



July 2013

## Celebrate Safely This Independence Day

Many St. Charles County residents will celebrate their Independence Day outdoors with sunshine, barbecue grills and, possibly, fireworks. However, if not properly monitored, the high temperatures, bright sunshine and the bangs, booms or sparks from fireworks can cause harm to people and pets.

### **Protecting Against Heat-Related Illness and Sun Damage**

Extreme heat/humidity and bright sunlight can lead to heat-related illnesses — especially in young children, the elderly and those who may have difficulties caring for themselves. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cautions that around 100 Americans die each year from the heat, and that many more suffer through over-exertion and stress. Taking simple steps in advance can keep you and your family safe during a heat wave:

- Drink more fluids, regardless of your activity level.
- Limit your intake of liquids containing alcohol or large amounts of sugar.
- Stay indoors (in an air-conditioned location) whenever possible.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.
- DO NOT leave anyone or any animals in a closed, parked car, as interior temperatures can grow rapidly during a hot day.
- If you experience or notice someone experiencing warning signs of heat-related illnesses (extremely high body temperatures, red/dry skin with no sweating, rapid pulse rate, dizziness/nausea/confusion, or unconsciousness), please seek immediate medical assistance while beginning to cool the victim.

Along with causing higher temperatures, bright, sunny skies can damage your skin. Overexposure may cause severe sunburn and may lead to skin cancer, which is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Avoiding peak periods (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), when ultraviolet (UV) rays are strongest, is the best way to minimize your risk, but taking other steps adds to your protection.



### **Safety During Backyard Barbecues**

Backyard barbecues and picnics are a rite of summer. To prevent food-borne illnesses from ruining your holiday celebration, follow simple guidelines for food safety. The first rule is to keep things clean — wash hands, utensils and surfaces before and after handling foods. Cooking meats to proper temperatures (145° F for steaks, 160° F for hamburgers and pork steaks, 165° F for chicken) will kill

bacteria that cause most food illnesses.

A good chef is also a safe chef, so follow manufacturer's guidelines for proper use of equipment. If you have a gas grill, check hoses and canisters for damage prior to lighting the flame, or use an electric starter or charcoal chimney to safely start a charcoal grill. Using a squirt bottle can control flare-ups, and flame-retardant gloves can limit possibilities for burns. Lastly, keep kids and pets away from open flames or hot grills at all times.

### **Firework Safety For People and Pets**

For many, fireworks are an integral part of their Independence Day celebration, but these explosives can be dangerous. Every year, more than 6,000 people end up in hospital emergency rooms with firework-related injuries. If fireworks are legal where you live, please read and review all warnings and instructions before use. Do not allow children to ignite or play with fireworks. Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface that is away from people, buildings or flammable materials, and never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned.

In addition to possible injuries to people, many pets are frightened by the loud noises created by fireworks and will run away trying to escape the sound. Local animal shelters often experience an increase in impounds leading up to the holiday because of pets that run from their homes to flee loud fireworks displays.

For more summer safety tips, please visit our [website](#) or check out [www.health.mo.gov](http://www.health.mo.gov) for heat-relief shelters near you.



# Safety, Planning Make Vacations Relaxing

Whether you're traveling near or far this summer, paying attention to simple safety and precautionary tips can help make your vacation a dream.

As most vacation destinations are within driving distance of your home, be sure to review the route and update your car's maintenance. Safe driving involves paying attention to all inhabitants of the roadways, so be on the lookout for other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

When visiting somewhere new or traveling outside the United States, your first step should be to research the destination. In addition to offering the best places to explore, a travel guide or tourism website can provide information on the climate and conditions at your destination. And, if you're visiting a less-developed area, it's also good practice to speak with a medical provider about updating your vaccinations before departure.

If you're traveling abroad, the [Division of Public Health's Vital Records program](#) can assist you with obtaining a birth certificate to complete your passport application. A 20-minute visit to their offices at 1650 Boone's Lick Road in St. Charles will give you a certified copy of your Missouri birth record.

