



WARREN COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT

NEWS & INFORMATION

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Duane Stansbury, R.S., M.P.H.
Health Commissioner

BACK TO SCHOOL IS VACCINATION TIME

It won't be long before we begin seeing the familiar site of yellow buses in our neighborhoods. Although this is a sure sign that summer is drawing to an end, the Health Department would like to remind parents that this last month of summer is a good time to review your child's immunization record. Most Warren County Schools open the last part of August. Be sure your children are ready for the first day of school by making sure they have received the required immunizations before entering school. For more information on vaccine requirements call the Child Health Clinic at 513-695-1468, 513-261-1468, 513-925-1468 or 937-425-1468 for the Lebanon Office and 937-746-1769 for the Franklin Office.

BE PREPARED OHIO

During Hurricane Katrina, we watched as some of our country's most vulnerable citizens—older adults and people with disabilities—struggled to get help or find care in the midst of chaos and confusion. Caregivers threw their hands in the air in desperation and exhaustion when medicine, supplies and transportation were nowhere to be found. These images are still fresh in our minds.

BE PREPARED OHIO—an event planned for September 22 in Southwest Ohio, will focus on one of the toughest lessons learned during that difficult time: people with functional needs (older adults, people with disabilities, etc.) may require more help than what is provided through traditional emer-

gency response systems. We know now that this vulnerable group needs help with advance planning—making an emergency plan, gathering supplies—and they will require special assistance during an emergency.

BE PREPARED OHIO—is a first-of-its-kind event that will bring together emergency responders, public health and social service agencies, people with functional needs and their caregivers to share information and resources on how to prepare for emergencies. The event will include educational tracts for professional (CEU available), as well as the general public.

BE PREPARED OHIO is scheduled for September. September is Na-

tional Preparedness Month, a time when emergency response agencies work to increase public awareness about emergency preparedness, and Americans are encouraged to participate in activities planned in their area.

For information about attending or participating in this event, please contact Amy Leonhardt, Council on Aging of Southwest Ohio, at 513-345-3367.

Please contact the Warren County Combined Health District Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Mike Merker 513-695-1728, 513-261-1728, 513-925-1728 or 937-425-1728 for more information on emergency preparedness for you and your family.

SAFE PREPARATION OF GROUND BEEF

There are a number of things you can do in preparing ground beef to protect your family's health, despite the increasing number of ground beef recalls. They include:

- Use an accurate meat thermometer when cooking ground beef patties and insure that the meat is cooked to 160 degrees F. throughout.
- Again, use an accurate meat thermometer because you cannot determine if it is cooked properly by looking at the color of the meat. "Steak-Dark" is just not an accurate measurement of a food having been

thoroughly cooked.

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat and poultry. Never touch ready-to-eat foods without first having washed your hands.



- Wash cutting boards, dishes, and utensils with hot, soapy water.
- Immediately clean up

spills.

- Never serve prepared foods on the same platter you prepared the raw foods on.

Refrigerate raw foods within 2 hours of purchase and prepared foods within 2 hours of cooking.

If you have any questions please contact the Environmental Health Division, Warren County Combined Health District at 513-695-1220, 513-261-1220, 513-925-1220 or 937-425-1220.

PUBLIC HEALTH NUISANCE INVESTIGATION AND ABATEMENT PROGRAM

A public health nuisance is any act, failure to act, or any condition that is injurious, dangerous, detrimental, or threatens the health, safety, or well-being of any individual or of the public. It is the duty of the Warren County Combined Health District to investigate and abate any reported environmental conditions which represent a threat to the public's health and safety. Public health nuisances would include sub-standard housing conditions, refuse and household trash problems, sewage problems, high weed problems, mosquito harborage problems, inoperative motor vehicle problems, animal and pet waste problems, rodent problems, etc.

