



rural spotlight

Fall is quickly approaching. Cool mornings and evenings will be welcomed as we leave behind the hot dry summer. As we prepare for the coming of fall, remember to stay active, get your flu shot, practice good handwashing and eat more fruits and vegetables. This issue will provide you ways for making healthy choices that will benefit you a lifetime.

5 Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls

Slips and falls rank as the leading cause of injury deaths among people 65 and older. Falls can be a threat to the health and independence of older adults and can significantly limit their ability to remain self-sufficient. Many people think falls are a normal part of aging. The truth is, they're not. Many falls can be prevented.

By making some changes, you can lower your chances of falling.

- 1 Exercise regularly. Exercise programs like Tai Chi that increase strength and improve balance are especially good.
- 2 Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines to reduce side effects and interactions that could cause dizziness or an unsteady gait.
- 3 Have your eyes checked at least once a year.
- 4 Improve the lighting in your home.
- 5 Reduce the hazards in your home that lead to falls, such as loose carpets and slippery or uneven surfaces.

this issue includes:

Preventing Falls

National Rural Health Day

Safe Food Handling

Don't Text and Drive

Facts about H3N2 Flu

Oral Health & Fluoride

Benzocaine and Babies

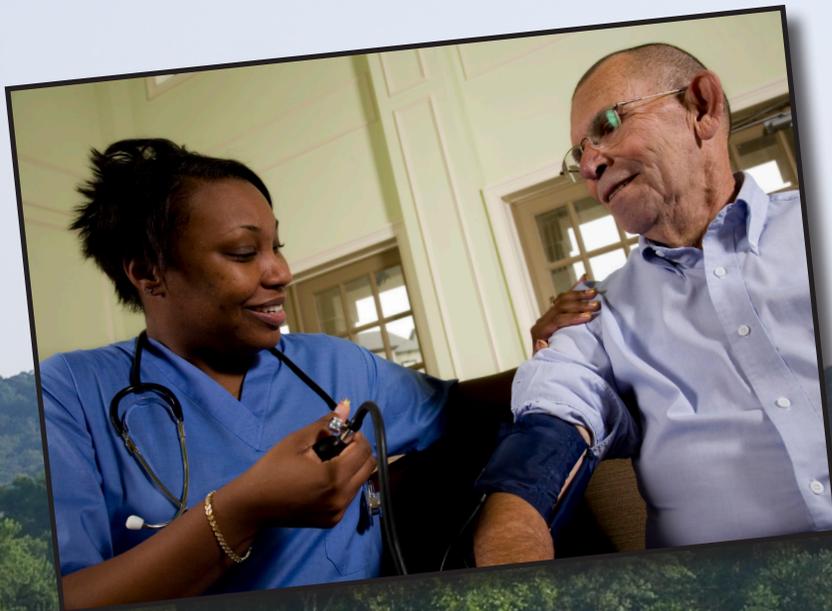
Preventing Flu and Germs

Recipe

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and Senior Services

National Rural Health Day

Thursday, November 15, 2012



Rural communities are wonderful places to live and work, which is why almost 59.5 million people – nearly one in five Americans – call them home. These small towns, farming communities and frontier areas are places where neighbors know each other, listen to each other, respect each other and work together to benefit the greater good. They are also some of the best places to start a business and test your “entrepreneurial spirit.” These communities provide the rest of the country with a wealth of services and commodities, and they are the economic engine that has helped the United States become the world economic power it is today.

Rural communities have unique healthcare needs.

Today more than ever, rural communities must address accessibility issues, a lack of healthcare providers, the needs of an aging population suffering from a greater number of chronic conditions, and larger percentages of un- and underinsured citizens. And rural hospitals – which are often the economic foundation of their communities

in addition to being the primary providers of care – struggle daily as declining reimbursement rates and disproportionate funding levels make it challenging to serve their residents.

That is why Missouri is joining the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health and other states to set aside November 15, 2012 and the third Thursday of every November to celebrate *National Rural Health Day*. First and foremost, *National Rural Health Day* is an opportunity to “Celebrate the Power of Rural” by honoring the selfless, community-minded, “can do” spirit that prevails in rural Missouri. It also gives us a chance to bring to light the unique healthcare challenges that rural citizens face – and showcase the efforts of rural healthcare providers.

