



PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2011

A Public Health Guide for the Holidays!

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It seems the holidays sneak up on us earlier and earlier every year. With all the hustle and bustle, we often put our health and safety in the backseat during the holidays. This holiday season be prepared by following these public health related tips to help you celebrate in both good health and good cheer!

Wash Your Hands!

Washing your hands is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash with clean, warm, running water for at least 20 seconds, scrubbing all surfaces. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Stay Warm

Cold temperatures can be very dangerous for everyone, especially infants and older adults. Stay dry, cover your head, and wear several layers of warm clothing. Check on elderly neighbors frequently.

Travel Safely

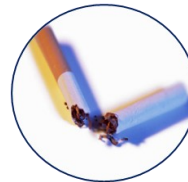
Many people travel to visit family or take



vacation during the holidays. At this time, and all year long, drive and ride safely. Always buckle your seatbelt and buckle children in using appropriate car seats and booster seats for ages and weight.

Be Smoke-free

If you smoke, consider quitting. Not ready to quit; protect others around you by not smoking in your home and car in addition to public places.



Get a Check-Up

Schedule a visit with your doctor and dentist for a routine exam. Ask your doctor what vaccinations and tests you should get based on your age, lifestyle, medical history and family health history.

Prevent Injuries

Injury from falls often occur during holiday months. Use appropriate ladders and step stools for hanging decorations, rather than furniture. Avoid fire hazards. Keep candles away from children, trees, and curtains and never leave them unattended. Use power-strips and extension cords appropriately. Install smoke



and carbon monoxide detectors in your home and change the batteries regularly.

Prepare Food Safely

When preparing holiday meals, prevent a foodborne illness by following the clean, separate, cook and chill rules. Clean your hands and cooking surfaces often while cooking. Avoid cross contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry and eggs separate from ready to eat foods. Cook foods to proper temperatures and refrigerate promptly.



Eat Healthy and Be Active

Eating healthy and exercising during the holidays can be challenging. This holiday, choose balance and moderation. Choose whole fruits over sweet treats. Find fun activities, like ice skating or snow shoeing to keep you active in winter months.



Protect Pets From Rabies

For many of us, pets are important family members. Do not forget about them during the holidays. Take them for regular check-ups and keep them up-to-date on their rabies vaccine.

WINTER DRIVING—WITH YOUR FAMILY

NOTE FROM
PUBLIC HEALTH SAFETY SERVICE AREA

Tis the season to be out and about, and wrapped up in the flurry of the holidays. Here are some helpful tips to keep you and your family safe when traveling down those snow and ice-covered roads:

Tip #1—If you get stuck, do not spin your tires. Reverse gently, without wheel spin, and move backwards as far as you can. Then, accelerate gently forward in the wheel track you just created.

Repeat the procedure if necessary.

Tip #2—If your brakes lock up (non-ABS brakes), do not panic. Reduce brake pedal pressure just enough to feel the wheels roll again. Straighten the vehicle's path with gentle use of the steering wheel. Reapply brakes gently.

Tip #3—If you have to brake hard with ABS brakes, keep your foot on the brake pedal and hold the wheel straight.

Tip #4—If you encounter a front-wheel slide, slow the vehicle down by smoothly lifting off the accelerator pedal. Turn the steering wheel back towards straight ahead. If you are already braking, lift off the brakes and straighten the steering wheel.

Tip #5—If you encounter a rear-wheel skid, lift off the accelerator and do not touch the brake. Steer into the

direction you want to go. Once you feel the vehicle stop rotating, turn the wheel the other way.



OH NO! COMPANY IS HERE!

NOTE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH SERVICE AREA

The holidays are just around the corner, bringing together family and friends for holiday gatherings. If your home relies on a septic system for wastewater disposal, be aware that extra guests can stress your system. To avoid any septic system emergencies that will interrupt your festivities, follow these holiday tips:

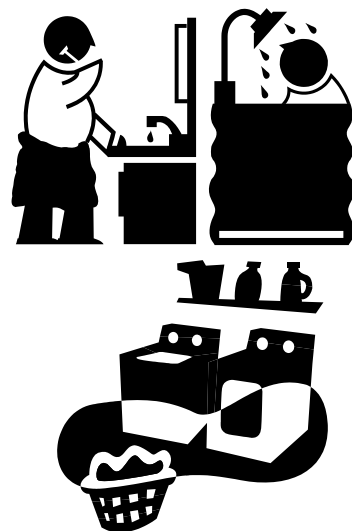
Flush only wastewater and toilet paper. Instruct guests not to flush tissue paper, sanitary napkins, baby wipes

or other items such as dental floss or cigarette butts. Perhaps a friendly sign in the bathroom and the placement of a nice trash can with a lid will help.

Don't put food down the sink or use a kitchen garbage disposal. Septic systems are not intended for the disposal of food items. During the holidays, the kitchen is a busy place. Remind guests not to put food, cooking oils, grease or fats down the drain. These can clog pipes and affect how

your septic system works.

Pay attention to water usage. Conserving water reduces the load your system has to handle. More guests equal more toilet flushing, hand washing and showers. Finish laundry before guests arrive and run the dishwasher at night to reduce water usage during peak times.



