



**AUGUST 2008**

## **An Apple for the Teacher, A Shot for the Student** *Make sure immunizations are on your back-to-school checklist*

As students and parents gear up for the new school year, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is reminding parents to make sure their children are up to date on their immunizations.

Gil Copley, director of the Department of Community Health and the Environment, said, "While no one looks forward to an injection, the benefits of preventing serious vaccine-preventable diseases far outweigh the mild discomfort of a shot and the low risk of side effects. Immunizations are an important step in keeping kids healthy and ready to learn."

Immunization is one of the most significant public health achievements of the 20th century. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox, eliminated wild polio in the U.S., and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis, and other diseases. But despite these efforts, tens of thousands of people in the U.S. still become infected by these and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines stimulate the body into developing antibodies to harmful bacteria and viruses, in a process called active immunity. Vaccines contain live, weakened or killed microorganisms, or so-called "fractions" of dangerous microorganisms. Once vaccinated, a person can retain immunity to a disease for many years.

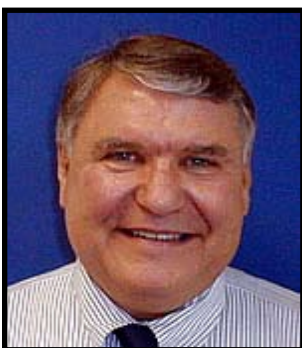


The state of Missouri requires all children to be up to date on required immunizations. A complete list of vaccination requirements is available by following [this link](#) or by calling (636) 949-7400. Students who have recently moved into Missouri should check with the health department to find out if their shots are up to date. Parents with children heading off to college should check with the school for their specific immunization requirements.

Families with health insurance are encouraged to obtain vaccinations from their health care provider. However, required immunizations are available from the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Vaccinations are offered at the health

department facility at 1650 Boone's Lick Road in St. Charles every weekday except Thursday. Office hours are 8:30 to 11:00am and 1:30 to 4:30pm. Hours are extended until 5:30pm on Tuesdays and until 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of the month.

## **From the Director**



Gil Copley

It has been more than a year since emergency preparedness was last mentioned in the "From the Director" messages. I think revisiting the topic is overdue. Even for those families, individuals, businesses, and facilities that have prepared and planned, maintaining a plan and the "things" that are a part of it is an ongoing necessity and an ongoing challenge.

I remember when I was first involved in public health in the City of St. Louis, participating in the cleanup of overlooked and long outdated Civil Defense shelters from the 1950's. These shelters were numerous during the Cold War era, but most had been decommissioned by the time I started in public health. However, some had been missed because they were tucked away in basements, sub-basements, parking garages, and other long forgotten places. The ones I saw contained deteriorated cots and bedding, water and "crackers" that were long out of date and no longer fit for human consumption, and first aid kits that were outdated as well.

*To read the rest of this article, click on [From the Director](#)*



# Obesity Epidemic Grows Larger

In the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States. The percentage of obese adults has increased from about 17 percent in 1987 to nearly 28 percent today, according to the latest report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To understand obesity, you first have to understand how it is defined. According to CDC, any adult with a body mass index (BMI) equal to or greater than 30 is considered obese. BMIs in the 25-29 range are considered overweight. To calculate your BMI, use this [online tool](#).

In 2007, only one state, Colorado, had a prevalence of obesity less than 20 percent. Thirty states, including Missouri, had a prevalence equal to or greater than 25 percent. Most worrying, three of these states (Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee) had a prevalence of obesity equal to or greater than 30 percent.

Surveys also show increases in overweight and obesity in children and teens. In the latest study by CDC, nearly 14 percent of children ages 2-5 years were overweight. For those age 6-11, the number jumps to nearly 19 percent,

and for youth ages 12-19, the prevalence of overweight and obesity is about 17 percent.

The increase in the number of overweight and obese Americans has serious implications for long-term health. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of many diseases and health conditions, including:

- high blood pressure
- type 2 diabetes
- osteoarthritis
- heart disease
- stroke
- sleep apnea
- some types of cancer