For more information visit our rural health web page at: <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/ruralhealth/index.php>.

Tailgate Responsibly

Using Safe Food Handling Practices Before and After the Big Game

Follow this **Q&A** to help make your game day experience remain fun, safe, friendly and family-oriented.

Q. What are the safe temperatures for cooking meat and poultry?

A. Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food inside has reached the temperatures recommended below.

Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops, and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.

Cook all raw ground beef, pork, lamb, and veal to an internal temperature of 160 °F as measured with a food thermometer.

Cook all poultry to an internal temperature of 165 °F as measured with a food thermometer.

SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

All poultry	165 °F
Ground meats	160 °F
Beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, roasts and chops	145 °F**
Leftovers, reheating	165 °F

***as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.*

Q. How do you avoid cross-contamination?

A. When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food. In hot weather (above 90 °F), food should never sit out for more than 1 hour.

For this and more information – www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_sheets/Tailgating_Food_Safety/index.asp.



Texting & Driving

Don't Mix

Don't let a text message be the last message you type. Texting takes your eyes off the road for 4.6 seconds. In reality, it is comparable to driving across a football field blindfolded traveling 55 miles per hour.

There are 3 main types of distractions:

1. Manual: Taking your hands off the wheel.
2. Visual: Taking your eyes off the road.
3. Cognitive: Taking your mind off driving.

Because text messaging requires manual, visual and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction. Drivers who use hand-held devices are 4 more times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves.

In Aug. 2009, Missouri became the 23rd state to ban texting while driving, but only one of nine states to limit it to a specific age group: 21 and under. The fine for violating Missouri's texting law is \$200. Effective January 2012, a new federal law requires commercial motor vehicle drivers to put their cell phones down when behind the wheel. This ban is for any commercial driver, including bus drivers and those driving vehicles designed to carry nine to 15 passengers. The ban includes reaching for, holding or dialing a mobile phone while driving.

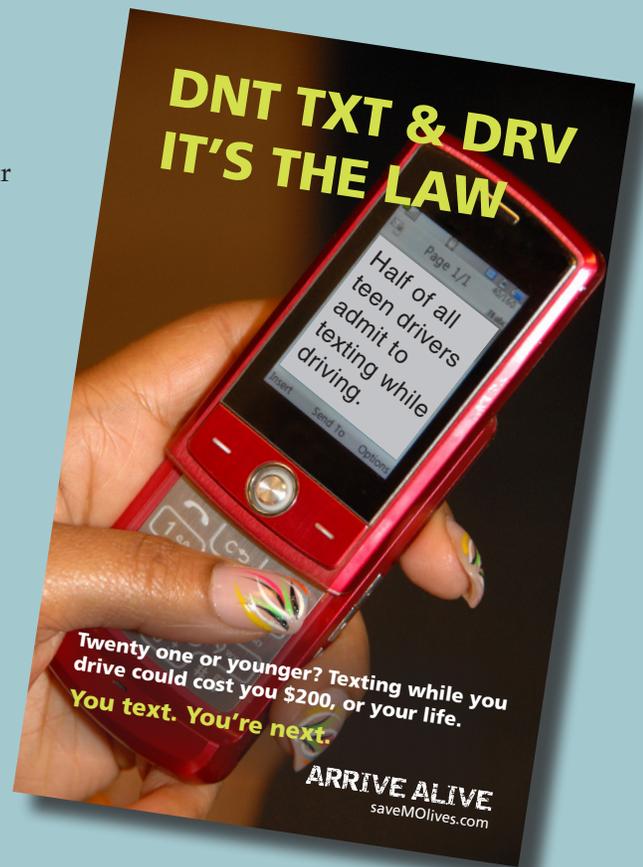
Out of sight, out of mind.

Before you set out to drive, put your phone in a place you can't get it and turn off the notification sound. This will avoid the temptation to text. If you are in a vehicle with a passenger, designate that person to do the texting.

As a parent, lead by example.

Children learn from their parent's behavior. If you need to talk on the phone or text, pull over to a safe place. Before handing the keys over to your teen, remind them to not text and drive. Also, teach your child to speak up if they are riding with someone who is texting while driving.

For more information, go to: www.savemolives.com.



