

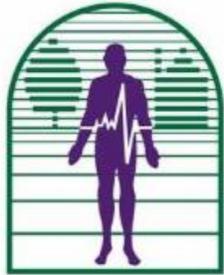
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October 2017



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

Communicator

Pumpkins and Apples and Squash; Oh My!

Many people love the season of Fall. Their only gripe: it doesn't last long enough (or those pesky little black bugs)! Pumpkins, apples, squash, and many other yummy recipes fill our homes with warmth. Looking for a recipe to roast pumpkin seeds? [Click Here!](#)

Throughout October and November, the Health Department encourages you to get your flu vaccine early. Influenza is at the peak of activity from September - May. It takes two weeks for your system to respond to the full effect of the flu shot. Get protected early!

Upcoming Happenings:

- October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- October 15-21: International Infection Prevention Week
- October 16-22: National Healthcare Quality Week
- October 16-20: National Health Education Week
- October 23-31: Red Ribbon Week
- October 22-29: Lead Poisoning Prevention Week
- November is American Diabetes Month
- November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- November is National Family Caregivers Month

Department Quick Links



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- November is National Home Care Month
- November 16: Great American Smoke Out

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, CCPH, IOM
Marketing & Public Information Officer
Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health



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

Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

October 22-28, 2017

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 24 million housing units in the U.S. have lead-based paint hazards and elevated levels of lead dust. Over 4 million of these hazardous homes have young children living in them who are highly susceptible to lead poisoning.

Lead is highly toxic and commonly found in products such as paint. Up until 1978, paint containing lead was used in and around our homes, workplaces, and environments. Lead can cause a range of health problems - from behavioral problems and learning disabilities, to seizures and death. Children age six and younger are at highest risk of lead poisoning due to the high absorption rate in their quickly growing bodies. Major sources of lead exposure to children are deteriorating lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in homes. Children can also be exposed to lead from other sources including take-home exposures from a workplace, lead in soil, or contaminated drinking water.



Despite the continued presence of lead in the environment, lead exposure remains a serious concern. Lead can have serious consequences for children including decreased IQ and the development of learning disabilities, nerve problems, kidney damage or even death. "We encourage parents, property owners, tenants, and contractors to be proactive when it comes to lead. The majority of lead poisoned children do not display symptoms until permanent damage has been done," said Jenna Willems, Healthy Homes Program Coordinator at the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health.

To increase awareness of childhood lead poisoning prevention, the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, along with the CDC, the U.S.

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

OCTOBER 23 - Clear Lake @ United Methodist Church

OCTOBER 30 - Mason City @ St. John's Episcopal Church

NOVEMBER 6 - Clear Lake @ Evangelical Free Church

NOVEMBER 15 - Mason City @ Wesley United Methodist Church

NOVEMBER 20 - Clear Lake @ First Congregational Church

NOVEMBER 29 - Mason City @ Mason City Senior Center

Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is participating in National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (NLPPW) October 19-25, 2017.

This year's NLPPW theme, "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future," underscores the importance of testing your home, testing your child, and learning how to prevent lead poisoning's serious health effects.

Public Health recommends that EVERY CHILD BE TESTED! All children regardless of race, economic background, or location of home should be tested for lead poisoning starting at 12 months. The testing is then recommended at different intervals for different children with regards to risk of lead exposure.

Parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead in many ways. Here are preventive measures you can make to help protect your family:

- Wash your child's hands, toys, and pacifiers. Do this often, especially prior to eating, to reduce transferring lead paint chips or dust.
- Clean floors, window sills, window troughs, and other dusty painted surfaces with a wet mop, wet cloth, or wet paper towel. Discard the cleaning cloth when finished.
- Don't let your child play in bare soil outside your home. Plant grass or cover soil with mulch. Also, remove shoes before entering the home so leaded soil stays outside.
- Find out where the lead hazards are in your home! Certified professionals can inspect your home for no charge through the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health to make you aware of what painted materials in your home contain lead. Keeping children away from these areas is important.
- Take extra precautions when remodeling the inside or outside of your pre-1978 home. Children should not have access to the remodel area and all dust and paint chips should be contained. Hire a contractor trained in lead-safe practices for known or potential lead hazards.
- Spread the word. Encourage your family and friends with young children to get educated and take action on lead.



"Remember, we encourage action because lead poisoning is completely preventable," said Willems.

For more information, contact the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health at 641-421-9339 or visit our [website](#).

October brings a reminder to THINK PINK!

October is breast cancer awareness month!