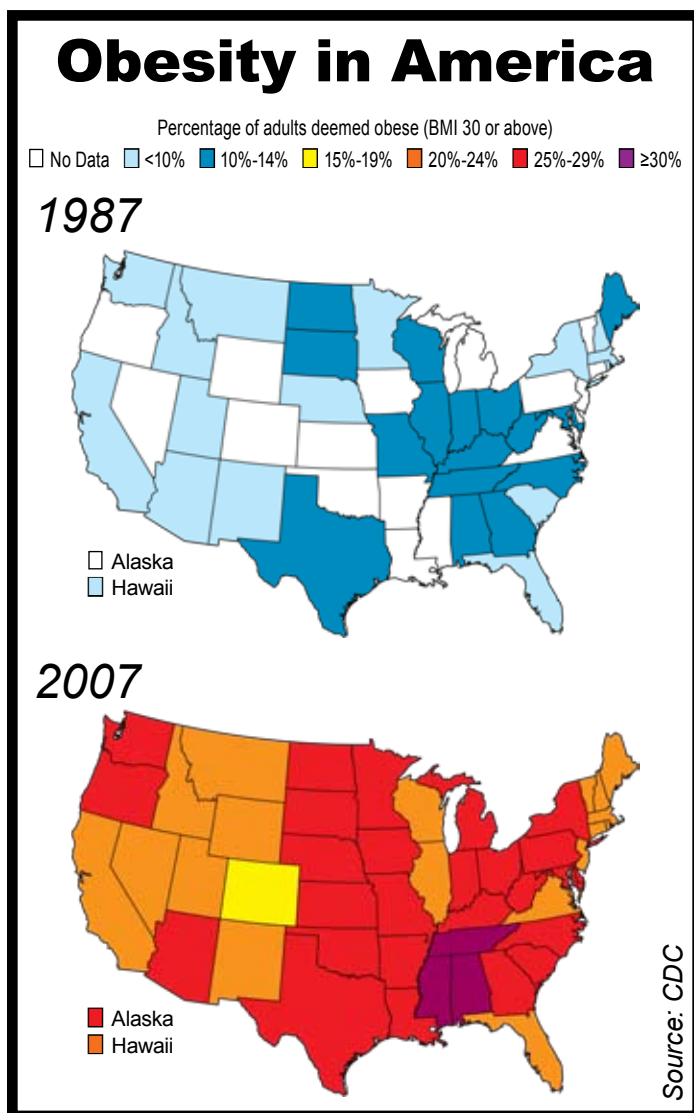
One of the national health objectives for 2010 is to reduce the prevalence of obesity among American adults. However, with just 17 months remaining until then, it appears the situation is worsening, rather than improving.

Fortunately, even in our "fast-food" society, there are ways to eat healthier. For example, instead of getting a calorie-laden burger, greasy fries, and a sugary soda at the drive-thru, try ordering something lighter like a grilled chicken salad with reduced calorie dressing, apple slices, and milk, water, or tea to drink.

In addition, many of our favorite foods are just empty calories; calories that end up turning into fat. One of the largest sources of empty calories is regular soda. Fruit juice and alcohol are also high calorie options that don't offer much in the way of nutrients. Beware of low-fat and fat-free versions of foods as well. They don't always have fewer calories, and frequently contain extra sugar to make them taste good.

Get in the habit of reading labels. It will open your eyes to what is really in the food you consume. Compare fresh foods to packaged to see the benefits. Compare fruits and vegetables to other snack foods such as potato chips. You may be surprised by the number of empty calories you take in every day!

To help St. Charles County residents make better choices, the Department of Community Health and the Environment offers a variety of nutrition classes. To learn more, call (636) 949-7400 extension 4244.



**RACE FOR THE RIVERS**  
AND CLEAN WATER CHALLENGE  
2008

Frontier Park, St. Charles Riverfront

[www.racefortherivers.org](http://www.racefortherivers.org)



# Spotlight On: Chad Menard

Chad Menard is an animal control officer for St. Charles County. In that role, he interacts daily with the citizens of the county, and of course their pets. He enjoys working with the public, something that wasn't always possible during his time as a corrections officer at the county jail. Prior to working for St. Charles County, Chad served his country for four years in the Marine Corps, and served tours of duty in the Persian Gulf and South Korea.

One misconception that people have about Chad's job is that he's "just a dogcatcher," when in fact there is more to it. "We're not just out to take animals," Chad says. "We want to make sure that they are well taken care of, and that they have good homes. We want to solve problems and educate owners. The last thing we want to do is write citations."

There is also an element of danger to Chad's job. He takes on aggressive dogs and wild animals with just a few basic tools, "but that's our job," Chad said. "We're a small division, but we're here to help people, and their animals too."

The periodic adoption events held by the Pet Adoption Center are also important to Chad. Not only do pets get new homes, but "we can tell people about our resources and the ways we can help them. The Pet Adoption Center is here to answer your questions," Chad said.

At the end of the day, Chad enjoys the sense of accomplishment he gets. "If I can go home everyday and make sure people have been educated and that their pets are being taken care of, that's very rewarding."



**Animal control officer Chad Menard looks after a dog at the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center**

## Hold the Jalapeños!



Earlier this year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an alert after an outbreak of Salmonella. At first, it was believed that fresh red tomatoes were contaminated with the bacteria that made 1,300 people sick.

Since then, an FDA laboratory has detected Salmonella saintpaul, the culprit in the outbreak, in a sample of jalapeño pepper grown in Mexico. Investigators believe the contamination came from the water used to irrigate the peppers.

The distributor is working with FDA to recall the contaminated product.

However, the tainted peppers may still be in grocery stores, homes, and restaurants. FDA is advising everyone to avoid consuming raw jalapeño and serrano peppers from Mexico and dishes containing the raw peppers. Consumers should be aware that raw jalapeño and serrano peppers are often used in making fresh salsa, pico de gallo, guacamole, and other dishes. Cooked or pickled jalapeños are not part of this warning.

To date, the CDC has confirmed 1,294 cases of Salmonella since April, with new reports of illness coming in as late as July 10. For more information on the Salmonella outbreak, visit [www.cdc.gov/salmonella/saintpaul](http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/saintpaul).