Despite growing awareness, texting and driving remains a major issue:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Missouri teens.
- Only 67 percent of Missouri teens wear their seat belt.
- Texting drivers spend up to 400 percent more time with their eyes off the road.
- Fifty percent of teen drivers say they text while driving.

The Facts about H3N2v Flu

Influenza (flu) viruses have infected people and animals such as birds, pigs, cats, dogs, and horses for centuries. Some flu viruses are found in only one type of animal, while others have more ability to move between species **but** may cause different types of illness in different animals. These viruses are able to mix with other flu viruses and create new viruses.

Influenza A viruses contain genetic material from flu viruses that infect birds, pigs and people. Most of the time, bird flu viruses stay in birds, pig flu viruses stay in pigs, and human flu viruses stay in people. Occasionally, however, flu viruses can spread from birds or pigs to people or from people to birds or pigs

A new type of influenza A virus has been found in people over the past year. This virus is called “variant” H3N2 (or, H3N2v, for short) because it has developed the ability to infect people, in addition to swine where it is normally seen. H3N2v flu has been found mainly in children and in people who have had extended contact with pigs. These infections have been very similar to regular flu which makes people sick primarily during the winter months each year. Most people with H3N2v flu have had mild symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, muscle pain, and headache. Like regular flu, infection with H3N2v virus can result in serious disease and even death, particularly in persons with certain risk factors. People who are at higher risk for complications from any type of flu include those with long term health conditions (like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions), those who have a weakened immune system, pregnant women, and persons younger than 5 years or older than 65 years of age.

H3N2v flu spreads from swine to people much the same way that regular flu spreads from person-to-person. If a sick pig coughs or sneezes, droplets containing flu virus can spread to people up to several feet away and land in their mouths



or noses, or can possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Less often, a person might get H3N2v flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth or nose. The time between exposure to this virus and when symptoms first begin is about one to four days. So far, H3N2v flu has only spread from one person to another in a few cases involving a small number of people. **Consumers cannot catch this virus by eating or handling pork or pork products.**

The regular flu vaccine will not protect people from getting H3N2v, but there are medications that may be used to treat persons who are infected and sick from this virus. Medications must be prescribed by a doctor, and early treatment is most effective. Persons who have flu symptoms and are very sick or worried about their illness should contact their health care provider. In addition, all persons at higher risk of flu complications should contact their health care provider as soon as possible if they develop symptoms of the flu.

For more information, go to: www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/h3n2v-factsheet.htm or <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/h3n2v-basics.htm>. Medical and health professionals will find information at: <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/variant.php>.

Follow these tips to reduce your risk of the H3N2v flu:

- Don't take food or drink into pig areas; don't eat, drink or put anything in your mouth in pig areas.
- Don't take toys, pacifiers, cups, baby bottles, strollers, or similar items into pig areas.
- Wash your hands often with soap and running water before and after exposure to pigs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid close contact with pigs that look or act ill.
- Take protective measures if you must come in contact with pigs that are known or suspected to be sick. This includes wearing protective clothing, gloves, masks that cover your mouth and nose, and other personal protective equipment.
- Watch your pig (if you have one) for signs of illness and call a veterinarian if you suspect it might be sick.
- Avoid contact with pigs if you have flu-like symptoms. Wait 7 days after your illness started or until you have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer. If you must have contact with pigs while you are sick, take the protective actions listed above.
- If you are at high risk of serious flu complications and are going to a place where pigs will be present, avoid those areas. This includes children younger than 5 years, people 65 years and older, pregnant women and people with certain long-term health conditions (like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems and neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions).



Healthy Teeth Healthy Smiles

(and the role fluoride plays)

To feel good, stay healthy, and look great throughout life, you might be surprised what a difference a healthy mouth makes. By adopting healthy dental habits at home, making smart choices about diet and lifestyle, and seeking regular dental care, you can help your teeth last a lifetime.

In addition to brushing, flossing and regular checkups, avoiding snacks containing sugars and starches can help teeth and gums stay healthy. Maintaining a balanced diet and limiting snacks are important to preventing early stages of tooth decay (cavities). Instead of soda and other sugary beverages, drink fluoridated water. Fluoride protects against tooth decay at any age.

Q: What is fluoride and how does it benefit teeth?

