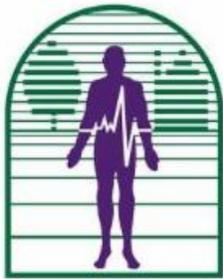


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Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health *Communicator*

A Fresh Start!

Welcome to 2016! The beginning of a new year, brings a chance to start fresh; make a change for the better. Why not start with your health? The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health offers over 50 programs and services to our county residents. Below are just a few you can take advantage of to better your health in 2016:

- [Radon testing](#) - \$6
- [Immunizations/vaccines](#) - varies
- [Well water testing](#) - FREE
- [Breast health screenings](#) - FREE for those eligible
- [Diabetes Prevention Program](#) - FREE for those eligible
- [STI/HIV testing](#) - varies
- [Senior Health Clinics](#) - FREE
- [Home care aides / Public Health Nurses](#) - varies

And MUCH, MUCH, more! Visit our website to see all of our 50+ programs and services.

Upcoming Happenings:

- January is Cervical Health Awareness Month
- January is National Radon Action Month
- February is American Health Month

Department Quick Links



Visit us on
Facebook!



Follow us
on
Twitter!

- February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
- February 2: National Wear Red Day
- February 4: World Cancer Day
- February 7: National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness 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, CPH, IOM
Marketing & Public Information Officer
Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

Influenza is widespread in Cerro Gordo County

Influenza activity is widespread throughout the community making its way into childcare facilities, schools, and businesses. In addition to the increase in influenza activity, norovirus (stomach bug) is also causing a significant amount of illness in the community. The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health is urging people to stay home when you are sick to prevent the spread of illness.



"If you or your child do not feel well, it is VERY important to stay home," says Jeni Stiles, Infectious Disease Nurse with the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. "This means you should not engage in any activities outside of the home." Activities include staying home from work or school, no traveling, no shopping, and no after school activities or athletic events. You or your child may ONLY return to these activities after the following:

- You have been fever free (and all other severe symptoms are gone) for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducer. This means if you or your child had a fever today until 1:00PM, you may NOT resume normal activities until 1:00PM tomorrow afternoon.
- You have not vomited or had diarrhea for the last 24 hours. This means, if you were vomiting until 2:00PM this afternoon, you may NOT resume normal activities until after 2:00PM tomorrow afternoon.

People sick with influenza may be able to infect each other one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick. This means that you may be able pass influenza on to someone else before you even know you are sick. People sick with norovirus (stomach bug) are most contagious when they are sick and for three days after their symptoms have stopped.



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

JANUARY 31 - Mason City @ St. John's Episcopal Church

FEBRUARY 7 - Mason City @ Mason City Senior Center

FEBRUARY 12 - Clear Lake @ Evangelical Free Church

FEBRUARY 28 - Mason City @ Trinity Lutheran Church

Officials with the Health Department urge you to prevent the spread of these viruses by practicing the following good health tips:

What should I do to protect myself and my family from the flu?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds. Wash your hands before and after eating, going to the bathroom, touching pets, phones, or keyboards.
- Use hand sanitizer. If you cannot wash your hands, alcohol-based hand cleaner may be used if your hands do not look dirty.
- Stay home from work or school when you are ill, and encourage others to do the same.
- Stay away from others you know are ill. You are less likely to become ill if you stay at least three feet away from someone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Get the flu shot. The first line of defense against influenza is to get your flu shot each year.
- Contact your health care provider. If you experience flu-like symptoms contact your physician. Your physician may be able to prescribe antiviral medications for you to shorten the duration of the illness and prevent transmission.
- Clean frequently and appropriately. Some viruses can live up to two hours on some surfaces. Frequently clean commonly used surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, eating surfaces, toys, and phones. Commercial disinfectants or bleach solutions should be used. The bleach solution can be made by mixing ¼ cup bleach with one gallon of water. The bleach solution must be made fresh daily.

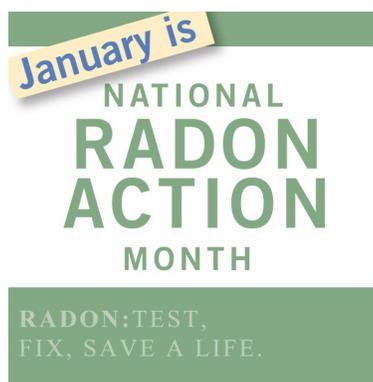
The Health Department is still encouraging those who have not received their flu vaccine to get one. The vaccine does take a couple of weeks to take effect so getting your flu vaccine soon is encouraged. Our Walk-In Immunization Clinic is open Monday-Friday from 10:00AM - Noon and 12:30 - 4:00PM. The Health Department accepts most major health insurances.

