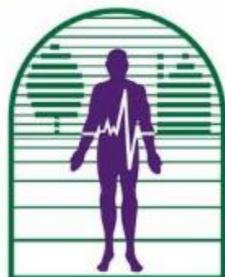


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Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health *Communicator*

April Showers Bring May Flowers...

Hip, Hip, HOORAY! for warm weather! Many of us are ready to get outside to garden, play with kids on the playground, even just open up the windows!

In April, the Health Department wants to draw your attention to a few important things:

- 1. We want remind you that with nicer weather also comes severe weather.** We have tools on our [website](#) to help you and your family get prepared.
- 2. We are recognizing National Infant Immunization Week, April 22-29.** It is critical to the health of your baby to vaccinate them against 14 vaccine-preventable disease. Be sure to check your child's records to ensure they are up-to-date. Give us a call at 641-421-9321 and we can check for you!
- 3. We are recognizing World Meningitis Day on April 24.** There is a new requirement for 7th and 12th graders with regard to the meningococcal vaccine. Read the article further down for more information!

Department Quick Links



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[Follow us on Twitter!](#)



WE'RE HIRING!

We are looking for a Public Health, Hospital, & EMS Program Coordinator. This person must have a experience in emergency services, healthcare management, natural sciences, and/or a related field. A good salary, health insurance, and IPERS are part of the package! [Click Here!](#) for a full job description!

Upcoming Happenings:

- April is Oral Cancer Awareness Month
- April is STD Awareness Month
- April 22-29: National Infant Immunization Week
- April 23-29: World Immunization Week
- April 24: World Meningitis Day
- May is Hepatitis Awareness Month
- May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- May is National Stroke Awareness Month
- May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month
- May 1-5: Air Quality Awareness Week
- May 5: Hand Hygiene Day
- May 14-20: National Women's Health Week
- May 18: HIV Vaccine Awareness Day
- May 22-28: Healthy and Safe Swimming Week / Recreational Water Illness and Injury Week
- May 26: Heat Safety Awareness Day
- May 31: National Senior Health and Fitness Day
- May 31: World No Tobacco Day

Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter to stay up-to-date on all Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health information. Visit our website at www.cghealth.com

For more information about our services, visit our website at www.cghealth.com.

Take care,

Kara Ruge
Marketing & Public Information Officer
Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

April is STD Awareness Month!

It can happen to you! Get tested!

By: Samantha Smith, RN, Disease Prevention Specialist

Sexually Transmitted Diseases are often focused on in health education classes or when talking to youth about sex. But what about HIV? HIV is perceived to be something "Iowans don't have" or "can't catch in a small



Scan this QR code with your smartphone for a direct link to our website.

Senior Health & Blood Pressure Clinics

The Health Department offers Senior Health Clinics to county residents aged 55 and older. There is no charge; however, contributions are accepted.

**The clinic is an annual health screening and does not replace a physician's care.*

To make an appointment, call the Health Department at 641-421-9316. Below is the schedule of upcoming Senior Health Clinics.

SENIOR HEALTH CLINICS

APRIL 24 - Swaledale @ United Methodist Church

MAY 1 - Mason City @ Wesley United Methodist Church

MAY 8 - Clear Lake @ Evangelical Free Church

MAY 17 - Mason City @ St. John's Episcopal Church

MAY 22 - Clear Lake @ First Congregational Church

town" or "it's only in the movies". Oh how wrong we are! April is Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Awareness Month, and the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health wants to focus on both STDs and HIV.

HIV is spread when an HIV-infected person's body fluids (blood, semen, vaginal secretions, or breastmilk) enter another person's bloodstream. The most common way people are infected with HIV is by having unprotected sex (vaginal, anal, or oral). HIV can also be spread by sharing needles that are used for taking drugs (legal and illegal), tattooing, and piercing. An individual with HIV can feel okay and still spread the virus to others.



This year, the Health Department received a grant to administer all HIV testing FREE of charge to those who request it. There are no longer any eligibility requirements! You don't even have to be a Cerro Gordo County resident!

So why did we receive this grant? We received it because HIV is an issue in our county and in the state of Iowa. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, there were 124 new HIV diagnoses in 2015. Diagnoses among men outnumber females by 75%. Over 27% of all HIV diagnoses in 2015 were people between the ages of 15-24 years old. As of December 31, 2015, there were 2,496 people living in Iowa with HIV. Those residents live in 94 of the 99 Iowa counties. These statistics are only gathered from those individuals who have been tested. In the 2017 County Health Rankings recently released, 76.74% of adults living in Cerro Gordo County report they have never been tested for HIV. This shows a lack of access to preventative care services. By receiving this grant, the Health Department is now able to remove the barrier and provide free testing to any resident who requests it.

