

Window of Health

Tandy Resigns As Health Department Administrator



October 19 was the final day for Rebecca Tandy at the Monroe County Health Department. She resigned to accept the position as Director of the Glasgow State Nursing Facility in Glasgow, KY. Among her many accomplishments while serving at the health department were: graduate of the 2005 Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute, received the 2006, Kentucky Health Department Association's Trailblazer Award selected by other health department directors, secured a \$500,000 Kentucky State infrastructure grant for the health department, and instrumental in the receipt of the 2006 Project Public Health Ready grant from NACCHO. Good luck in your new job Rebecca.

MRSA

What is it? Should You Be Concerned?

As a result of nationwide media attention, staphylococcus aureus "staph" infections, have been brought to the public's attention and raised awareness of skin infections. Health individuals carry staph on the skin or in the nose. In certain circumstances, a skin infection can occur and can be spread by close contact with other individuals. Redness, swelling, pain, and draining are signs of infection and may present as a cut, boil, blister, or insect bite. The infection can also be present in surgical wounds, the bloodstream, and pneumonia. Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA) results when a staph becomes resistant to certain antibiotics, like Methicillin. Other antibiotics must be used to treat the infection because Methicillin is no longer effective. This treatment; however, becomes more expensive and takes longer as stated by William

Hacker, MD, Commissioner for Kentucky Department for Public Health.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following ways to protect yourself from MRSA. These include: 1. Wash hands regularly and shower after participating in exercise. 2. Cover abrasions or cuts with a bandage until healed. 3. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors when using weight training benches, use a barrier. 4. Maintain a clean environment by cleaning touched surfaces and those surfaces that come into contact with people's skin frequently.

These are just a few ways to help prevent MRSA, but you may also visit www.cdc.gov for more information.

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Varicella (Chickenpox) is a disease caused by infection with the varicella zoster virus. Symptoms of the virus are: 1) a skin rash or blister-like lesions, covering the body, but usually more concentrated on the face, scalp, and trunk, 2) most, but not all, infected individuals have fever, which develops just before or when the rash appears, 3) if exposed, persons who have been vaccinated against the disease may get a milder illness, with less severe rash, and mild or no fever.

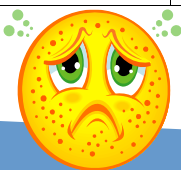
The virus is highly contagious and can easily spread by: 1) coughing and sneezing, 2) by direct contact, and 3) by aerosolization of the virus from skin lesions.

In 2007, the Advisory Committee on

Immunization Practices published new recommendations for varicella vaccine administration. A second dose of varicella vaccine is now recommended for all children. The first dose of varicella vaccine should be given at age 12 to 15 months. The second dose should now be given routinely at age 4 to 6 years.

To improve individual protection against varicella and to have a more rapid impact on school outbreaks, a second dose catch-up varicella vaccination is recommended for children, adolescents and adults who previously received one dose.

For additional information, contact the Monroe County Health Department.



BORN TOO SOON, TOO SMALL IN KY

Prematurity/low birthweight is the leading cause of death in the first month of life. In addition to mortality, prematurity is a major determinant of illness and disability among infants including, developmental delays, chronic respiratory problems, and vision and hearing impairment. In an average week in Kentucky, *154 babies are born preterm* (less than 37 completed weeks of pregnancy), *25 babies are born very preterm* (less than 32 completed weeks), *94 babies are born low birthweight* (less than 5 ½ pounds) and *17 babies are born very low birthweight* (less than 3 1/3 pounds). These statistics pose serious threats for the future health of Kentucky's children.

While the specific causes of preterm

labor and delivery are largely unknown, research indicates that they are likely due to multiple risk factors. Generally, factors that increase the risk of having a preterm birth fall into the following categories: demographic and genetic characteristics, behavioral and environmental factors, and medical and obstetrical history. Risk factors may include a history of preterm birth, physical abnormalities, stress, infection, diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use. Smoking is an important determinant of health and a significant factor contributing to preterm and low birthweight births. In 2005 in Kentucky, 32.3% of women of childbearing age reported smoking.

Prematurity is the leading killer of Americans newborns. Steps a woman

can take to assist her in having a healthy pregnancy are to:

- Get regular prenatal care
- Take prenatal vitamins every day
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- Avoid uncooked meats, fish containing mercury and unpasteurized dairy products
- Eat balanced, nutritious meals daily

Manage stress in your life

Exercise moderately

Maintain healthy teeth and gums

Know the warning signs of preterm labor.....for more information visit

www.marchofdimes.com or call the Health Department.

PROMOTE YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING WINTER

When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Many homes will be too cold—either due to a power failure or because the heating system isn't adequate for the weather. Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outside, can cause other serious or life-threatening health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected.

Plan ahead for extremely cold weather every winter—it's always a possibility. There are steps you can take in advance for greater wintertime safety. Build a "Winter Survival Kit" for your home. Keep several days supply of the following: 1) Food that needs no cooking or refrigeration, such as bread, crackers, cereal, canned foods, and dried fruits. Remember baby food and formula if you have young children, 2) Water stored in clean containers, or purchased bottled water (5 gallons per

person) in case your water pipes freeze and rupture, 3) Medicines that any family member may need.

Prepare your home for winter. Listen to weather forecasts regularly, and check your emergency supplies whenever a period of extreme cold is predicted. Your ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age, and older people are more susceptible to health problems caused by cold. If you are over 65 years old, place an easy-to-read thermometer in an indoor location where you will see it frequently, and check the temperature of your home often during the winter months. Infants less than one year old should never sleep in a cold room because infants lose body heat more easily than adults; and unlike adults, infants cannot make enough body heat by shivering. Provide warm clothing for infants and try to maintain a warm indoor temperature. If the temperature cannot be maintained, make temporary arrangements to stay elsewhere.