A: Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in nearly all water supplies. Research has revealed that at a certain level in drinking water, fluoride prevents tooth decay.

Q: What is community water fluoridation?

A: Community water fluoridation is the controlled adjustment- either increasing or lowering- and monitoring of fluoride in community drinking water to reach optimal fluoride levels for preventing tooth decay.

Community water fluoridation is the single most cost effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. Credible scientific studies conducted throughout the past 60 years have consistently indicated that fluoridation of community water supplies is safe and effective in preventing dental decay in both children and adults. Community water fluoridation is the most efficient way to prevent one of the most common childhood diseases- tooth decay (5 times as common as asthma and 7 times as common as hay fever in 5 to 17 year olds).

Studies demonstrate water fluoridation continues to be effective in reducing tooth decay by 20-40%, even in an era with widespread availability of fluoride from other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste. The average cost for a community to fluoridate its water is estimated to range from approximately \$0.50 a year per person in large communities to approximately \$3.00 a year per person in small communities. For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.

A community that stops fluoridating or never starts this process will find that local residents end up spending more money on decay-related dental problems.

Avoiding just one filling would pay for fluoridation for a family of four for over 30 years.

Q: Does fluoride in drinking water protect only the teeth of children or does it benefit everyone?

A: People of all ages benefit from drinking water that is optimally fluoridated. Oral health is important throughout a person's life. In the 1950's, before water fluoridation was common, most people over the age of 65 had lost their



Benzocaine and Babies: Not a Good Mix



When a baby is teething, many a mom or dad reaches for a pain remedy containing benzocaine to help soothe sore gums. Benzocaine is a local anesthetic found in such over-the-counter (OTC) products as Anbesol, Hurracaine, Orajel, Baby Orajel, and Orabase. But the use of benzocaine gels and liquids for mouth and gum pain can lead to a rare but serious – and sometimes fatal – condition called methemoglobinemia. Methemoglobinemia is a blood disorder in which an abnormal amount of methemoglobin -- a form of hemoglobin -- is produced. Hemoglobin is the molecule in red blood cells that distributes oxygen to the body. Methemoglobin cannot release oxygen. In methemoglobinemia, the hemoglobin is unable to release oxygen effectively to body tissues.

Children under 2 years old appear to be at particular risk.

Healthy Teeth continued from page 6

teeth. Now, after decades of widespread fluoridation and increased dental health education, more seniors are keeping most or all of their teeth.

To find out if your public water system is fluoridated, go to Missouri's fluoridation map at <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/oralhealth/waterfluoridation.php>. Or, to find out how much natural fluoride is in your private well, contact your local county health department for this testing service.

For more information, visit: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/oralhealth/index.php>, American Dental Association at www.ada.org, Pew Center at www.pewstates.org/issues/dental-health-328288 and www.ILikeMyTeeth.org.



KIDS HEALTH TIP

Preventing Flu and other Germs

It's the season for flu. Viruses that can cause the flu are everywhere. Just by washing your hands more often, you can help stop the spread of flu and other germs.

Follow these prevention tips for a healthier flu season:

- **Get vaccinated** from the flu.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Don't share cups and eating utensils**, like forks and spoons, with anyone.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

For more information, go to <http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/influenza/index.php>.

For questions or comments about this publication, contact the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at 800-891-7415 or info@health.mo.gov. Visit our website at www.health.mo.gov.

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A healthy recipe for *Fall*

Autumn Toasted Trail Mix

- 1 cup soy nuts
 - 1 cup whole raw almonds
 - 1 cup dried pumpkin seeds
 - 1 tablespoon canola oil
 - 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
 - 1/2 to 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
 - 1/8 teaspoon allspice
 - 1 cup dried cranberries
 - 2 cups fat-free mini pretzels
- To dry seeds: Spread pumpkin seeds out on paper towels and place on cookie sheet to dry overnight.
- Heat canola oil in large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat.
- Add seasoning to pumpkin seeds, soy nuts & almonds. Then pour nuts & seeds into skillet stirring constantly. When nuts & seeds begin to get golden, start to pop open and release their aroma, they are done.
- Cool slightly. Add dried cranberries and pretzels.

Source: <http://missourifamilies.org/nutrition/recipes/AutumnTrailMix.htm>