In order to prevent the spread of HIV, testing and protection are the keys to prevention. Alongside our free testing, we also offer FREE condoms at various locations (our Department located on the third floor of Mohawk Square, NIACC, and WellSource). HIV is a public health threat, and it is one that needs to be taken very seriously. This disease can completely change your life with just one sexual encounter.

STDs are also a growing problem amongst those ages 15-24. Studies show that one in two sexually active people will get an STD by the age of 25, yet less than 12% of people age 15-25 say they've been tested for STDs in the past year. Young people stigmatize STDs, so many of them ignore the idea of it because they're embarrassed or afraid of what people will think if they test positive for one. Choosing to get tested for STDs should carry the same weight as choosing to have sex.

STD's can be transmitted by vaginal, anal, or oral sex (just like HIV). Many STDs do not show symptoms so people may not know they have an STD.

BLOOD PRESSURE CLINICS

**APRIL 21 - (8-9AM) @
Swaledale Town Hall, 402 Main
St, Swaledale**

**APRIL 25 - (10:30-11:30AM) @
Clear Lake Senior Center, 105 S
4th St, Clear Lake**

**MAY 9 - (8:15-9AM) @ First
Citizens Bank HC Movie,
Cinema West, 4710 4th St SW,
Mason City**

**MAY 12 - (10:30-11:30AM) @
Mason City Senior Center, 326
4th St NE, Mason City**

Air Quality Awareness Week May 1-5



The air we breathe, whether inside or outside, can enhance or hinder our quality of life. Although Iowa is a rural state, air quality is just as important as any other state.

Poor air quality indoors can be attributed to mold/mildew, tobacco smoke, lead based paint hazards, pet dander, asbestos, carbon monoxide, chemicals, poor air circulation, and many other contributing factors.

Poor air quality outdoors can be natural or man-made. Natural occurrences such as volcanic eruptions, fires, dust,

This is why testing is so important. STDs can cause serious health concerns if they go untreated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people ages 18-24 be tested annually for chlamydia and gonorrhea. Some STDs such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis can be treated and cured with antibiotics. The Health Department offers quick, easy, confidential, and free testing to eligible Cerro Gordo County residents for these and other common STDs.

The common denominator in becoming infected with STD and HIV is having unprotected sex with multiple partners. If you have sex with multiple partners, your chances of becoming infected with HIV are the same as becoming infected with an STD.

I encourage Cerro Gordo County residents to call me today with questions or make an appointment for HIV or STD testing at 641-421-9309, or visit our [website](#). Testing is quick, easy, confidential and FREE.

We can stop the spread of HIV and STDs!

*Harms, Jerry. (2016). State of Iowa End-of-Year HIV Disease Surveillance Report for 2015. Retrieved April 18, 2017, from the Iowa Department of Public Health website:

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/105/State%20of%20Iowa%202015%20End-of-Year%20HIV%20Disease%20Surveillance%20Report.pdf>

*Yes Means Test. (2017). American Sexual Health Association kicks off STD Awareness Month with an effort to shatter the stigma of STDs, where half of all new infections are in people ages 15-24. Retrieved April 18, 2017, from <https://www.multivu.com/players/English/8069751-american-sexual-health-association-stds-yes-means-test/>

April 24: World Meningitis Day

My Meningitis Story

By: Bethany Bjorklund, RN, Immunization Nurse

Every year on April 24th, we recognize World Meningitis Day. Meningitis can affect anyone, anywhere, at any time. It does not discriminate against age, gender, where we live in the world, how healthy we eat or how much we work out. Every year more than 1.2 million people are affected by meningitis.

Meningitis is an inflammation of the meninges (the protective tissue that lines the brain and spinal cord). There are two forms of meningitis; bacterial and viral. This means the disease can be caused by a virus or bacteria. The most severe forms of meningitis are caused by bacteria and thankfully can be prevented with vaccines.



I know what it feels like to have meningitis. The type of meningitis I had was viral, the more common and less severe of the two forms, but nonetheless still terrifying, painful, and frankly an experience I never want to go through again. This year for World Meningitis Day I wanted to share my story with you.

and wind all attribute to poor air quality. Man-made air pollution can come from a multitude of stationary and mobile sources. Stationary sources include smoke stacks of power plants, manufacturing facilities (factories), and waste incinerators, as well as furnaces and other types of fuel-burning heating devices. Mobile sources include motor vehicles, marine vessels, and aircraft.

Outdoor air quality in Cerro Gordo County is handled by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The IDNR provides the following air quality programming services in Cerro Gordo County:

- Issue permits for the installation and operation of major sources to persons or companies emitting air contaminants.
- Perform compliance inspections at industrial and commercial facilities.
- Respond to outdoor air quality complaints, to include illegal open burning, fugitive dust, excessive emissions, and general air quality issues.
- Maintain a network of continuous monitors for ambient air throughout the state of Iowa to measure compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

[Click Here!](#) for more information about the IDNR Air Quality Program in Cerro Gordo County.