According to the American Cancer Society, 1 in 8 women will develop invasive breast cancer in their lifetime. Less than 15% of these women

BLOOD PRESSURE CLINICS

OCTOBER 24 - (9:15-10AM) @ Plymouth City, 616 Broad Street., Plymouth

OCTOBER 31 - (10:30-11:30AM) @ Clear Lake Senior Center, 105 S 4th St., Clear Lake

NOVEMBER 9 - (10:30-11:30AM) @ Mason City Senior Center, 326 4th St NE, Mason City

NOVEMBER 14 - (8:15-9AM) First Citizens National Bank Heritage Club Movie, Cinema West, 4710 4th St. SW, Mason City

Red Ribbon Week October 22-31



Nearly nine percent of United States youth ages 12 to 17 use illicit drugs, and nearly eight percent use tobacco products according to the National Survey of Drug Use Health's Summary of National Findings. The same study showed that substance use by adolescents could be prevented through early interventions, including parental involvement. In fact, 96 percent of youths who perceived strong parental disapproval for trying marijuana once or twice remained drug free.

In a recent CDC study, more than a quarter million youth who had never smoked a cigarette used an electronic cigarette in 2013, a threefold increase from

will have a family history of breast cancer. It is estimated that approximately 40,000 women will die from breast cancer in 2016. As startling as these statistics are, our current mammogram rates in North Iowa are less than 40%! Meaning less than 40% of women who should have an annual mammogram, actually complete the screening.



Yearly mammograms have helped reduce the breast cancer mortality rate in the U.S. by nearly 1/3 since 1990. The earlier breast cancer cases are caught, the better the woman's survival rate. This is why its vital women begin their annual mammograms at the age of 40.

Many women have expressed reasons as to why they haven't scheduled and received their annual mammogram. Below are 5 popular myths that I would like to "debunk"!

- I'm too busy.
Don't put yourself last. This is your health and you can't help others if you're not healthy. Typically mammogram appointments take around 30 minutes or less.
- I have no family history, so I don't need to get a mammogram.
85% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history.
- I can't afford it.
Most insurance plans pay for preventive (screening) mammograms every 12 months. If you have no insurance or your insurance will not cover your mammogram, financial help is available by contacting the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health's Care for Yourself program at 641-421-9315.
- I exercise, eat right and live a healthy lifestyle. I won't get breast cancer.
That's great! A healthy lifestyle may lower your risk of breast cancer (and many other diseases), but it doesn't eliminate your risk. You still need to get checked. (Routine screenings belong on your list of healthy habits.)
- I can't feel any lumps during a self-exam.
Breast cancer can start long before a tumor is big enough to feel. Mammograms can show lumps or specks that may be from cancer, precancerous cells, or other conditions that would require further testing.

Breast cancer is no longer a rare occurrence. Most of us know someone who has been affected by breast cancer. The woman may be a relative, friend, neighbor, loved one, co-worker, or spouse of someone you know. Receiving your annual mammogram beginning at the age of 40 is very important to your health, your family, and your future. This potentially life-saving exam is simple and quick! Early detection is key!!!

Talk with your medical provider or contact the Forest Park Imaging Center today to schedule your mammogram. If you are a women 40 years old or older. If you are without health insurance, contact the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health at 641-421-9315 for information about financial assistance through the Care for Yourself program.

2011. Over 43 percent of these youth said they intend to smoke conventional cigarettes within the next year, compared to 21.5 percent of those who had never used e-cigarettes. Nicotine is a highly addictive drug and can harm the adolescent brain, causing lasting deficits in cognitive function. About three out of every four teen smokers become adult smokers, even if they intend to quit in a few years.

Red Ribbon Week was created to show a commitment to raise awareness of the damage drugs can have to a person and their life. This awareness week is recognized in most schools and communities as an opportunity to teach youth about the effects and consequences of drug use.

For more information on the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health's tobacco cessation services, visit our [website](#).

Is it strep throat?



With school in session, illnesses will begin to spread faster. Here is how to know if you or your child has strep throat!

Strep throat is a common type of sore throat in children, but it's not very common in adults. Healthcare professionals can do a quick test to determine if a sore throat is strep throat. If so, antibiotics can help you feel

WELLNESS CORNER

Sweet Potato vs. Yam

What's the difference?

Sweet potatoes, also known by the scientific name *Ipomoea batatas*, are starchy root vegetables. They are thought to originate in Central or South America, but North Carolina is currently the largest producer. Surprisingly, sweet potatoes are only remotely related to potatoes. Like a regular potato, the tuberous roots of the sweet potato plant are eaten as the vegetable. Their leaves and shoots are sometimes eaten as greens. However, sweet potatoes are a very distinctive-looking tuber.



They are long and tapered with a smooth skin that can vary in color, ranging from yellow, orange, red, brown or purple to beige. Depending on the type, the flesh can range from white to orange to even purple.

There are two main types of sweet potatoes:

Dark-Skinned, Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potatoes

Compared to golden-skinned sweet potatoes, these are softer and sweeter with a darker, copper-brown skin and bright orange flesh. They tend to be fluffy and moist and are commonly found in the US.

