



Bangor Region
Public Health & Wellness
www.WhatYouDoMatters.org
City of Bangor

What You Do Matters

For Healthy Living in Eastern Maine Communities

www.WhatYouDoMatters.org

December 2009

Find out *More*
Do More
www.MaineParents.net

Alcohol Awareness Week

Alcohol Awareness Week, December 6th - 12th, is a great time to consider how your words and actions can prevent underage drinking.

Following these tips can make a positive impact on the young people in your life and give them some first steps to a great future.

- TIP 1** Keep track of any alcohol in your home – know how much you have, and keep it where it is not accessible to teens.
- TIP 2** Get to know your teen’s friends and their parents... Talk to the parents so you know their rules too.
- TIP 3** Reinforce the rules and consequences of underage drinking before your teen goes out.
- TIP 4** Before your teen goes to a party, ask if adults will be present and if alcohol will be present.
- TIP 5** Wait up, or set the alarm, for curfew time – talk with your teen about their night. Teens who believe their parents will catch them are less likely to drink.

For more information visit www.maineparents.net.

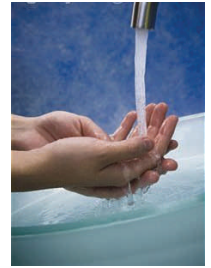
Y-Fit Tip

The Holidays can be busy and stressful. Here are five tips to keep you active:

- Be flexible when your days get busy: Have plenty of options available in case you can’t make it your favorite aerobics class. Keep a pair of walking shoes in your car and squeeze in a walk at lunch.
- Take an honest look at your schedule: Make time for exercise. If you have parties to attend after work wake up a few minutes early and squeeze in a workout.
- Keep fitness a priority: Exercise is crucial this time of year because we often eat more during the holiday season and stress levels are higher.
- Schedule your workout like you would a meeting: You will be more likely to stick with exercise.
- Save time and make exercise a family event: Try snowshoeing or sledding with the entire family.

National Hand Washing Awareness Week December 6 - 12

Help stop the spread of germs and disease. Wash your hands!



With flu season here, it is doubly important to practice good hand washing. When you don’t wash your hands frequently you can pick up germs from anything you touch, and from your hands germs can spread to any other person or object. Your hands will infect you when you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth and before you know it, everybody is getting sick.

How often should you wash your hands? Often! Even though you can’t see them, germs are everywhere.

It is especially important to wash your hands:

- After coughing or sneezing (if you accidentally covered your nose or mouth with your hand instead of your elbow);
- Before, during, and after you prepare food;
- Before you eat, and after you use the bathroom;
- When your hands are dirty, and;
- More often when someone you live with is sick.

Hand sanitizers work well as a substitute for soap and water

Start The New Year Tobacco Free

You hear a lot of different reasons to quit tobacco, but the reason that matters most is the one that's important to you.

What's YOUR reason to quit?

- Save money?
- Spend more time with your grandchildren?
- Breathe easier and feel better?

Every year, Mainers join millions of Americans that make it their New Year's resolution to quit tobacco. Take time this month to find your reason to quit and begin planning your quit plan NOW so you can make 2010 the year you quit tobacco.

Call the toll-free Maine Tobacco HelpLine at 1-800-207-1230 and let them help you create a plan that's designed just for you. A plan that includes personal coaching and may include free medication to make quitting less difficult.

People who use the HelpLine are **three times more likely to quit**, so start getting ready for a brand New Year by talking with them TODAY!

Protect Your Child From Lead Paint Exposure

Every year about 200 children in Maine are lead poisoned. Lead is especially bad for children under age six because their bodies are still developing. Lead exposure can cause:

- Learning delays;
- Behavioral problems;
- Lower IQ;
- Damage to the nervous system and kidneys;
- Hearing loss and stunted growth.

Lead-based paint is the most common source of lead exposure for preschool children, and while it's most often found on the walls, doors and windows of older homes; children's toys can also be a source of lead-based paint exposure too.

When shopping this holiday season, avoid painted toys, unless they're made in the U.S. or Europe, where lead paint is banned and not available to toy makers.

For more information and a guide to purchasing safe toys visit:
www.HealthyStuff.org

Toy Buying Safety Tips

- Scooters, Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast and falls can be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be worn at all times and be sized to fit.
- Small Balls and other Toys with Small Parts can cause choking. For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts.
- Balloons - Children can choke or suffocate on un-inflated or broken balloons. Keep un-inflated balloons away from children younger than eight years old. Discard broken balloons at once.
- Magnets - For children under age six, avoid building or play sets with small magnets. If magnets or pieces with magnets are swallowed, serious injuries and/or death can occur.

Once the gifts are open:

- Immediately discard plastic wrappings or other packaging before they become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings.
- Let adults charge batteries. Chargers and adapters can pose burn hazards to young children.