

Health Matters



from the Kane County Health Department

— July 22, 2015 —

Trending Matters:

August is:



[West Nile Virus Surveillance Reports](#)

Vaccines protect us throughout our lifetime

Vaccination is one of the best ways parents can protect infants, children, and teens from 16 potentially harmful diseases. Vaccine-preventable diseases can be very serious, may require hospitalization, or even be deadly – especially in infants and young children.

The benefits of vaccination are two-fold: In addition to providing individual immunity, high vaccination levels can provide protection against disease to those in a community who would otherwise be vulnerable.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) and is used to bring awareness to the enormous impact vaccines have on improving the health of children in the United States.

Most parents today have never seen first-hand the devastating consequences that vaccine-preventable diseases have on a family or community. While these diseases are not common in the U.S., they persist around the world.

It is important that we continue to protect our children with vaccines because outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases can and do occasionally occur in this country.

Vaccines are among the most cost-effective clinical preventive services and are a core component of any preventive services package. Unfortunately, we know from our Community Health Assessment that only about half of 2 year olds in Kane County received the recommended vaccinations. Outbreaks of communicable disease, such as the measles outbreak in 2014, lead to increased absenteeism in workplaces and schools and increased healthcare costs. A robust healthcare system in Kane County working to prevent, identify early, and treat communicable diseases is critical to reducing the burden of communicable disease.

While immunizations have significantly reduced the incidence of many serious infectious diseases, vaccination

rates for some diseases are not meeting national public health goals. And we need to remind people that immunizations aren't just for children. They are needed throughout our lifetime.

Weekly Immunization Awareness Month themes throughout August will be:

Week 1: A Healthy Start:
babies from birth to age 2
and pregnant women



Week 2: Back to School:
children, pre-teens
and teens to age 18



Week 3: Off to College:
young adults age 19-26



Week 4: Not Just for Kids:
adults age 26+



During the month of August, the Health Department will be using social media to promote the practice of getting vaccinated, throughout one's lifetime.

More info about immunizations can be found on our website by clicking [HERE](#).

**Summertime eats:
Ensuring the festival food we eat is safe**



Summer is here, when we can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, including sampling the fare from the many food vendors at local festivals. Tasty hot dogs, elephant ears, lemon shake-ups—you name it, someone somewhere is probably selling it. Assuring access to safe food is one of the priorities of the Community Health Improvement Plan, and KCHD's Environmental Health Staff works every day to ensure the food we eat, whether you buy from a festival food vendor or at a restaurant, is safe.

Foodborne illness is a preventable public health challenge that causes an estimated 48 million illnesses and 3,000 deaths each year in the United States. And we typically see an increase in those illnesses during the summer. That's why at this time of the year KCHD inspects hundreds of vendors who apply for temporary permits every year, ensuring that they comply with safe food handling practices and ordinances at dozens of events.



Kane County Environmental Health Sanitarian Austin Schramer conducts an inspection of a food booth during a recent Swedish Days Festival in Geneva.

Each vendor is inspected, and these visits take place in addition to the regular inspections of the county's nearly 2,000 food service establishments that hold permanent permits.

Is the food kept at the proper temperatures? (Cold needs to be cold, and hot needs to be hot to prevent the disease); Are there proper cleaning procedures and equipment in place? And the list goes on.

Often, the food vendor is a service club or agency, whose business is not a full time, commercial food service.

In this case the Environmental Health Practitioner also becomes a teacher, providing education on proper food handling procedures.

So the next time you sample some tasty treat from a local food vendor, you can rest assured the KCHD's Environmental staff has done all it can to ensure that it is safe to eat. For more information about food safety and the food safety program in Kane County, you can click [HERE](#).

Improving internal communications

The Division of Health Promotion recently used "Popcorn Sessions" as a way to improve internal communications and keep staff better informed on the work their colleagues are doing. And, no, there is no real popcorn to snack on.

The Popcorn Sessions are an informal way of ensuring the staff gets a taste of the duties and responsibilities of their co-workers. It's a way of sharing information and knowledge that benefits all. Each staff member presented for a few minutes about a specific public health activity so that the Environmental Health Section could learn about Community Health Section and vice versa. It was a fun, quick way for the two sections get a little more in depth info about each other. Each popcorn session was about 5-6 minutes for the presentation

and then another 4-5 to answer questions. It was very interactive and the speakers brought whatever visuals or handouts they thought would be helpful.



Above, Emma Cook, Joe Durczak and Maria Almanza were among the Division of Health Promotion staff who participated in the popcorn sessions.

Kane County Breastfeeding Coalition promotes informed choices



**August is National
Breastfeeding Awareness
Month**

The Kane County Breastfeeding Coalition promotes policy and evidence-based practices to help new and expectant parents in choosing how to feed their infants and in supporting those who breastfeed their babies. This aligns with the Kane County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) since breastfed infants have a lower risk of obesity—along with other health benefits.

The Kane County Breastfeeding Coalition is made up of participants from diverse aspects of the community, including the local hospitals, community health centers, WIC Programs, the Kane County health department, private lactation consultants, community groups that promote breastfeeding, and others.

Its mission is to engage all interested community members in improving health by making breastfeeding information and support available to new parents. The goal is to help parents make informed choices about breastfeeding as early as possible during pregnancy and to support that choice as soon as the baby is born.

The Breastfeeding Coalition page on the KCHD website contains a wealth of information for new and expectant mothers, providers and others. It can be found [HERE](#).

The Kane County Breastfeeding Coalition Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month, 8 -9:30 a.m. at:

Delnor New Life Maternity Center

Conference Room
3000 Randall Road Geneva, IL 60134

World Breastfeeding Week
August 1-7

The Kane County Breastfeeding Coalition is an essential health partnership to help achieve the 2030 Kane County health vision: "To have the healthiest residents in Illinois!"



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