



Window Of Health

Monroe County Health Department

"Growing Healthy families...Together"

January, 2010

Volume 5, Issue 4

MCHD Staff Happily Receive H1N1 Vaccinations



Inside this issue:

- Diabetes Health Fair **2**
- Radon Detection **2**
- Tips For Parents **2**
- New Employees **3**
- Motorcycle Helmets **3**
- Winter Health Tips **3**
- MCHD Tobacco Free **3**
- Underage Drinking **4**

H1N1—It Ain't Over Till It's Over

There is some good news to report on the H1N1 flu virus. Kentucky Department for Public Health officials tell us that overall cases are declining as is seen throughout the United States and the world.

On a precautionary note — pandemic influenzas generally come in waves. We are now at the lower ebb of a wave, but the wave can potentially increase significantly after the first of the year. Therefore, we must not let our guard down. No one knows whether 2010 might be a replay of 1958 following the Asian flu outbreak of 1957. Like H1N1, the Asian flu was a new strain. It struck in the spring, hung around during the summer, and picked up steam as schools opened in the fall infecting some 25% of the U.S. population. In late November it appeared to wane.

As it turned out, the Asian flu simply took a break during the holidays. In January, 1958, it came roaring back, infecting millions more and killing as many as 20,000 Americans by the end of March.

Public health officials are very aware that although serious, this year's outbreak could have been much worse. So far, the H1N1 virus has proven to be less lethal than originally predicted. Although starting out slow, vaccine availability has increased substantially in the past few weeks providing vaccine for all in the high risk groups who want it, and for many others. In Monroe County, we have lifted the requirement for being in a high risk group for H1N1 infection to receive the vaccine and will now vaccinate anyone who desires such.

Fighting the flu is a shared responsibility, and it is time for all to step up and do our part. If you have not been vaccinated, please do so. This is a way to better protect you, your family, and your community. As of this printing approximately 1200+ Monroe Countians have been vaccinated for H1N1.

Finally, until the female who doesn't exercise, who doesn't eat 5 a day fruits and vegetables, but grazes over high caloric junk food, and generally doesn't take care of herself sings, H1N1 is not over. Protect yourself now for a possible 3rd wave of the outbreak by getting a vaccination today. Please call the Monroe County Health Department for information on how you can get vaccinated at your convenience.

Food Safety Regulations Amended For Coming Year

Regulations governing Kentucky's food code have been amended, improving safety and health standards for food storage, preparation and serving. Among other improvements, the new code requires that businesses and facilities employ someone who has knowledge of food safety and its relationship to foodborne illness. The changes also require that permit holders take responsibility to exclude or restrict ill workers with communicable disease such as norovirus, E. coli, salmonella

or Hepatitis A. Other significant changes require that cold food be stored at 41 degrees F. instead of 45 degrees (business owners will have 5 years to upgrade equipment); and the use of consumer advisories regarding the consumption of animal foods that are raw, undercooked or not otherwise processed to eliminate pathogens. The new regulations were adopted in May of 2009 with an implementation date of May, 2010. Local health department staff have been

trained on these new regulations. Locally, the Monroe County Board of Health recently passed an ordinance requiring all permitted food establishments which prepare and sell food to have at least one person on staff who has received a mandatory food managers certification. This will be required before 2011 permits will be issued. Trainings will be held at the Monroe County Health Department. Contact Jason Holland at the health department for details.

January Is National Radon Action Month

Radon is a cancer-causing radioactive gas. You cannot see, smell or taste radon, but it may be a problem in your home. The Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today. If you smoke and your home has high radon levels, you are at high risk for developing lung cancer. Some scientific studies of radon exposure indicate that children may be more sensitive to radon. This may be due to their higher respiration rate and their rapidly dividing cells, which may be more vulnerable to radiation damage.

New advances in testing procedures now allow for testing for just three to seven days instead of one year as was required previously.

For additional information on Radon testing or to pick up your free Radon Detection Kit, please call Jason Holland at the Monroe County Health Department.



