



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



A Day in Your Life, Thanks to Public Health

Celebrate health during National Public Health Week: April 3-9

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BURLINGTON, VT – Vermonters are able to live longer and healthier lives, thanks to more than 100 years of work by the Vermont Department of Health. On average, people in the U.S. are living 30 years more than previous generations. Twenty-five of those years are credited to public health achievements such as childhood vaccinations, infection control measures, safer workplaces, services for mothers and babies, and recognizing tobacco as leading public health threat.

“Public health is the work we do, beyond the doctor’s office, to protect and promote best health for everyone,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “With central offices and laboratory in Burlington and 12 district offices around the state, your Health Department is working every day to meet the continuing and future challenges to your health.”

A Day in Your Life –

6 a.m. - Up out of bed, you head for the shower and then brush your teeth. You have confidence that your water is safe and clean because you’ve had it tested by the Health Department Laboratory. In the kitchen, you set out milk, fruit, cereal and whole grain bread. You know that a nutritious breakfast is the best start for kids and adults alike. On the radio, you hear that flu season is coming to a close. Your family is up to date on their vaccinations, and no one’s been sick this year.

7 a.m. - You head off to the car. Fastening seatbelts is a habit – and your policy is “hands off” mobile devices, for safety’s sake. It’s snowing and you drive at a safe speed. You know from public health messages that most crashes and injuries are avoidable.

8 a.m. - At work you enjoy a smoke-free environment, just like almost everywhere else. Vermont was the first state to ban smoking in public places, thanks to the efforts of public health. You smile because your best friend has succeeded in quitting, with help from Vermont’s Quit Network. Your kids have never smoked, thanks to your example and public health messages all around them.

9 a.m. - Your sister calls. She and her new baby are just back from the pediatrician. The six-week checkup was great! The Health Department promotes early prenatal care, and every baby gets a newborn screening to test for conditions that, if untreated, can cause development and learning delays and severe health problems. If a child has a special health need, the Health Department coordinates specialty care. She’s also thrilled with her visits to her Health Department district office, free Text-4-Baby health tips, breastfeeding support, healthy WIC foods and nutrition services, plus a debit-like card to buy fresh fruit and vegetables at local markets.

12 noon - It’s still snowing, but you change into treaded boots and head out the door to join your lunchtime Fit & Healthy walking partners. Public health studies have shown that people who exercise regularly live longer and healthier, with less chronic disease. You have learned to fit regular physical activity into your busy day.

12:30 p.m. - For lunch you stop for take-out soup and salad. You assume that the food is safe to eat because the Health Department oversees inspection and licensing of restaurants, publishes scores, and investigates foodborne illness outbreaks.

1 p.m. - Back at work, you hear the sound of sirens as an ambulance passes your building. Thanks to the Health Department, it is fully equipped and inspected, with EMTs trained and certified and part of a system to make sure critically injured people have the best possible chance of survival.

4 p.m. - Another day ends. You start your car and the radio comes on. You hear a public service announcement

advising parents to make sure their young children have all their vaccines. Public health promotes early childhood immunizations to protect against serious, sometimes life-threatening diseases.

5 p.m. - Your children are home, after a day of school. You limit sitting time in front of TV in favor of outdoor activity. You are all on track to keep the extra pounds off and the energy on to live, work, learn and play for a long time to come!

6 p.m. - Your family comes together for dinner, and you tell them to wash their hands before eating. "To keep germs from spreading, we know" they say. "And cover your cough, wash your hands, stay home and away from others when you're sick."

7 p.m. - The evening news tells of a mysterious illness among visitors at a local event. Thankfully, the outbreak is under control. The Health Department says planning, practice and close coordination with other local and federal agencies has made for a faster and more effective response to any public health emergency.

8 p.m. - It's time to talk with your pre-teen about drinking and drugs. You've prepared for this, with help from the Health Department's and your community's Parent Up! campaign. You say a silent thank-you and make a mental note to join the local health coalition.

10 p.m. - It's time for bed and you drift off to sleep. Public health has touched your lives in countless ways today, working behind the scenes – nearly invisibly – to keep you all safe and sound.

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