## Mental Health

Feeling blue? You are not alone. When talking about health and wellness we cannot forget mental health. Our society can be quick to dismiss the connection between mental and physical health. A report released in 1999 by the U.S. Surgeon General makes a clear connection between mental and physical health and stresses the fundamental importance of mental health to overall health and well being.

Did you know that one in five Americans, or about 54 million people, face mental disorders in a given year? Oftentimes mental health issues are ignored by the person experiencing symptoms due to anxiety or fear of judgment from others. Support during traumatic life events or ongoing health issues can significantly impact one's quality of life. When left untreated, mental health disorders can be as disabling as a physical illness. There is help. For more information on mental health and treatment resources visit the National Alliance on Mental Illness at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

### Helpful Phone Numbers

Division of Public Health (636) 949-7400	WIC (636) 949-7402
Health Education (636) 949-7401	Division of Environmental Services Recycling Services (636) 949-7415
Vital Records (636) 949-7558	Division of Humane Services (636) 949-7387
STD Prevention/Treatment (636) 949-7401	Animal Control (636) 949-7347
Environmental Public Health Program (636) 949-1800	



*Go for the Gold!*

## **Mothers Know Breastfeeding is a Winner**

One of the single most important decisions a new mother can make to assure good health and contentment for her newborn baby is to breastfeed. This simple fact is being reinforced in August during

Missouri Breastfeeding Month.

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment supports and promotes breastfeeding in several ways. Nancy Duncan, the director of the Division of Public Health, said, "One purpose of our Women, Infants, and Children program is to dispel myths and unreasoned fears about breastfeeding, and provide accurate information to support those who want to breastfeed."

Experts agree breastfeeding promotes baby's good health both in the beginning stages and throughout life. Breast milk aids in the proper development of a baby's brain as well as the growth of their immune system to withstand such ailments as diarrhea, ear infections, and infections of the respiratory and urinary tracts. It also reduces the baby's

risk of environment-borne illnesses, food sensitization, and allergies. A baby who is breastfed exclusively for at least six months has a reduced risk of obesity later in life. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that new mothers breastfeed their babies for at least the first year.

Mothers enjoy tangible health benefits as well. Breastfeeding helps the mother return to her pre-pregnancy size sooner, boosts her immune system and even reduces a diabetic mother's need for insulin. Long term benefits include a mother's increased protection from breast and ovarian cancers and osteoporosis.

If you are interested in breastfeeding, but aren't sure where to turn for information, call the Breastfeeding Helpline at 1-800-994-9662. The National Women's Health Information Center has trained counselors who can answer common questions and provide referrals. The Helpline is open to nursing mothers as well as their partners, families, and prospective parents seeking to learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding.

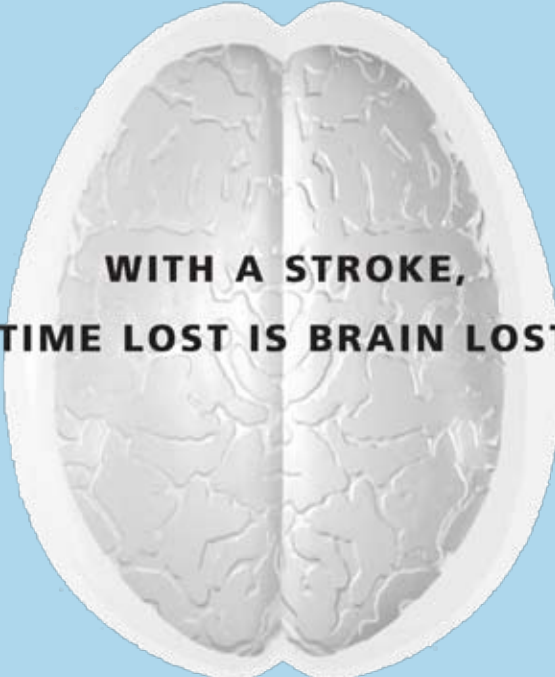
## **Flood Debris Cleanup Operation Continues**



The recent floods have left a mess in parts of St. Charles County. Now, the Department of Community Health and the Environment is doing its part to help residents recover from the flooding.

The department's Division of Environmental Services is partnering with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Emergency Response Team to aid in the removal of potentially hazardous and unidentified container material left behind by the retreating waters. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad has also agreed to assist in removal of flood debris from the railroad right-of-way. Additionally, the county will provide roll-off containers to aid flood-impacted residents in their clean-up efforts. Those who live in the impacted areas will receive an informational door hanger to help them locate the disposal sites nearest to them. Signs have also been posted on the containers and at container locations to help residents with proper disposal of flood debris. The Division of Environmental Services will have an active onsite presence in the flood-affected areas to help pick up any debris left behind.

Residents with questions about the flood cleanup operation should call the Community Development Department at (636) 949-1814. To report flood-related debris in public areas, call the Division of Environmental Services at (636) 949-7415.



**WITH A STROKE,  
TIME LOST IS BRAIN LOST.**

If you suddenly have or see any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately: Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body • Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding • Difficulty seeing in one or both eyes • Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination • Severe headache with no known cause

Learn more at [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org) or 1-888-4-STROKE.

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