One morning in January 2003, I woke up with my right foot asleep. Gradually the tingling sensation traveled its way up my right leg, hip, arm, shoulder, and eventually the tip of my tongue. As a 16 year old, my mind was thinking I was fine and I continued to get ready and go to school since it was after all finals week. When I got to school, I just didn't feel like myself. All of a sudden during my first class of the day, I got the worst headache I have ever had in my life. My head was throbbing; I was sensitive to light and felt like I was going to throw up. I ended up going to the school nurse's office and was sent home.

That day, I was seen by our family doctor and was referred to a neurologist in town right away. I was diagnosed with migraine headache and given medication to help ease the pain. Unfortunately, the medication did not make the pain go away and I found myself hibernating in a dark basement, throwing up and crying because of the immense amount of pain in my head. Meningitis can often be mistaken as a migraine headache or the flu.

After no improvement and beginning to suffer from dehydration, I earned a trip to the emergency room and needed to have a spinal tap. As a 16 year old there is nothing scarier than the thought of having a large needle inserted into your lower spine to take out spinal fluid. This procedure had to be done to determine what else could be causing me to feel this much pain with no signs of improvement. After the spinal tap was finished, I felt the best I ever did. The pain was gone. The results came back showing I had viral meningitis. I was admitted to the hospital for I.V. fluids overnight and was discharged home the next day feeling much better. Viral meningitis usually clears up on its own and my body just needed time to fight the infection.

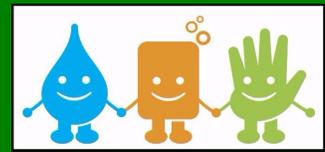
As time progressed around day 20, the head pain started to come back and I was not really getting any better. I began to develop double vision, tinnitus (ringing of the ears), and had lost 10 pounds. I was then referred to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota to see a pediatric neurologist. Shortly thereafter, I ended up being hospitalized for three more days and received I.V. steroids daily (not the muscle building type) for seven days, along with two more spinal taps. I recall moments where I wanted to give up, crying and telling my family, "I'd rather be dead" than suffer with this type of pain.

I was lucky. I had VIRAL meningitis. From what I remember, doctors were never able to determine which specific virus had caused this infection, but thankfully I did not suffer any permanent neurological effects from the buildup of pressure around my brain and spinal cord. I missed a total of 35 days of school and my full recovery took almost an entire year to get back to feeling like my 'normal self.'

I thank you for taking the time to read my meningitis story, as there are many others out there who are not here to share their meningitis story.

Please contact me at the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health for more information on which vaccines can protect you, your child, or teenager against meningitis. Our walk-in immunization clinic is open Monday-Friday from 10:00AM-Noon and 12:30-4:00PM. Visit our [website](#) or call 641-421-9322.

Hand Hygiene Day - May 5



You may think a quick rinse under water is enough to clean your hands, but you'd be surprised! Keeping your hands clean is the most important method to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to other people in the household. Many diseases are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean water.

To properly wash your hand, wet them under clean, running water. Apply soap and lather your hands together-lather the backs of your hands, between fingers and under nails. Scrub your hands for at least 30-seconds. Rinse your hands under clean, running water and dry using a clean towel, paper towels or allow them to air dry. Here are 5 reasons why hand washing is so important...

1. Germs Make People Sick. People, especially children frequently touch their eyes, mouth and nose without realizing it. Germs can travel from the hand and get into the body, which can make us sick. Feces from people and pets spread germs like Salmonella, E. coli and norovirus, which causes diarrhea and it can cause respiratory infections. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), proper hand washing can reduce the number of people who get

WELLNESS CORNER

The Abdominal Muscles

The most popular question asked to personal trainers ... "How do I get a flatter stomach?"

I dare you to find a personal trainer who has never been asked this question by one of their clients. Mid-section weight loss is the singular most popular wish among personal training clients.

Trainers should be educated enough to know that there are no magic workouts to banish belly bulge. Cardio exercises may help you burn extra calories and drop weight, but every individual is different in regards to where on the body the fat is lost. Women tend to lose weight in their chest, butt, and thighs first. Men tend to lose fat faster in their mid section. However, this DOES NOT hold true for everyone.

While resistance exercises can certainly strengthen the core abdominal muscles, they are ineffective for flattening your belly without increased fat burning from changes in your diet. In fact, some people who do not improve their diet, but add a lot of strength exercises for their abdominal muscles may actually find their bellies getting bigger!!