Regardless of where you'll be visiting, a travel health kit can make the trip more comfortable. Be sure



to include all of the prescription medication that you regularly take and pack this in a location that won't be lost. As a precaution, include a copy of the prescription or a note from your physician in a separate location. Over-the-counter medications like pain relievers, anti-diarrheals, antacids, creams can provide relief when needed. It's also important to include sunscreen and sunburn relief creams, insect repellent, sanitizer, bandages and other basic first aid supplies that may not be available at your destination.

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## HEALTHY RECIPES

Each month, we take a traditional recipe and offer a healthier alternative. This time, we present a quick-to-prepare Asian favorite that incorporates a variety of tasty veggies.

### Chicken Broccoli Stir Fry

*Recipe makes four servings. One serving contains 340 calories, eight grams of fat, 240 mg of sodium, 35 grams of carbohydrates and 28 grams of protein.*

#### Ingredients

- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp Schezuan sauce (a spicy sauce available at most groceries)
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 pound of boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1 inch cubes
- 2 cups frozen broccoli florets
- 1 6-ounce package of frozen snow peas
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 Tbsp sesame seeds (optional)

#### Steps:

1. Mix orange juice, soy sauce, Schezuan sauce and cornstarch in a small bowl. Set aside after mixing.
2. Heat oil in a wok or large skillet. Add chicken cubes, and stir fry for approximately 5-7 minutes.
3. Add cabbage, broccoli, snow peas and sauce mixture to chicken in skillet. Cook for an additional 5 minutes until vegetables are cooked through.
4. Serve chicken and vegetables over cooked rice. Sprinkle with sesame seeds for added texture and flavor.

(Recipe courtesy of *Explore the World with Fruits and Vegetables* - found on [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

## 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 and education, emergency preparedness or other opportunities. Programs typically last about one hour but can be tailored to your organization's needs. For availability and topics offered, please visit our [website](#).

### 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
Division of Environmental Health and Protection (636) 949-1800	(636) 949-7387 Animal Control (636) 949-7347

# Enhance Future Safety By Planning Today

Last month provided further illustration on the importance that advanced planning can have on minimizing future disasters. As we viewed the scenes of destruction throughout our county, we once again realized that preparing now helps to protect us from whatever may come next.



Though we can seldom predict exactly when and where we may next experience a widespread emergency, it is encouraging to observe the quick reactions that occur once conditions indicate that something serious may be coming. First, a core team of governmental and non-governmental agencies work together throughout the Metropolitan Area to monitor conditions, develop response plans and practice roles to protect the community. Next, media plays its part by distributing instructions and warnings. Lastly, as we observed in Oklahoma, Joplin and here in our area, members of the public must then obey these warnings and take precautions.

While this comprehensive regional effort is underway, that last aspect demonstrates that a portion of the responsibility does **FALL UPON YOU**. By doing whatever you can to prepare in advance, you will help lessen the

possibility for damages and speed the return to normal. An easy to follow, [three-step emergency plan can help guide you on the path toward safety.](#)

- 1) **Create a Plan** – Establish a policy that will determine how you and others would react to a situation. Develop plans for two types of situations — staying in place and evacuation. To make the plan more effective, practice until it is easily understood by your entire group.
- 2) **Prepare a Kit** – Set aside an easily accessible supply of resources that can protect and sustain your loved ones until additional help is available. Experts recommend preparing an emergency kit with materials that will sustain yourself, your family and your pets for at least three days.
- 3) **Listen for Information** – Locate resources that can provide life-saving information and follow these instructions. Make sure that you can obtain this information even in times of power outages or communications' breakdowns.

Individuals and organizations can volunteer to aid response efforts. The department's *Medical Reserve Corps* will respond to a health-related crisis, while area *Community Emergency Response Team* members will assist natural disasters safety responses. The *St. Charles County Community Organizations Active in Disaster* (COAD) chapter provides the platform for community responses through a collaboration of organizations. For information on joining the Medical Reserve Corps, area CERT programs or the St. Charles County COAD, visit our [website.](#)

## Colorful Fruits, Vegetables Provide Varied Tastes, Nutrients

At some point in our childhood, everyone heard the phrase, "If you don't eat your vegetables, you won't get dessert." It turns out mom was wanting more than just a clean plate!