Golden-Skinned, Pale-Fleshed Sweet Potatoes

This version is firmer with a golden skin and light yellow flesh. It tends to have a drier texture and is less sweet than dark-skinned sweet potatoes.

Regardless of the type, sweet potatoes are generally sweeter and moister than regular potatoes. They are an extremely robust vegetable. Their long shelf life allows them to be sold year-round. If stored correctly in a cool, dry place, they can keep for up to 2-3 months. You can buy them in a wide range of different forms, most often whole or sometimes pre-peeled, cooked and sold in cans or frozen.

Yams are also a tuber vegetable. Their scientific name is *Dioscorea*, and they originate in Africa and Asia. They are now commonly found in the Caribbean and Latin America as well. Over 600 varieties of yams are known, and 95% of these are still grown in Africa.

Compared to sweet potatoes, yams can grow very large. Size can vary from that of a small potato to up to 5 feet. Not to mention, they can weigh up to an impressive 132 pounds!

Yams have some distinct characteristics that help distinguish them from sweet potatoes, mainly their size and skin. They are cylindrical in shape with brown, rough, bark-like skin that is difficult to peel, but it softens after heating. The flesh color varies from white or yellow to purple or pink in mature yams. Yams have a unique taste, too. Compared to sweet potatoes, yams are less sweet and much more starchy and dry. They also tend to have a good shelf life. However, certain varieties store better than others.

better faster and prevent spreading it to others. Many things can cause that unpleasant, scratchy, and sometimes painful condition known as a sore throat. Viruses, bacteria, allergens, environmental irritants (such as cigarette smoke), and chronic postnasal drip can all cause a sore throat. While many sore throats will get better without treatment, some throat infections-including strep throat-may need antibiotic treatment.

How you get strep throat?

Strep throat is an infection in the throat and tonsils caused by group A *Streptococcus* bacteria (called "group A strep"). Group A strep bacteria can also live in a person's nose and throat without causing illness. The bacteria spread through contact with droplets after an infected person coughs or sneezes. If you touch your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching something with these droplets on it, you may become ill. If you drink from the same glass or eat from the same plate as a sick person, you could also become ill. It is also possible to get strep throat from touching sores on the skin caused by group A strep.

A fever is a common symptom of strep throat. The most common symptoms of strep throat include:

- Sore throat, usually starts quickly and can cause pain when swallowing
- A fever
- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus
- Tiny, red spots (petechiae) on the roof of the mouth (the soft or hard palate)
- Swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck

In the US, true yams can be tough to find. They are imported and rarely found in local grocery stores. Your best chances of finding them are in international or ethnic food stores.

October is Let's Talk Month! Your kids need you to talk to them! Here's how!

[Click here for larger image.](#)

October is Let's Talk Month

Research shows kids who talk with parents about sex and relationships are less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior.

The teen years are a time of exploration, discovery, learning, and growing up. They are a time when young people are first really faced with profound questions about relationships and sex. Although many parents understand the importance of talking to their kids about sex, far fewer seem to realize just how important it is for them to talk to their children about what it takes to recognize, develop, and maintain a healthy relationship.

Conversation Door Openers

- "What do you think?"
- "That's a good question."
- "I don't know, but I'll find out!"
- "I'm trying to understand what you're feeling."
- "Do you know what that word means?"
- "I am glad you told me about that."

Conversation Door Closers

- "You're too young."
- "Where did you hear that?"
- "If you say that word again, etc."
- "That's none of your business."
- "I don't care what your friends are doing."
- "That's just for boys/girls!"
- "We'll talk about that when you need to know."

Teens say that the most important thing parents can do to teach them about successful relationships is to talk to them about relationships, not just about the birds and the bees.

Teens report that the second most important thing that parents can do is to listen when they talk about the people in their lives.

For more information about teen pregnancy prevention visit: www.thenationalcampaign.org/

Let's Talk! Campaign
Division of Public Health

Other symptoms may include headache, stomach pain, nausea, or vomiting. Someone with strep throat may also have a rash known as scarlet fever (also called scarlatina).

Strep Testing

No one can diagnose strep throat just by looking at your throat. Instead, healthcare professionals use two tests to see if group A strep bacteria are causing a sore throat. A "rapid strep test" involves swabbing your throat and gives results quickly. If the test is positive, your healthcare professional can prescribe antibiotics. If the test is negative, but your healthcare professional still strongly suspects strep throat, then they order a throat culture. A throat culture involves sending a throat swab to a lab to see if bacteria grow from the sample. For that reason, a throat culture takes more time to get results.

Treatment

You should start feeling better in just a day or two after starting antibiotics. Call your healthcare professional if you don't feel better after taking antibiotics for 48 hours. People with strep throat should stay home from work, school, or daycare until they no longer have a fever and have taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours so they don't spread the infection to others.

*CDC.gov

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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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