"HOW?" you ask.

Well, muscles lie beneath our subcutaneous fat layer, and if we strengthen our muscles, they can expand and push the fat layer further out. Therefore, you may have very strong core muscles, but your "six-pack" may still be hidden behind a chubby belly. (But if you don't have a strong core, please don't claim your "six-pack" is hidden behind your chubby belly!)

Now don't throw all your abdominal exercises out the window. A strong core is important for proper posture, good respiratory health, good balance, improved sports performance, protection from back injuries, and can in small amounts, tighten your mid-section by strengthening the muscles that your sagging skin clings too.

- Know that core exercises are essential for total body workouts.
- Know a strong core is the foundation of a strong and WELL body!
- And know a flat stomach is not the result of a "Vibrating Waist Belt"!

Sample Exercises:

sick with diarrhea by 31-percent. A single gram of human feces can contain one trillion germs. That's about the weight of a paper clip.

2. Cross Contamination of Food Can Make You Sick.

Germs have no scruples. They don't care whether you've handled raw chicken and then sliced some fresh cucumber. To prevent cross contamination in the kitchen, it's vital to wash your hands frequently.

3. When to Wash Your Hands.

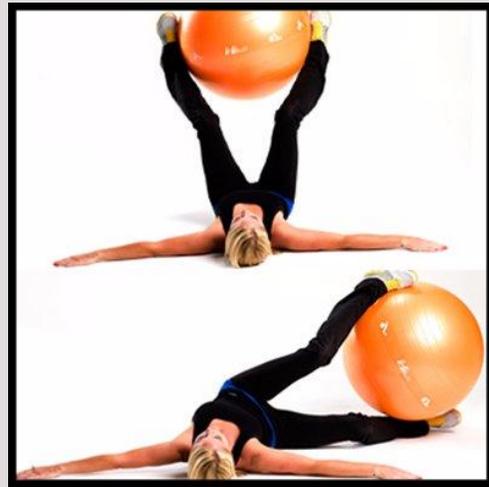
Hand washing should become second nature-and don't do it only after you've used the bathroom or prepared a meal in the kitchen. You should wash your hands frequently because you never know when you've come into contact with germs. Wash your hands after using a tissue, taking the garbage out, before eating, during food preparations, after changing a diaper, after playing with pets. Basically, wash your hands a lot.

4. Germs Can Transfer to Other Objects.

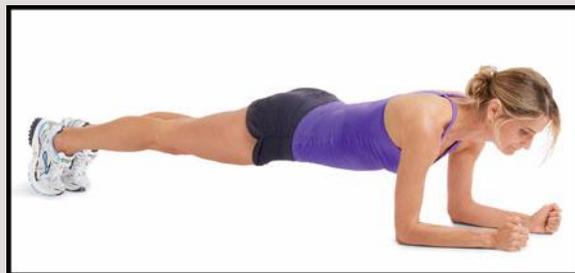
There's a reason why germs spread like wildfire through day care centers and schools. Germs are easily transferred to objects like toys, smart phones, laptops and handrails. That means that anyone who hasn't washed their hands properly can potentially contaminate anything they touch. Properly washing children's hands is vital to stop the spread of germs, but you'll also need to disinfect toys and surfaces regularly to prevent the spread of infection. That means



Crunch with weight x 8



Torso twist with weight x 8



Front plank x 30 seconds



Side plank x 30 seconds

disinfecting anything that comes into contact with little hands like door knobs, benches, handrails, toys and chairs. It may seem like a daunting task, but it will help keep everyone germ free.

5. When to Use Hand Sanitizer

Washing with soap and water is the best method to combat germs, but sometimes you may find yourself in a sticky situation where you don't have access to clean water and soap. That's when hand sanitizers come in handy.

Studies have found that hand sanitizers with an alcohol concentration between 60- and 90-percent are more effective. Non-alcohol based hand sanitizers do not work as well. They only reduce the growth of germs, rather than killing them. One thing to keep in mind is that if you're hands are greasy, hand sanitizers with 60-percent alcohol may not be enough. To get rid of the grease and germs, good old-fashioned soap and water are the best choice.

*Sonnenberg, Anja. (2016). *5 Reasons Why Handwashing is so Important*. Retrieved on April 19, 2017, from the ActiveBeat website: www.activebeat.com

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Help Us Promote Public Health Services

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Have them click the "Join Our Mailing List" button!

Our Mission Statement:

The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health works to optimize the health of all people in Cerro Gordo County.

Our Vision Statement:

We will be the leader in making Cerro Gordo County the healthiest county in Iowa.

Our Value Statement:

We believe in human dignity, respect for individual choices, promotion for wellness and personal safety, protection of the environment, prevention of disease and access to quality health services.



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