Diabetes Health Fair

On November 12, the Monroe County Diabetes Coalition, Monroe County Medical Center, and Monroe County Health Department hosted their annual Diabetes Health Fair. Various agencies hosted booths with information on Diabetes. Incentives and door prizes were given away. The Medical Center offered free A1C testing for participants. A total of 58 attended.



Guest Speaker Sandy Peterson, RN, CDE speaks to the group about the "Highs and Lows of Diabetes."



MCMS student Amanda McGeorge hosted a booth demonstrating her STLP (Student Technology Leadership Program) project "Juvenile Diabetes: Normal Life Different Routine" which took home regional honors and will be competing at the state next May! Congratulations Amanda and good luck in May!

"Be careful about reading health books, you may die of a misprint."
Mark Twain



Tips For Parents To Raise Safe and Healthy Kids

1. Plan for a healthy pregnancy by taking folic acid avoid drinking alcohol, know your family's health history, and make sure you are healthy and up-to-date on your immunizations.
2. Educate yourself on child development so that developmental delays are caught early and interventions can be made to help your child reach their full potential.
3. The developmental program "HANDS" can assist eligible 1st time parents with developmental screenings, referrals, activities, and information that supports age appropriate development. The program also networks with other agencies to ensure a beneficial treatment program is implemented when delays are detected.
4. Get your child routine check-ups and vaccinations which should include dental and eye exams.
5. It is also important to protect your kids in the home, car, school, and other areas. Parents should use appropriate car seats, keep harmful substances out of reach, and also be aware of any signs of abuse.
6. Parents should provide healthy meals and snacks. Eating right helps children have energy, strong bones, and fight diseases. Breast feeding is best for babies.
7. Kids should be active at least one hour a day. Activities for the whole family are good and should increase breathing and heart rate.
8. Be smoke-free. Exposing children to second-hand smoke is harmful. Being smoke-free during pregnancy can prevent premature birth and after birth can prevent SIDS, bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, and ear problems.
9. Monitor kid's activities, what they are watching and who they are spending time with. Discourage TV for children under the age of 2 and limit to no more than two hours for children over 2.
10. Parents should teach healthy habits that include wearing a seat belt, helmets, sunscreen, brushing teeth, washing hands, and more.
11. Kids also need love and support of family and friends. Talk and make sure kids know how to be safe, healthy and happy. It is important for kids to develop in a safe, loving, and secure environment.

New Staff Members At The Monroe County Health Department



Brenda Spear

The Monroe County Health Department is proud to welcome two new employees, Brenda Spear, Senior Support Services Associate I, and Kaylin Graves, Clinical Assistant.

Brenda grew up in Monroe County and is a graduate of Tompkinsville High School. She attended UT Nashville and received her certification as an MLT. She has

two daughters, Jennifer Grimsley and Brittany Newport.

Kaylin is a life long resident of Monroe County and a graduate of Monroe County High School. She is the recent bride of Kelby Graves. She is currently attending Western KY University majoring in Business Management with an emphasis in Human Resources.



Kaylin Graves

Motorcycle Helmets Save Lives

Individuals wearing motorcycle helmets who sustained head injuries fared better outcomes than those who were not, according to a new study.

Patients with head injuries (total sample of 3,328) were grouped into categories representing good and poor outcomes (moderate disability or death) at discharge. Researchers found that the percentages of good and poor outcomes were 87.2 percent and 12.8 percent in the helmeted group; whereas in the non-helmeted group, results were 66.4 percent and 33.6 percent respectively. Non-helmeted motorcyclists had longer average intensive care unit stays and worse outcomes at discharge than helmeted motorcyclists.

Researchers concluded, "The next step involves identifying the difference in costs associated with mandatory legislation and lack of regulation. Future cost-utility or cost-effectiveness analyses can calculate the incremental cost-effectiveness ratio for regulation of helmet use."

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a drop in body temperature to 95 degrees or less and can be fatal if not detected promptly and treated properly. In the United States, about 700 deaths occur each year from hypothermia.

While hypothermia can happen to anyone, the elderly run the highest risk because their bodies often do not adjust to changes in temperature quickly and they may be unaware that they are gradually getting colder.

