



What Does Community Health Do For YOU?

Every day we find stories in the news involving health, but most do not realize what they're hearing or reading because it's so common. We all know that this country has a system of doctors and hospitals to take care of us when we get sick. What many people may not recognize is that there also is a system that works to keep us healthy in advance of getting sick. ***It's the community health system.***

The community health system is not something that's widely understood by the public — even though it impacts lives and activities every day — because most of these activities are completed outside of public view. Through a series of articles in this and upcoming editions of [HEALTH eNEWS](#), we hope to provide you with a better understanding of the efforts undertaken by community health, and specifically the Department of Community

(Public Health, Environmental Public Health, and Humane Services).

The Division of Public Health is what many traditionally think of when listing public health activities and encompasses several programs, including: an Immunization clinic, the WIC Supplemental Food and Nutrition Education Program, an STD Prevention and Treatment clinic, the distribution of Vital Records, Health Promotion and Education, and Communicable Disease reporting.

The Division of Environmental Health and Protection promotes healthy conditions and reduces public risks. The division's programs include the inspection and licensing of food-service providers, day-care centers, aquatic and recreation facilities, body art centers and more; mosquito and pest control; and natural resource management.

The Division of Humane Services promotes the health, safety and welfare of pets and people in St. Charles County through education, adoptions and animal welfare enforcement. Its services include the operation of the county's Pet Adoption Center that has successfully placed more than 25,000 animals into loving homes since opening its doors in 1999.

In addition to these divisions, the Department partners with Federal, state, regional and local agencies to coordinate the county's emergency planning and response activities.

To learn more about the many services provided through the Department of Community Health and the Environment, click [HERE](#) or call us at (636) 949-7400.

Top Health Accomplishments*

- Vaccinations
- Food safety and increase in healthy foods
- Motor vehicle safety
- Healthier mothers/babies
- Safe workplaces
- Family planning
- Infectious disease control
- Fluoridated drinking water
- Decline in heart disease and stroke
- Recognizing health threat of tobacco

*According to CDC list of greatest U.S. Public Health Achievements in the 20th Century

Health and the Environment, to enhance the quality of life for St. Charles County residents and visitors.

The Department responds to the population's needs through the actions of three divisions

From the Director



Gil Copley

I subscribe to the **Twitter BioSense** feed (@CDC_BioSense), and this time of year, there are tweets almost every day relating to incidents of Carbon Monoxide poisoning. Often, the incidents involve fatalities.

I think almost all of us have heard about Carbon Monoxide. Carbon monoxide (CO), is an odorless, colorless gas, which can cause sudden illness and death. It is produced any time a fossil fuel is burned. Since this often involves a home heating system, we tend to hear about CO poisoning incidents more often in the winter. Generators located too close to a residence are another common source of CO, and every year we read of tragic accidents involving the use of portable generators during power outages.

CO detectors are now available in many retail stores. We in public health urge our residents to purchase one or more of these detectors to protect families in their homes. Local Fire Departments may also have information on detectors and CO safety.....

To continue reading this article, click on [From the Director](#)



Follow a Healthy Game Plan For Super Bowl Parties

Are you gathering with friends and family to watch the big game on February 4? Whether you're watching for the on-field action or the commercials, it's important not to fumble at your Super Bowl party. Be sure to offer healthy snacks and follow simple food safety precautions that will help to ensure a good time regardless who wins.

Instead of fatty, sauce covered snacks for your party, why not offer healthful additions that complement your full-flavored main course. Each month in [HEALTH eNEWS](#), we offer healthy alternatives to common recipes (see Black Bean Hummus recipe below for the latest example). In addition to these options, your party tray should feature a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat/low-calorie dips and dressings, and flavorful snacks that can accommodate all attendees' diets.