Not all conditions which might represent a nuisance or aggravation to an individual are considered a public health nuisance. Many such nuisances are what would be termed a "personal nuisance" and do not fall under the Health Department's jurisdiction. Problems with surface water drainage between neighboring property owners would be an

example of a nuisance but not a public health nuisance.

If you have a condition in your neighborhood that cannot be resolved in an amicable fashion between neighbors you are encouraged to contact the Warren County Combined Health District Environmental Health Division and file a complaint. You are not required to give your name when filing a complaint but if you do, it is considered a matter of public record and is available to anyone upon request.

Upon receipt of any public health nuisance complaint our environmental health division staff conducts an investigation of the condition reported. If the complaint is found to be valid we attempt to educate the person causing the nuisance to correct the behavior creating the nuisance. If education fails, orders to correct the nuisance are issued and if the violator does not voluntarily abate the nuisance our policy is to refer the matter to the

respective Prosecutor's Office for resolution of the problem through the legal system.

Some of the nuisance complaints we receive are in fact, not public health related, and in those cases we will refer the matter to another government agency who might handle that particular problem. To report a nuisance you can either call our Environmental Health Division at 513-695-1220, 513-925-1220, 937-425-1220, or 513-261-1220. You can also find our nuisance complaint form on the internet at <http://www.co.warren.oh.us/health/forms/27a.pdf>. If you have questions on a nuisance or our nuisance program, please contact Daniel Collins, R.S., Director of Environmental Health at 513-695-1271, 513-925-1271, 513-261-1271 or 937-425-1271.

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE COMPLIANCE

In mid-2007 the Ohio Smoke-Free Workplace Law, that was passed in by a majority of Ohio Voters in 2006, went into effect. While all of the complaints are reported through the Ohio Department of Health in Columbus, Ohio, all enforcement of these rules are handled by the local health department. During the second half of 2007, the Warren County Combined Health District conducted 118 complaint investigations into allegations of the Smoke-Free Workplace Law. The number of complaints during the first half of 2008 have dropped significantly, averaging 2 com-

plaints per week. The law further prescribes that if a business is found to be in violation of the Smoke-Free Workplace Law, the local health department has discretionary powers to either enforce the rules stringently or to allow for a verbal warning on the first offense. The Warren County Combined Health District decided to take an educational approach to enforcement of the law and we provided those found to be in violation of the law with the knowledge they needed for compliance. As a consequence, only a few of our busi-



nesses were required to go beyond the verbal warning prescribed in the law. If you want to report a violation of the smoke-free workplace law please contact the Ohio Department of Health at 1-866-599-OHIO (6446). This number is posted on signs that are supposed to be on every entrance into a building. If you have any questions about the Smoke-Free Workplace Program in Warren County contact Daniel Collins, R.S., Director of Environmental Health at 513-695-1271, 513-261-1271, 513-925-1271 or 937-425-1271.

TIPS FOR BETTER ORAL HEALTH

Your mouth is a report card for overall health – taking proper care of it will help you look and feel better. Poor oral health can lead to bad breath, cavities and gingivitis. More importantly, serious infections, if left untreated, can enter the bloodstream and compromise otherwise healthy vital organs. Periodontal disease has been linked to cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, and diabetes and low-birth weight in newborns. In addition, dental-related illness can diminish quality of life. Suffer-



ers from oral health complications may face restricted food choices and poor nutrition, and experience self-consciousness that limits social interaction and communication. Good brushing and flossing habits are imperative to strong oral health; however, regular dental checkups are important to preventing and treating more serious oral infections. Think your mouth isn't that important to your overall well-being? Think again. You can help prevent tooth and gum diseases with a few simple steps:

Visit your dentist regularly

Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes

Use a soft-bristled toothbrush

Use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste

Clean between your teeth with floss

Maintain a balanced and healthy diet.

For more information on oral health or for information regarding the health department's referral program, please contact Shelly Norton, Health Educator at 513-695-2475, 513-925-2475, 513-261-2475 or 937-425-2475.