For more information about influenza, influenza prevention, or the influenza vaccine, please call 641-421-9322 or visit our [website](#).

January is Radon Action Month

The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health joins the Iowa Department of Public Health, the American Lung Association of Iowa, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in encouraging Iowans to test their homes for radon and take action to reduce elevated radon levels. Many Iowa homeowners and renters are not aware of the presence of radon gas in their home, despite it being a deadly carcinogen.

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that is invisible (colorless, odorless, and tasteless), and is the second-leading cause of lung cancer. Everyone living in Iowa should know the following about radon:



BLOOD PRESSURE CLINICS

FEBRUARY 8 - (10:30-11:30AM) @ Mason City Senior Center, 326 4th St NE, Mason City

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month



Relationship Goals or Relationship No's?

By: Anitra, Youth Organizer at [LovelsRespect.org](#)

Last weekend I saw the movie Suicide Squad. I had heard a lot about the "love story" between Harley Quinn and the Joker, and I wanted to see for myself if it lived up to the hype. Some people on social media have been calling their relationship "goals." But it didn't take long for me to realize that what was happening between Harley and the Joker is no love story.

It is common for unhealthy or abusive relationships to be portrayed as "passionate" when in reality they are quite

1. Elevated radon levels in a home is more common in Iowa than any other state in the U.S. An estimated 5 out of every 7 homes in Iowa have elevated radon levels.
2. Any home can have elevated radon levels. This means old homes, new homes, drafty homes, insulated homes, homes with basements, and homes without basements are all at risk.
3. Smokers who live with radon in their homes are 8-9 times more likely to develop lung cancer from radon than non-smokers.
4. Technically, there is no 'safe' level of radon as it is a carcinogen, but a level under 4.0 picocuries/liter of air (the radon action level) minimizes your exposure to radon, lowering the risk of radon-induced lung cancer significantly.

Scientifically-based evidence over the last 50 years confirms again and again the health risks of radon exposure. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared radon a problem through a national health advisory report against radon stating, "Indoor radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, and breathing it over prolonged periods can present a significant health risk to families all over the country. It's important to know that this threat is completely preventable. Radon can be detected with a simple test and fixed through well-established venting techniques."

Take the first step in prevention and get your home tested for radon today. The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health sells test kits year-round for \$6.

For more information on radon visit our [website](#) or call Jenna at 641-421-9339. Iowans can also call the Iowa Radon Hotline at: 1-800-383-5992.

Join Our Team!

Position: Public Health / Home Care Nurse

The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health is looking for a compassionate and independent professional nurse to provide skilled care in the home setting. The nurse will serve patients in the home; determine patient and family needs; develop health care plans; provide nursing services and treatments; and coordinate care amongst a multidisciplinary team.

Regular working hours include Monday-Friday with incentive pay for occasional weekend and holiday on-call rotation. Comprehensive and competitive benefit package includes paid health and life insurance, vacation and holiday pay, and retirement benefits.

Please submit resume and county application to Valerie Conklin, at 22 North Georgia, Suite 300, Mason City, Iowa 50401 or vconklin@cghealth.com.

[Click here for application!](#)



dangerous. In the movie, the relationship between Harley Quinn and the Joker is meant to come off as a dynamic duo in a quest for equal power. But their relationship is not about equality. The Joker often uses abusive tactics to maintain control over Harley and their relationship.

Manipulation: The Joker is highly manipulative of Harley from the beginning. In their backstory, Harley is the Joker's psychiatrist, and he uses his mental illness, his past as an abused child and the mistreatment he received from others to manipulate her feelings for him. Manipulating a person's feelings to get them to behave a certain way is not healthy. It's also important to remember that mental health issues do not excuse abuse, and neither does a person's past.

Possessiveness: The Joker treats Harley as a possession that belongs to him. During one scene, the Joker "gives" Harley to a business partner, saying, "Harley now belongs to you." In another scene, the Joker asks Harley if she is willing to die for him. She eagerly responds, "Yes." He then says that dying is too easy and asks if she is willing to live for him. This implies that he wants her to submit to him and only him. But people are not possessions. Neither partner has the right to make decisions for or control the life of the other.