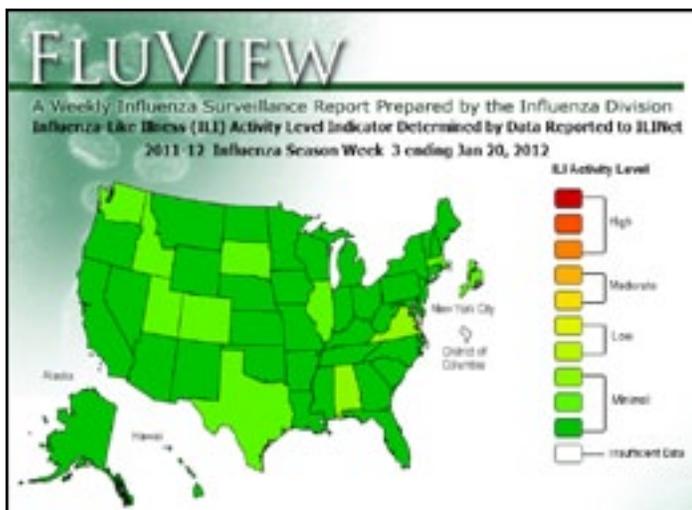
In addition to smart food choices, offer a variety of drinks for your guests. A host who offers non-alcoholic drinks for party goers provides a winning option for sober drivers. Instead of sodas, fruit juices and other sugary drinks, water is a great alternative for those looking to avoid empty calories.

With game-day festivities that last several hours, you'll need to prepare and serve your food safely. The four keys to food safety are: **CLEAN** all preparation areas, hands, utensils and foods before, during and after preparation;



SEPARATE raw and cooked foods; **COOK** foods to their proper internal temperatures; and **CHILL** to keep bacteria from forming. Another rule is to not leave foods out at room temperature for more than two hours.

For additional information on hosting a healthy and safe Super Bowl party, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#).



HEALTHY RECIPES

Each month, we'll take a traditional recipe and offer a healthy alternative. This time, we're offering something to snack on during the big game.

Black Bean Hummus

Recipe makes 12, 2 Tbsp servings. One serving contains 43 calories, 1 gram of fat, 45 mg of sodium, 7 grams of carbohydrates and 2 grams of protein.

Ingredients

- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained
- 1 Tbsp sesame tahini
- 1 Tbsp reduced-fat sour cream
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp minced tomato
- 1 Tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp cumin
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

Steps:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor.
2. Process until mixture is smooth.
3. Serve with fat-free tortilla chips, pita bread wedges or raw vegetables.

(Recipe courtesy of *Diabetic Meals in 30 Minutes or Less!* by Robyn Webb)

Helpful Phone Numbers

Division of Public Health (636) 949-7400	WIC (636) 949-7402
Immunizations (636) 949-1857	Recycle Works Central (636) 949-1800
Vital Records (636) 949-7558	Recycle Works West (636) 949-1800
Health Education and STD Clinic (636) 949-7401	Division of Humane Services Pet Adoption Center (636) 949-7387
Division of Environmental Health and Protection (636) 949-1800	Animal Control (636) 949-7347

Matters of the Heart

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), an American will experience a coronary event about every 25 seconds this year and a person will die from this disease almost every minute.

Heart disease is a broad term used to describe a range of issues that affect your heart, including diseases of blood vessels (such as coronary artery diseases), heart rhythm problems, heart infections and congenital heart defects.

Maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle are the best ways to prevent and fight heart disease. In addition, it is important to know your risk factors and your numbers — blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol — so that you can work to decrease the potential for harm. Heart disease risk factors can include your age, gender, family history, smoking, poor diet, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, physical inactivity, high stress and poor hygiene.

Complications of heart disease include heart failure, heart attack, stroke, aneurysm, peripheral artery disease and sudden cardiac arrest. If you think that you may have heart disease or are worried about your heart disease risk because of a strong family history, make an appointment

with your family doctor. If heart disease is found early, your treatment may be easier and more effective.

Heart disease can be improved — or even prevented — by making certain lifestyle changes, so this February take these healthy tips to heart:

- ♥ Get Active
- ♥ Eat Better
- ♥ Lose Weight
- ♥ Stop Smoking
- ♥ Control Cholesterol
- ♥ Manage Blood Pressure



Let's Talk!

Are you interested in learning how community health impacts your life, your business and your community?

Invite a member of our staff to speak with your organization about public health topics, upcoming programming and other opportunities. Programs typically last about one hour but can be tailored to your organization's needs.

The Public Health Education staff promotes healthy behaviors and the prevention of disease through specific programs geared toward youth, adults and seniors. Classes focus on nutrition, physical activity, hygiene, personal safety, disease prevention and more. To schedule a health education class with your day-care, organization or senior center, please call (636) 949-7400.