Signs of hypothermia include forgetfulness, drowsiness, slurred speech, change in appearance, weak pulse, low heartbeat, and very slow and shallow breathing. If the body temperature drops to or below 86 degrees, a person may slip into a coma or have a death-like appearance.

If you notice these symptoms in a person, take his or her temperature. If 95 degrees or below, call a doctor or ambulance.

Colds—Cause and Treatment

More than 100 viruses can cause colds, the world's most common illness, so few people escape being exposed to at least one of them. In the United States, most people average about three colds every year.

Once it enters the body through the nose or throat, the cold virus begins to multiply, causing any of a number of symptoms: sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, aches and pains, mild fever, nasal congestion and coughing. A cold usually lasts a week or two.

The best way to treat a cold is to take a mild pain reliever, avoid unnecessary activity, get as much bed rest as possible and drink plenty of fluids, especially fruit juices. Over-the-counter cough and cold remedies may relieve some of the symptoms, but they will not prevent, cure or even shorten the course of the illness.

While there is no vaccine to protect you from catching a cold, there are ways to lessen your chances of coming down with the illness. Keep up your natural resistance through good nutrition and getting enough sleep and exercise. Turn your thermostat down and keep the humidity up in your home. Day air dries out the mucous membranes in your nose and throat and causes them to crack, creating a place where cold viruses can enter your body. Avoid direct contact with those who have colds and wash your hands frequently.

MCHD—Tobacco Free Campus

Monroe County Health Department recognizes its responsibility to promote the health, welfare and safety of its patients and employees. In light of scientific evidence that the use of tobacco is hazardous to the health of individuals, as of January 1, 2010, the campus of the

Monroe County Health Department will be tobacco free. Tobacco is defined as cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco.

Smoking cessation classes and education literature are offered through the health department.

Monroe County Health
Department

452 E. 4th Street
P.O. Box 247
Tompkinsville, KY 42167

Phone: 270-487-6782
Fax: 270-487-5457
www.monroecohd.com

Valerie Hudson
Director

Window of Health

Published Quarterly By
The Monroe County
Health Department

Harold Kelley
Editor

Contributors
Amy Comer, ARNP
Jill Ford, RN
Amy Hale, RN
Jason Holland
Amy Hutchinson

Underage Drinking: Dispelling the Myths

Today, the most frequent sources of alcohol for adolescents include family members, friends, adult purchasers, and parties. Tolerance for underage drinking may stem from several misconceptions about youth alcohol consumption.

Myth: "Alcohol is a relatively harmless drug compared to illegal drugs."

Fact: Compared to youth who wait until they are 21, youth who drink before age 15 are 12 times more likely to be unintentionally injured while under the influence of alcohol, 7 times more likely to be in a motor vehicle crash after drinking, and 10 times more likely to get in a physical fight after drinking. Drinking drivers under age 21 are involved in fatal crashes at two

times the rate of adult drivers. In addition, there is a strong correlation between youth alcohol use and violence, risky sexual behavior, poor school performance, and suicide. Recent evidence suggests adolescent drinking can inflict permanent damage on the developing brain. Early onset drinking is associated with greater levels of alcohol problems in adulthood.

Myth: "Underage drinking is inevitable, and it is safer if it occurs in a controlled, residential setting."

Fact: Underage drinking parties represent an unusually high risk setting for youth alcohol problems, including alcohol-related traffic crashes, other forms of injury, sexual assaults, and other forms of violence. Further, providing

alcohol to adolescents explicitly indicates approval of underage alcohol use, while disregarding underage drinking may lead to future substance use or abuse. Despite increasing peer influences as children age, parents continue to play an important role in shaping alcohol use behavior among adolescents. On the other hand, when parents provide alcohol to teenagers at parties, there is a significantly greater likelihood of regular and binge drinking by youth. These behaviors are also strong predictors of alcohol use and misuse in later life.

Contact the Monroe County Alliance for Prevention for more information on how you can help prevent underage drinking in our community. Call (270)791-7261 or email ahutchi@lifeskills.com.

Monroe County Health Department
452 E. 4th Street
P.O. Box 247
Tompkinsville, KY 42167-0247