Eating well balanced meals will help you stay warmer. Do not drink alcoholic or caffeinated beverages—they cause your body to lose heat more rapidly. Instead, drink warm, sweet beverages or broth to help maintain your body temperature. If you have dietary restrictions, ask your doctor.

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well.

Taking preventive action is your best defense against having to deal with extreme cold-weather conditions. By preparing your home and car in advance for winter emergencies, and by observing safety precautions during times of extremely cold weather, you can reduce the risk of weather-related health problems.

DON'T STRESS—IT'S BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Okay, so that's probably not something your mom ever said to you, but maybe it should have been. More and more research is showing that consistent stress affects not only our emotional and psychological well-being, but also our physical well-being. Stress can come from a variety of sources. Some common causes of stress include: A) chronic health problems, B) emotional difficulties, C) relationship troubles, D) work environment, and E) life transitions. No matter where the stress comes from, its presence can have a negative impact on your body. A rapid heart-beat, headache, stiff neck, backache, rapid breathing, sweating and upset stomach are a few of the ordinary physical manifestations of stress. These are the symptoms we might commonly associate with being stressed-out. Unfortunately though, there are many less commonly known ways that stress can affect our bodies. Stress can be categorized as either acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term). The problems caused by these two types of stress are different. The body's reaction to any dangerous or demanding circumstance is considered

acute stress. Your body usually recovers from this type of stress if it does not occur so often that your body is unable to return to its normal state. For people who already have heart problems, acute stress can trigger an irregular heartbeat or a heart attack. Acute traumatic events, such as sexual abuse or military experiences, may cause long term effects such as the development of acute stress disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder. Chronic stress results from consistent hassles, such as your work environment or a personal relationship—a stress you live with on a daily basis. Chronic stress can affect your muscles, your reproductive organs, your lungs, your skin, your immune system and your cardiovascular (heart) health. Many of us know that stress often causes neck, shoulder and back pain and stiffness, in addition to an upset stomach. Perhaps though, you did not know that stress can worsen the condition of people rheumatoid arthritis and may be a factor in long lasting digestive problems, such as gastro esophageal reflux disease, peptic ulcer disease, and irritable bowel

syndrome. Long term stress also affects body parts we do not commonly associate with the stress response, including reproductive organs, lungs and skin. Chronic stress can be to blame not only for painful menstruation, but also decreased fertility. Worsened symptoms of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease can be the result of chronic stress. Furthermore, chronic stress can worsen skin conditions such as acne and psoriasis. In addition to these health issues, chronic stress can also have a broader influence on your health. When the body is under consistent stress, the immune system becomes weakened and one becomes more susceptible to illnesses ranging from colds and infections to more serious diseases. The way stress affects a person depends on a variety of factors, including traits inherited from your family, your past stress experience, your perception of stress, the way you cope and your social support. You can lessen health problems caused by stress if you learn to manage your stress level in a healthy way.

HANDWASHING AWARENESS WEEK HELD AT TES



Payton York and Christy Grider, RN display the winning K-2 entry.



Michelle Fox and Christy Grider, RN with the winning 3-5 entry.

Tompkinsville Elementary School celebrated handwashing awareness week December 2nd through the 9th. Because handwashing is the single most important defense against illness, a poster contest was held to emphasize the importance of

proper hand washing and disease prevention. The contest was divided into age groups, K through 2nd grade, Thanks to the staff and all children that participated in the activities and to remember that good handwashing is the key to good health.

MCHD SHARES IN ARNP ROTATION

This past fall, the MCHD was privileged to have a Western KY University student completing a rotation at the health department.

Jennifer Proffitt is a registered nurse and is currently working on her master's of science in nursing to become an advanced registered nurse practitioner. She worked in the clinic with our nurse practitioner Amy Comer to gain experience with preventive exams including pap smears, breast exams, and well child exams. Jennifer plans to graduate

in May, 2008.



Amy Comer, ARNP (left) and Jennifer Proffitt discuss the schedule at the beginning of the work day.



Monroe County Health
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BACKPACK SAFETY

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Backpacks are a popular and practical way for children to carry schoolbooks and supplies. When used correctly, they are designed to distribute the weight of the load among some of the body's strongest muscles.

RISK FACTORS—When they are too heavy or worn incorrectly they can cause problems for children by injuring their muscles and joints. They can lead to back, neck, and shoulder pain as well as posture problems.

GUIDELINES—Choose the right backpack. Wide padded shoulder straps, two shoulder straps, padded back, waist strap, lightweight backpack.

1. Always use both straps, slinging the backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.
2. Tighten the straps so that the pack is close to the body. The straps should hold

the pack 2 inches above the waist.

3. Pack light. The pack should not weigh more than 20 percent of the child's total weight. Encourage your child to leave the books at school that he does not need.
4. Organize the backpack to use all the pockets. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back.
5. Bend using both knees when you bend down. Do not bend over a the waist when wearing or lifting a heavy backpack.

The load your child is carrying should not be too heavy. If the load seems heavy, ask your child if all was needed that he/she carried home. If you have any questions on school backpack safety, call the TES Nurse, Christy Grider, RN at 487-6472.

WIC is a national program that helps low-income families meet nutritional needs. WIC provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant women and new mothers, infants and children up to 5 years of age who are found to be at nutritional risk.

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