The Environmental Education staff encourages the protection and conservation of natural resources. Programs focus on waste management and recycling, the development of an ecosystem and more. To schedule an environmental education class with your school or organization, please call (636) 949-1800.

The Emergency Preparedness staff provides guidance on developing a family and organizational response plan in the event of an emergency. Focusing on the [READY in 3](#) principle, these interactive discussions will offer instruction on how to prepare for potential disasters that may impact our area. To schedule a preparedness discussion for your membership, business or residential center, please call (636) 949-7408.



The Sweet Truth About Chocolate

February is when many receive sweet chocolaty treats from their Valentine. Instead of feeling guilty for indulging in these delicious gifts, it's better to recognize the health benefits these treats can bring — especially from the dark chocolate variety.



Dark chocolate is made up of plants, which means that dark chocolate contains many of the same benefits found in dark, leafy vegetables. These benefits are from flavonoids, which act as antioxidants.

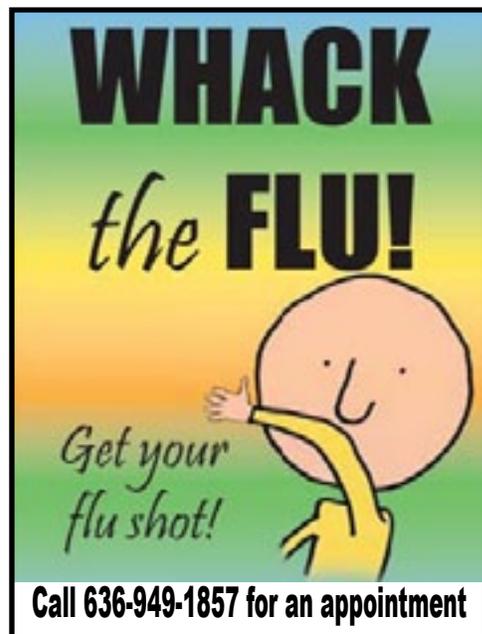
Antioxidants protect the body against aging, which can lead to heart disease and damage. Dark chocolate contains nearly eight times the amount of antioxidants found in strawberries. Flavonoids help to relax and lower blood pressure, as well as balance hormones in the body. They also reduce the blood's ability to clot, which reduces the risk of stroke and heart attack. In addition, dark chocolate has been known to reduce the bad (LDL) cholesterol up to ten percent.

Aside from the healthy heart benefits of dark chocolate, it also helps our moods. Chocolate candy tastes good, which stimulates endorphin production and

makes us “feel good.” Also, dark chocolate contains serotonin, which has been used to treat depression. Serotonin levels are often decreased in people with depression and in those experiencing PMS symptoms.

While there are great benefits from a chocolate treat, it does not mean that you should go out and indulge in pounds of chocolate daily. Studies show these benefits may be attained by eating 3.5 ounces, or about half a chocolate bar a few times a week.

The benefits of chocolate are certainly “sweet,” and this information comes at the perfect time of the year!



Responsible Owners Control Their Pets

Nearly 70,000 puppies and kittens are born each day in the United States, which is way more than can ever be placed in loving homes. By spaying and neutering our pets, responsible owners do their part to control pet overpopulation and to limit the number of unwanted animals.

The mating cycle is different for male and female animals and lasts different lengths for dogs and cats. Male dogs and cats are capable of breeding at approximately six months of age and often display aggressive behaviors when seeking a mate after reaching maturity, unless they are neutered. Female dogs experience a “heat” cycle every six months (depending upon the breed) that can last up to three weeks. Female cats come into heat every two weeks during the breeding season (typically March through September in our area).



While spaying and neutering are major surgeries, these commonly performed procedures to remove reproductive organs have a low incidence of complications. Using general anesthesia and medications to minimize pain, the surgery usually heals within a few days. Typically the only complication is that the owner will need to keep their pet calm for a few days until the incision heals.

Studies show that surgical sterilization enhances your pet's health and quality of life. Dogs and cats are shown to be better behaved, do not “mark” their territory and are less likely to roam the neighborhood. Spayed and neutered pets are known to live longer and have less incidences of cancers.

All dogs and cats adopted through the Pet Adoption Center are spayed or neutered, but you can also do this to other unaltered pets through your veterinarian. For information on adopting a pet or if you have questions on the spaying/neutering process, please call the Pet Adoption Center at (636) 949-PETS (7387).