DON'T LET THE FLU INFLUENCE YOUR HOLIDAY!

NOTE FROM
CLINICAL HEALTH SERVICE AREA

The flu season typically lasts from October until May. Disease rates tend to peak—you guessed it, around the holidays. This year, don't let the flu dampen your family's holiday experience. Fight the flu by remembering the 3 C's:

Cover your cough. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If you have no tissue handy, cough or



sneeze into your upper sleeve.

Clean your hands. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.



Contain germs. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home



from work, school, and errands when you are sick. Avoid places where people gather.

In addition to the 3 C's, get a flu shot. An annual flu shot is a safe and effective way to help protect you and your family from influenza. Even a flu shot late in the season can still help protect against illness. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older receive a yearly flu shot.



VERA FRENCH

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: GENERATIONS AREA AGENCY ON AGING

While the holidays are a great time of joy, for many reasons it can also be a time of stress and depression. It is important to know that there is help in our community.

Vera French Community Mental Health Center works to enhance the mental health of all in our community by providing quality, accessible and comprehensive mental health services. They are

committed to helping people in our community live well, and helping individuals live the best life possible. Vera French provides a wide variety of services and programs to the community, including the Adult Day Treatment Program/Adult Partial Hospital Program (APHP), which provides group therapy on an outpatient basis and is intended primarily as an alternative to

inpatient hospitalization or as a transition from the hospital into the community. Other programs and services include patient outreach, case management, community support, outpatient therapy, and school-based therapy. Programs include Frontier Community, Joblink, Pine Knoll Residential and Rummage Closet. Programs and services are provided in



a variety of locations including the mental health center, Terrace Ridge, Pine Knoll, Vera French Foundation, Vera French housing, the Rummage Closet, Frontier, and individual schools. To learn more about Vera French Mental Health Center, please visit www.verafrenchmhc.org or call 563-383-1900.

SWEET HOLIDAY TREATS CAN BE TOUGH ON TEETH

NOTE FROM COMMUNITY RELATIONS, INFORMATION AND PLANNING SERVICES

The holiday season is known for sweet treats and goodies. However, snacking on sweets throughout the day lets sugar linger on the teeth. When sugar is on the teeth, naturally occurring bacteria in the mouth feed on the sugar and create acid. These acids can wear down the tooth, making it weaker and more susceptible to tooth decay.

Just because the holidays are upon us doesn't mean your family's dental health has to suffer. Follow these simple

steps for holiday oral health care:

- Sugary foods and drinks should be eaten all at once, rather than snacking throughout the day. Try to limit the sugars by choosing healthy snacks like fruits, veggies, milk and cheese.
- Avoid chewy and sticky foods. These foods, even nutritious choices like raisins, hold acid against teeth longer than other foods.
- After eating sugary foods, rinse your mouth with water before brushing teeth to prevent tooth erosion from the acids.
- Keep your teeth clean with daily brushing and flossing! Keep a toothbrush and travel-sized tooth paste handy so that you can brush

after eating at holiday parties. As an added benefit, you are less likely to eat more if you have just brushed your teeth—helping with holiday weight gain!

- Continue to brush and floss at least twice a day. Spend at least 2 minutes brushing first thing in the morning and at night before bed.



SMOKE FREE HOMES

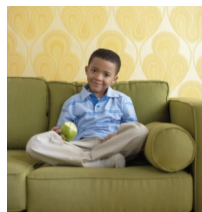
COMMON CONFUSIONS: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

As we prepare for the colder temperatures that will soon arrive, we also prepare to spend more time indoors, out of the cold. One of the best strategies to protect our health during this time is to make sure our homes are free of secondhand smoke. For some, this may mean finally making the decision to quit smoking. For others, this may mean pledging to keep their home smoke-free by agreeing to not smoke

inside of their home.

Research shows that the home is where children spend the most time surrounded by secondhand smoke. Smoking in a different room does not help – secondhand smoke moves from one room to another, even if the door is closed. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke and the best way to protect your friends and family from exposure to secondhand

smoke is to keep your home smoke-free. Tips on how to take the next step to being smoke-free at home as well as information on quitting smoking are available from the Tobacco-Free QC Coalition at www.tobaccofreeqc.com.



SCOTT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- *Veteran's Day*
Friday, November 11, 2011
Scott County Offices Closed
- Scott County Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, November 17, 2011; 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Open to the Public. Location: Scott County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Boardroom, 600 W 4th Street, Davenport
- *Thanksgiving Holiday*
Friday, November 24-25, 2011
Scott County Offices Closed
- Scott County Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, December 15, 2011; 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Open to the Public. Location: Scott County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Boardroom, 600 W 4th Street, Davenport
- *Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (Observed)*
Friday, December 23 and 26, 2011
Scott County Offices Closed

OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department is committed to promoting, protecting and preserving the health of the community by providing leadership and direction as advocates for the individual, the family, the community and the environment we serve.

OUR VISION:

As recognized and respected leaders in serving and protecting our citizens, we at the Scott County Health Department are committed to a safer, healthier community and environment. In so doing, we provide a multitude of services with Professionalism, Responsiveness, Involvement, Dedication, and Excellence.



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.