

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



ST. CHARLES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
**Community Health
& The Environment**

Health-E-News

JANUARY 2009

Complete the "Solid Waste Triangle"

Resolve to Reduce and Reuse

Since 1990, when the first Recycle Works location opened, St. Charles County residents have recycled more than 25 million pounds of material. This has helped reduce the burden on local landfills and helped keep our environment cleaner. However, while recycling is important, it's just one part of the equation. In 2009, resolve to complete the "Solid Waste Triangle" of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

In these tough economic times, demand for recycled material has fallen, which leads to lower prices paid for the material. While some centers have stopped accepting certain types of recyclables due to lowered demand, the St. Charles County Recycle Works facilities have not yet had to take this step. The situation does, however, give all of us a chance to think about the amount of waste we generate, and take steps to reduce our impact on the solid waste stream.

Across the country, many communities and individuals have found creative ways to reduce and better manage municipal solid waste, more commonly known as trash or garbage, through a mix of practices that include source reduction, recycling and composting, and disposal.



Some ways to reduce the waste we generate include:

- Bringing your own plate, cup, and utensils to work for use at lunch or break times instead of disposable tableware. The "dollar store" is a great place to pick up an inexpensive set. (Be sure to wash your tableware after every use and before storing.)
- Drinking tap water from a reusable container instead of purchasing expensive, wasteful bottled water. If you must buy bottled water, reuse the bottle several times before recycling it.

Some ways to reuse items include:

- Buying reusable bags for use at the grocery store. This helps cut down on the number of plastic bags that need to be landfilled. In addition, reusable bags often hold more than plastic bags.
- Bringing a reusable mug when you visit your local coffee shop. Many coffee shops offer a discount to customers who bring their own mug.

To learn more about solid waste management visit the Environmental Services section of our website at www.scchealth.org/es.

From the Director



Gil Copley

East-central Missouri is currently experiencing an increase in pertussis in school-age children. Since the early 1980's, in the United States we have seen increasing rates of pertussis with periodic peaks every three to four years. Most of those reported with the disease had been vaccinated. However, the rates today are far lower than when there was no vaccine to protect against pertussis and no vaccine is 100% effective. Although most of those with pertussis make a full recovery, it can be very dangerous, especially to very young infants. So it is still very important to be vaccinated and most of those who are vaccinated will be protected.

This current situation led me to think about what it used to be like before we had vaccines to protect against disease. All of these vaccine preventable diseases used to be deadly, some very deadly. In order to explore this thought I turned to the CDC website.

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



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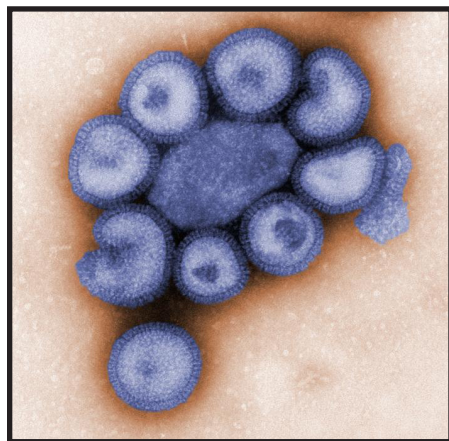
New Test Helps Detect Flu Virus

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has cleared a new test developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to diagnose human influenza infections and the highly pathogenic influenza A (H5N1) viruses.

The device, called the Human Influenza Virus Real-Time RT-PCR Detection and Characterization Panel, uses a molecular biology technique to detect flu virus and differentiate between seasonal and novel strains of influenza.

The test panel and diagnostic system can detect and identify commonly circulating human influenza viruses as well as influenza A (H5N1) viruses. Results can be available within four hours and the system can test multiple samples at once. CDC-approved laboratories around the country began using the new test this fall.

"This is a significant achievement for public health surveillance," HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said. "The test allows us to better support laboratories on the front line of influenza testing in the United States and abroad."



An electron microscope reveals the structure of the influenza (flu) virus
Image courtesy CDC

"This new test provides us another tool in our toolbox to fight seasonal influenza, a virus that unfortunately kills thousands of people each year in the United States," said CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "We'll now be able to detect influenza in the community faster, which allows

us to take steps more quickly to protect and save lives."

Scientists around the world are concerned that the H5N1 virus, found in birds, could one day mutate and acquire the properties needed to quickly spread between people, resulting in a pandemic. H5N1 viruses have caused human deaths in Asia, but have not yet been detected in the Western Hemisphere.