Along with varying textures, colors and flavors, choosing a variety of vegetables for your meal also provides multiple vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that cannot be obtained through just one source.

Red fruits and vegetables like apples, watermelon and tomatoes promote heart health, improve memory and reduce cancer risks.

To help eyesight, lower cholesterol and reduce blood pressure, dietitians recommend selecting orange foods that are high in beta-carotene.

Adding blue- and purple-colored foods (especially blueberries and eggplant) increases your intake of anthocyanins, which reduce cancer risks, boost the immune system and help digestion.



Spinach, broccoli and other green vegetables combine with other nutrients to lower blood pressure, reduce cancer risks and maintain vision.

In addition to nutritional benefits, fruits and vegetables can also help weight loss, if prepared properly. Canned or frozen products are good options when fresh options are not available, as long as they don't include sugary or heavy syrups and sauces. Another way to help fill your plate with "good" calories is to substitute fruits

or vegetables into regularly eaten meals.

Understanding portion sizes will help minimize overeating. One apple, orange, or banana is considered one cup, and each contains around 100 calories. A half-cup of baby carrots (about six) or broccoli florets (about five) contains fewer than 30 calories to present a small snack.

For more information on the benefits of fruits and vegetables, please click [HERE.](#)

# Smoking Cessation Classes Help Break The Chain

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, and quitting is widely accepted as the single, most important thing you can do to improve your health.

Although quitting can be an arduous task and studies have shown that it takes the average smoker seven-to-nine attempts before they can maintain a smoke-free lifestyle, it is heartening to know that more than 46 million Americans have been successful in making this commitment.

Most smokers recognize that they are addicted to nicotine, but they may not realize there are several aspects to their addiction. The [American Lung Association](#) calls this the *Three-Link Chain of Addiction*, which includes physical, mental and social aspects. First, smokers are physically addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes, which actually produces changes in the smoker's brain. As smoking becomes a common behavior, smokers mentally associate the activity with emotions like pleasure or relief. Additionally, smoking is a recreational activity that plays a huge role in society and links people who may not have much else in common. People who address all three parts of the chain have a better chance of staying quit!



Remembering the Three A's while trying to quit will help smokers deal with situations that make them want a cigarette.

1. **Avoid the situation** if you can. To do this, a smoker must identify their triggers, which may be their morning cup of coffee or social events involving alcohol.
2. **Alter or change the situation.** If coffee is one of your triggers, try drinking decaffeinated tea or fruit juice instead.
3. **Alternatives or substitutes for smoking can help.** Chew sugarless gum or suck on sugarless lollipops.

With commitment and dedication anyone can quit smoking, including you! If you would like more information on how to quit smoking, please visit our website to learn about the [Division of Public Health's Smoking Cessation](#) classes.



## Give A Cat Its Furr-Ever Home

If it seems like you're seeing more cats than normal this time of year, it's because spring is when they typically produce their first litter. Cats produce up to three litters a year, with an average of six kittens per litter. As finding homes for all these new felines is often a problem, shelters like the County's Pet Adoption Center become filled in the early summer.

Located at 4850 Mid Rivers Mall Drive, the Pet Adoption Center offers adult cats for \$30 and kittens for \$40. These adoption fees include spaying or neutering, microchipping, vaccinations, and a vet exam — services that are not always included when adopting elsewhere. To view some of the pets available to take home today, please click [HERE](#).

Although exciting, bringing home a new pet is a big adjustment, and there are many things to consider. First is that cats are particular and should be introduced to a new home slowly. Giving him or her a small, quiet area to be alone will make this transition

easier. Second is to arrange set places for the litter box, food and water bowls, and scratching post to give your cat a routine. A third step is to "cat proof" your home by removing potential dangers and areas of curiosity. Lastly, set ground rules for your family for the care and treatment of your new pet.

In addition to providing a loving home for a shelter cat, you can help control overpopulation in other ways. Spaying or neutering your pet will prevent unwanted kittens and enhance their quality of life. If you have wild cats on or near your property, the County's [Operation Sterile Feral Program](#) will spay or neuter unowned cats to minimize these populations as well. For information on spay or neuter services through the Pet Adoption Center, please call (636) 949-PETS.

