint that might contain lead, you can call the health department to inspect and repair the problem.

8 a.m. You hop in the car for your daily commute to work and buckle your seatbelt. Public health experts have conducted research that has led to improved traffic safety laws and seatbelt requirements.

9 a.m. Your workday has begun. The air filters provide the office with clean air. Public health leaders have worked with county and state legislators to assure a smoke free environment at your workplace through the Berrien County Clean Indoor Air Regulation and through Michigan's new clean indoor air law.

12 noon At lunch, you go for a brisk walk. Health department employees are hard at work ensuring safe sidewalks and complete streets in your commu-



nity. The CDC encourages adults to get at least 30 minutes of activity at day to stay healthy.

5 p.m. You go to meet friends or family for dinner. You see a health department certificate posted, which means that health department sanitarians have inspected the restaurant to make sure that food is being prepared and served in a safe and healthy way.



8 p.m. You check out the Berrien County Health Department's website and discover that not only does public health inspect the water you drink, the air you breathe and the food you eat, but the health department is also watching out for viruses such as the H1N1 virus, and preparing for unforeseen disasters in order to protect the public. www.bchdmi.org

During National Public Health Week, recognize that strong, healthy communities are dependent upon strong public health systems, and that begins with YOU. If every one of us took just a few small steps towards a healthier lifestyle, the next generation could quite possibly be the healthiest in the world. Take the first step by learning more about public health. Visit the CDC's website <http://whatispublichealth.org/> and the National Public Health Week's website www.nphw.org.

Michigan soon to be Smoke-Free

One of the greatest Michigan accomplishments in public health lately is the smoke free Michigan law. Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm signed legislation that prohibits smoking in public places such as restaurants, bars, hotels, or any place that serves food or beverages. The Ron M. Davis Law, named after the late chief medical officer of the Department of Public Health, takes effect May 1, 2010, and will make Michigan the 38th state to ban smoking in public places.



Secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in Michigan, resulting in about 2,500 deaths. When smoking occurs in the workplace, employees are exposed to cancer-causing substances all day. Smoking-related illnesses in adults include heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory illnesses and diabetes. Children and adolescents exposed to secondhand smoke can develop asthma, ear infections, colds and pneumonia.