Helpful Phone Numbers	
Division of Public Health (636) 949-7400	WIC (636) 949-7402
Health Education (636) 949-7401	Division of Environmental Services Recycling Centers (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	

Kick the Habit in 2009

Every January 1, thousands of smokers across the U.S. try to kick the habit as part of their New Year's resolutions. However, many of them fail, and for many reasons. If you're a smoker who is determined to quit once and for all in 2009, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment can help.

First, check out our [Tobacco Cessation Resource Guide](http://www.scchealth.org) online at www.scchealth.org. These resources can help you on your way to being smoke-free.



Just thinking about quitting smoking may make you anxious. But your chances will be better if you get ready first. Quitting works best when you're prepared. Before you quit, **START** by taking these five important

steps:

Set a quit date.

Tell family, friends, and co-workers that you plan to quit.

Anticipate and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting.

Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and work.

Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit.

Going "cold turkey" works for some smokers, but most need help dealing with the withdrawal symptoms. Fortunately, there are a number of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products on the market that can help ease your transition to a tobacco-free life. Using these products can more than double your chances of success. Talk to your health care provider to see which NRT is right for you.

Many smokers light up after a meal, especially when eating out. If you're one of those who need some extra "resolve" to avoid an after-dinner cigarette, you may want to check out one of the many St. Charles County restaurants that offer smoke-free dining. The list can be found [here](#). Check back often, as the list is continually updated.

Finally, don't be discouraged if you slip up and smoke a cigarette. It's not a lost cause. One slip up doesn't make you a failure. It doesn't mean you can't quit for good. However, don't be too easy on yourself either. If you slip up, get back on the non-smoking track right away. Remember, your goal is **no** cigarettes - not even one puff.

For more information on quitting smoking, visit www.smokefree.gov. Here's to a happy, healthy, and most of all *smoke-free* New Year!

Tainted Weight Loss Pills Tagged as Health Risk

Adapted from FDA

Losing weight is a popular New Year's resolution, but consumers should be wary of products that promise to help them shed pounds quickly or lose weight without the benefit of exercise.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers not to buy or use more than 25 different weight-loss pill products because the products may be harmful to their health.

The recalled products contain undeclared, active pharmaceutical ingredients. Some of the amounts of active ingredients far exceed FDA-recommended levels.

Some of the products claim to be "natural" or to contain only "herbal" ingredients, but actually contain potentially harmful ingredients not listed on the product labels or in promotional advertisements. These products have not been approved by the FDA, are illegal, and may be potentially harmful to unsuspecting consumers.

The undeclared ingredients found in the pills include sibutramine, a controlled substance that can cause high blood pressure, seizures, abnormally rapid heart rate, palpitations, heart attack, or stroke. It can also interact with other medications and increase the risk of side effects. In addition, the safety of sibutramine has not been established in pregnant and lactating women, or in children younger than 16.

The recalled diet drugs also contain rimonabant, a drug not approved for marketing in the United States. The drug

has been associated with increased risk of depression and suicidal thoughts. In Europe, where it is approved, rimonabant has been linked to five deaths and 720 adverse reactions over the last two years.

The diet pills may also contain phenytoin, an anti-seizure medication, and phenolphthalein, a solution used in chemical experiments that is a suspected cancer-causing agent.

These weight-loss products, some of which are marketed as "dietary supplements," are promoted and sold on various websites and in some retail stores.

If you use any of these weight-loss products, stop taking them and consult your health care professional immediately. In addition, you should always seek guidance from a health care professional before purchasing weight-loss products or beginning a weight loss regimen.

The tainted weight-loss products specified in the alert are 2 Day Diet, 3 Day Diet, 3x Slimming Power, 5x Imelda Perfect Slimming, 7 Day Herbal Slim, 7 Diet Day/Night Formula, 8 Factor Diet, 999 Fitness Essence, Extrim Plus, Fat Loss Slimming, GMP, Imelda Perfect Slim, Japan Lingzhi 24 Hours Diet, Lida DaiDaihua, Miaozi Slim Capsules, Perfect Slim, Perfect Slim 5x, Phyto Shape, ProSlim Plus, Royal Slimming Formula, Slim 3 in 1, Slim Express 360, Slimtech, Somotrim, Superslim, TripleSlim, Venom Hyperdrive 3.0, and Zhen de Shou.

For more information, visit www.fda.gov and click on "Information for Consumers."

Did You Know...

The 1918 flu pandemic killed more than 500,000 Americans in just a few weeks.

Get prepared for any type of disaster with Ready in 3.



www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3

I Have a Dream...



St. Charles County Government offices will be closed on Monday, January 19 for Martin Luther King Day