February is Heart Health Month

The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health is recognizing Heart Health Month during February.

Heart Disease is the leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. However, it's also one of the most preventable. By making simple lifestyle changes, knowing the signs and symptoms of heart attack and/or stroke, and having regular check-ups are all ways you can lower your risk for a serious and sometimes fatal heart incident.



"During the month of February, we will be focusing on different areas where you can better your heart health", stated Karen Crimmings, Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Service Manager for the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health.

- **Week 1: Nutrition** Simple dietary changes that can reduce your risk of heart disease. Lower your LDL cholesterol levels and increase HDL cholesterol levels, prevent diabetes, and obtain or remain at a healthy weight.
- **Week 2: Quit Tobacco** Tobacco use is a major cause of heart disease. Breathing secondhand smoke interferes with the normal functioning of the heart, blood, and vascular systems in ways that increase your risk of having a heart attack.
- **Week 3: Stroke and Heart Attack Risk Factors and Symptoms** Common risk factors for heart disease and stroke that can be controlled or treated include high LDL cholesterol levels, low HDL cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, physical inactivity, and being overweight or obese.
- **Week 4: Fitness** To improve overall cardiovascular health, it is suggested you complete at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise.

One step you can take toward recognizing Heart Health Month is by wearing red on Friday, February 2. National Wear Red Day is used to promote awareness for heart disease and bring prevention to mind.

For more information on how to improve your health, visit our [website](#).

Physical Abuse: The Joker uses physical torture/abuse to control Harley and make her "prove" her love for him. In one scene he tells Harley that he doesn't want to kill her, he's just wants to hurt her "really, really bad," to which Harley responds that she can take it. In the scene mentioned above where he asks Harley if she is willing to submit to him, she responds by falling into a barrel of what is believed to be acid. Physical abuse of any kind is never okay. In a healthy relationship, partners make the choice to care for and trust each other; these are not things you have to "prove" to your partner by acting a certain way.

I know this movie is fictional and it has a lot of extreme characters and situations. But, the messages we get from movies, music, television and ads can influence how we think and feel about our relationships. The relationship between Harley and the Joker may be romanticized in *Suicide Squad*, but abuse and manipulation are not #relationshipgoals. We think it's important to think hard about the messages we're getting and whether they're healthy for us or not. Because at love is respect, we believe everyone deserves a healthy, safe, and respectful relationship!

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



WELLNESS CORNER

Antibiotics

Eat High Fiber Foods After Taking Antibiotics

Fiber can't be digested by your body, but it can be digested by your gut bacteria, which helps stimulate their growth. As a result, fiber may help restore healthy gut bacteria after a course of antibiotics. Studies have shown that foods that contain dietary fiber are not only able to stimulate the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut, but they may also reduce the growth of some harmful bacteria.



However, dietary fiber can slow the rate at which the stomach empties. In turn, this can slow the rate at which medicines are absorbed. Therefore, **it is best to temporarily avoid high-fiber foods during antibiotic treatment** and instead focus on eating them after stopping antibiotics. High-fiber foods like whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables can help the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut. They should be eaten after taking antibiotics but not during, as fiber may reduce antibiotic absorption.

Eat Prebiotic Foods

Unlike probiotics, which are live microbes, prebiotics are foods that feed the good bacteria in your gut. Many high-fiber foods are prebiotic. The fiber is digested and fermented by healthy gut bacteria, allowing them to grow. However, other foods are not high in fiber but act as prebiotics by helping the growth of healthy bacteria like *Bifidobacteria*.

For example, red wine contains antioxidant polyphenols, which are not digested by human cells but are digested by gut bacteria. One study found that consuming red wine polyphenol extracts for four weeks could significantly increase the amount of healthy *Bifidobacteria* in the intestines and reduce blood pressure and blood cholesterol.

The Bottom Line

Prebiotics are foods that help the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut and may help restore the gut microbiota after taking antibiotics.

Help Us Promote Public Health Services

Forward this electronic newsletter to your friends, family, co-workers, and associates.
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.



22 N. Georgia Ave., Suite 300, Mason City, IA 50401

Phone: 641-421-9300 www.cghealth.com

Cerro Gordo County Dept. of Public Health, 22 N. Georgia Ave. Suite 300, Mason City, IA 50401

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