

# Welcome, You've Got Mail!

Welcome to the first edition of the Monroe County Health Department Newsletter. Our goal is to provide updates on available health programs, as well as other pertinent health related issues for all citizens of Monroe County on a quarterly basis. The health department staff welcomes your feedback on how we may provide the information that you need on a timely and consistent basis. Please continue to check our website at [www.monroecohd.com](http://www.monroecohd.com) regularly for the latest information.

*Rebecca Tandy*  
Director

## Flu Vaccine Update

Influenza vaccine distribution delays or vaccine shortages have occurred in the United States in three of the last five influenza seasons. In response, prioritization has been implemented in previous years to ensure that enough vaccine is available for those at the highest risk for complications from influenza.

Given the uncertainties in doses and distribution this season, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is recommending the following high-risk groups receive influenza first:

- persons aged >65 years with co-morbid conditions
- residents of long-term care facilities
- persons aged 2-64 years with co-morbid condi-

tions

- children aged 6-23 months
- pregnant women
- health-care personnel who provide direct patient care
- household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children <6 months

Should an adequate supply of vaccine be available, then all persons will be eligible for influenza vaccination.

Review the health department website or local newspaper for continuous updates.

## October is Lead Awareness Month

October is Lead Poisoning Awareness Month. Any child can be at risk for lead poisoning. One million of our country's children have elevated levels of lead in their blood. Lead poisoning is one of the most preventable environmental health problems.

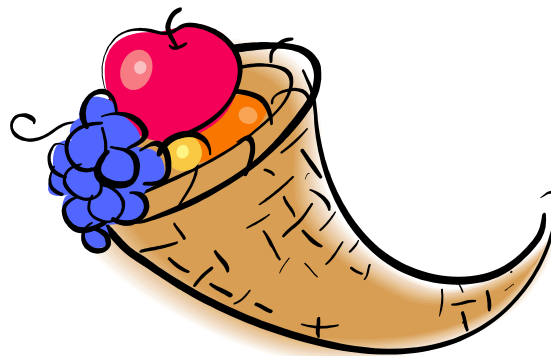
Lead poisoning can occur from exposure to lead in dust, soil, and paint chips. Even small amounts of lead can harm a child's developing nervous system and could lead to problems with behavior, learning, growth, and other long-term complications.

The only way to know if your child has been exposed to lead is to have your child's blood tested. There are a variety of sources where lead can be found, as well as several prevention measures to prevent your child from becoming exposed. Please call the Monroe County Health Department for further information and to find if your child is at risk.

**Jill Ford, RN, Community Health Nurse**

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# Disaster Preparedness

The recent events on the gulf coast show what can happen and the devastating effect of a major disaster. The Monroe County Health Department reminds us that disaster can strike without warning, forcing us to go for days without basic necessities and/or directed to evacuate your home.

**You need to be prepared.** Knowing the steps to take during a disaster—whether flooding, tornadoes, earthquakes, ice storm, or another crisis—can greatly reduce the danger and distress your family may face.



Every family should have a basic emergency plan. Having a plan is one of the most important steps you can take in disaster preparedness. Knowing what to do and how to do it can help your family manage disasters with less worry, fear and uncertainty.

Every family should prepare a disaster supply kit. Having a disaster supply kit ready to take with you at a moment's notice ensures that you will have necessary supplies no matter how fast you may need to evacuate.

For additional information refer to the Monroe County Health Department website at [www.monroecohd.com](http://www.monroecohd.com) or call the health department at 487-6782.

# Emergency Supply Kit

The Monroe County Health Department recommends families have a disaster supply kit in place for any type of emergency—tornado, earthquake, flood or any other risk to health and safety.

- A three-day supply of food and water (one gallon per day per person). Include canned and dried foods that are easy to store and prepare
- Clothing, blankets and sleeping bags
- Battery-powered radio and flashlight with extra batteries
- A First-Aid Kit
- Candles and matches
- Sanitation supplies, including iodine tablets and bleach to disinfect water
- Potassium iodide to protect against radiation poisoning
- Toilet articles and special needs for infants, older adults or disabled family members
- Extra sets of car keys and eyeglasses
- If you have a car, try to keep at least 1/2 tank of gas in it at all times
- Cash and traveler's checks—cash is most important in case ATMs are shut off
- Important family documents in a waterproof container
- Chemical and hazardous materials disasters can send tiny microscopic "junk" into the air so think about creating a barrier between yourself and any contamination. Consider having something for every family member that covers the mouth and nose.
- Duct tape and heavyweight garbage bags or plastic sheeting that can be used to seal windows and doors against potential contamination outside.
- Keep a smaller emergency supply kit in your car.

# Holiday Safety Tips

The following are links available for making the upcoming holiday season safer for your entire family.

- Holiday Stress and Children  
[http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/holiday\\_stress.html](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/holiday_stress.html)
- Halloween Safety Guide  
<http://www.halloween-safety.com/>
- Halloween Safety Tips  
<http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/halloween.htm>
- Thanksgiving Safety  
<http://www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/SSS/SSS101/SSS137.pdf>
- Safe Turkey Preparation  
<http://www.ehso.com/ehshome/FoodSafety/foodsturkeyfaqs.php>
- Christmas Safety  
<http://www.sosnet.com/safety/Christmas.html>
- Holiday Season Safety  
<http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/holseasn.htm>
- Chimney Safety  
<http://www.csia.org/>

*Harold Kelley, Public Health Preparedness Planner*

## Finding Breast Cancer Early

Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women and the disease we fear most. As scared as we are, we need to remember that, if breast cancer is found early, it can often be treated successfully.

### Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

There is no known cause of breast cancer. However, there are certain risk factors that increase the chances of getting breast cancer. Review the list below, and talk with your health care provider about risks that apply to you and about how often you should get breast exams. These things can increase your chances of getting breast cancer:

- Began menstruating before age 12 (increases your risk)
- Completed menopause after age 55
- Treatment with radiation therapy, especially before age 30
- Being overweight after menopause or gaining weight as an adult
- Taking hormone therapy for a long period of time.
- Dense breasts, which makes it harder for a lump to show up on a mammogram (dense or thick breast tissue can be affected by the amount of fat and breast tissue that you have)
- Your health care provider said that you have atypical hyperplasia (excess cells lining the inside of the milk ducts and lobules of the breast that look abnormal) or lobular carcinoma in situ (abnormal cells are in the lobules of the breast)
- Changes in certain genes (BRC1 or BRC2). Every woman has these genes, but for some women one or more of these genes don't work the way they should. If you are concerned that you have these genetic changes, talk with your health care provider to find out if genetic testing is right for you.
- Drinking alcohol (some researchers say that more than one glass per day increases your risk)
- Your mother, daughter, or sister had breast cancer, especially at a young age
- A personal history of breast cancer (had breast cancer in the past)
- Getting older
- Had your first child after age 30

### Breast cancer can be found early. Follow these steps:

Examine your breasts every month. Do a monthly breast self-exam a week after your period ends. If you don't get your period anymore, do a BSE at the same time every month.

Get a mammogram. A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast. It can find breast cancer that is too small for you or your health care provider to feel. All women starting at age 40 should get a mammogram every one to two years. Have the mammogram done right after your period because it might be less painful and is more accurate than during your period.

To schedule an appointment for a breast exam and a low cost mammogram call the Monroe County Health Department at 487-6782.

## October is *National Family Sexuality Education Month*

Sexual health is about more than using birth control, practicing safer sex, or being free of infection or dysfunction. It's about being emotionally, physically, and mentally aware of what you want and need sexually. It's also about communication and responsibility.

### **Here are four keys to improving your sexual health:**

- **Get the Facts.** Gather the information you need to make healthy sexual decisions – facts about anatomy, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, and safe sex. There is a lot of misinformation out there, so be sure to check your facts against trusted sources.
- **Get perspective.** Forget expectations about how you “should” feel or look or express your sexuality. Listen instead to what your body and mind are telling you. Our bodies have a great capacity for pleasure – whether or not we look like a perfect “10” – and there is a far greater variety of sexual expression than what's depicted in mainstream media.
- **Know yourself.** Facts alone can't improve your sexual health. Sexual health is rooted in self-awareness and self-knowledge-and you can't find that information in a book or online. A key component of sexual health is knowing your body – what it looks like, how it works and how it feels. Becoming more familiar with your sexual anatomy can help reduce the sense of shame or mystery some people have about their sex organs. People who are familiar with their sex organs are more likely to detect an infection or other health problem.
- **Get a check-up.** Maintaining your sexual health is not something you accomplish all on your own. A health care provider can be a great ally. Whether or not you are sexually active, it's important to take proper care of your reproductive and sexual health. For women this means getting regular pelvic and breast exams. For men this means getting your prostate and testicles checked. Depending on the risks you've taken, you may want to be tested for sexually transmitted infections.

The Monroe County Health Department offers adult health screenings for men and women. We also have family planning services for women who choose to use birth control. Our family planning clinics are usually scheduled the first and third Wednesday of every month. Check the Monroe County Health Department Website for upcoming family planning dates. We invite you to come in for an exam. Please call 487-6782 for an appointment.

Betty Ford, RN, Community Health Nurse

**MONROE COUNTY HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**

Hours Of Operation

7:00 AM — 4:30 PM

Monday thru Friday

452 East 4th Street

P.O. Box 247

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Phone: (270) 487-6782

Fax: (270) 487-5457

[www.monroecohd.com](http://www.monroecohd.com)

Health Department Holiday Closures

November 11—Veteran's Day

November 24-25—Thanksgiving

December 23-26—Christmas

December 30-January 2—New Years



**Monroe County KY-ASAP**

**WHAT IS KY-ASAP?**

The Kentucky Agency for Substance Abuse Policy (KY-ASAP) within the Office of Drug Control Policy, began working with citizens in Kentucky communities in 2000 to help overcome local problems with illegal drugs, and underage tobacco and alcohol use. Our local Monroe County KY-ASAP board is assembled of key members who are actively working in the areas of prevention, intervention, or treatment of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD). The Monroe County board formulated a strategic plan involving multiple agencies in our county to address our highest need areas in relation to ATOD problems. The main purpose of our board is to bring all interested community agencies together to increase awareness of ATOD use and better serve our population. If you would like additional information please contact Dyshel Thompson, Monroe County KY-ASAP Board Chairperson at (270) 487-6782.

**Flu Preventor**

*Did You Wash Your  
Hands?*

**Use soap & water.**

**Rub hands 20 seconds.**

**Rinse.**

**Dry with paper towel.**

**Use towel to turn off  
faucet.**

**YOUR HEALTH IS IN  
YOUR CLEAN HANDS.**



**Monroe County Health Department**

452 East 4th Street

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Tompkinsville, KY 42167