



# rural spotlight

## STARTING 2009 HEALTHY

Losing weight is one of the most popular New Year's resolutions. But following through can be a big task -- especially if you're focused on that number on the scale.

Instead of worrying about weight loss, concentrate on general health. Pick a few things that you can control more easily, and tackle them one at a time throughout the year. How can you do that? Here are some ideas:

### Start small

If you want to lose 50 pounds, or run a marathon, those are great goals. But they can be daunting to think about on January 1. Break your goals into smaller targets. Losing 12 pounds by April 1 can seem a lot more doable. When you hit your smaller targets, that helps you reach the big goal.

### Focus on what you can control

Face it, the number that shows up on the scale can be unpredictable. Sometimes you spend the whole week pushing away temptations,

and you still pack on the pounds. Other times, you eat that extra piece of birthday cake, and still lose weight. It's a big picture issue. No one is perfect all the time. Set realistic goals and you'll be more likely to get the results you want. Setbacks may occur, but don't let it ruin your progress.

### Pick resolutions that are right for you

Not everyone has to fit into a size 2 dress to be healthy. Make sure your resolutions are what you really need. If you have high blood pressure, exercise and cut back on your salt intake. If you're overworked and overstressed, make a point to schedule some relaxation time, and time for more sleep. The first step for success in meeting your goals is keeping yourself motivated by setting smaller targets that are reasonable and attainable.

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Missouri Department  
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Cholesterol  
Sodium  
Pot

# High Cholesterol

## AS A HIDDEN DANGER

Between 1995 and 2005, the number of Missouri adults with high cholesterol rose by about 33%. Officials estimated about 40% of Missouri adults have high cholesterol -- even though many of them feel perfectly healthy.

Lisa Britt, a health educator with the state Health Department, said it's not easy to tell whether you have high cholesterol without having it tested.

"There aren't signs and symptoms for elevated cholesterol, just like there aren't signs and symptoms for high blood pressure," she said.

But the lack of symptoms doesn't mean your cholesterol isn't important to your overall health. High cholesterol can be an indicator of more serious health problems.

"High cholesterol is one of the major controllable risk factors for coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke as your blood cholesterol rises so does your risk for coronary heart disease," Britt said.

Adults over age 20 should get their cholesterol checked at least every five years. A cholesterol test should include total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and triglycerides. LDL is considered bad cholesterol, and is the main source of buildup and artery blockage. HDL is considered good cholesterol, and keeps LDL cholesterol from build-

**Adults over age 20 should get their cholesterol checked at least every five years.**

ing up in the arteries. Triglycerides are another form of fat in the blood.

## Wintertime Health Message



During Missouri's cold winter months, respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases can run rampant, creating widespread outbreaks that can have serious impacts on your community. These illnesses often spread faster and more easily because many people do not take simple but effective prevention measures.

Of course, some of the best ways to slow the spread of germs and to reduce illnesses include hand washing, flu vaccines, staying home when you are sick, and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Key disease-fighting strategies like these form the basis of free educational

materials contained in the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' (DHSS) Pandemic Influenza Community Preparedness Toolkit at [www.dhss.mo.gov/PandemicInfluenza/PanFluCommToolkit.html](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/PandemicInfluenza/PanFluCommToolkit.html). These educational materials can be used to provide essential reminders in the workplace, schools, and other public areas to help decrease the risk of influenza, norovirus, MRSA, and other serious infectious health issues.

With flu season underway, now is a great time to stock up on materials to support your local disease prevention efforts. To order the free materials contained in the toolkit, simply fill out the online order form at <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/PandemicInfluenza/PanFluCommForm.html>.

For more information, contact DHSS's Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at (573) 751-6113.



# Innovation in Preschool

A growing disconnect between children and nature has led the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation to develop a program called Nature Explore. Within this program are outdoor classrooms. The Kid's Corner Preschool in Fredericktown, Missouri is home to the first such classroom built at a childcare center. The Nature Explore Classroom is designed to help educate young children using research-based principles to include nature in their daily learning. To be certified by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Nature Explore Classroom, Kid's Corner had to meet three certification standards outlined in the Dimension Foundation's Learning With Nature Idea Book. They include a well designed outdoor space, staff development through a Nature

Explore Workshop and documentation of increased family involvement.

The classroom is located outside of the main building. It features interactive elements like climbing structures, crawl logs, musical instruments made of natural materials, wooden blocks, small waterways, and natural materials for building and creating art. Research has shown that children encouraged to play in such a setting can have enhanced concentration, develop creativity and problem solving skills, and relieve stress, among other benefits. Kid's Corner owner and director Kim Clauser says, "One of the best aspects of the classroom is that it gives children a positive hands-on experience with nature and the outdoors in a structured setting."

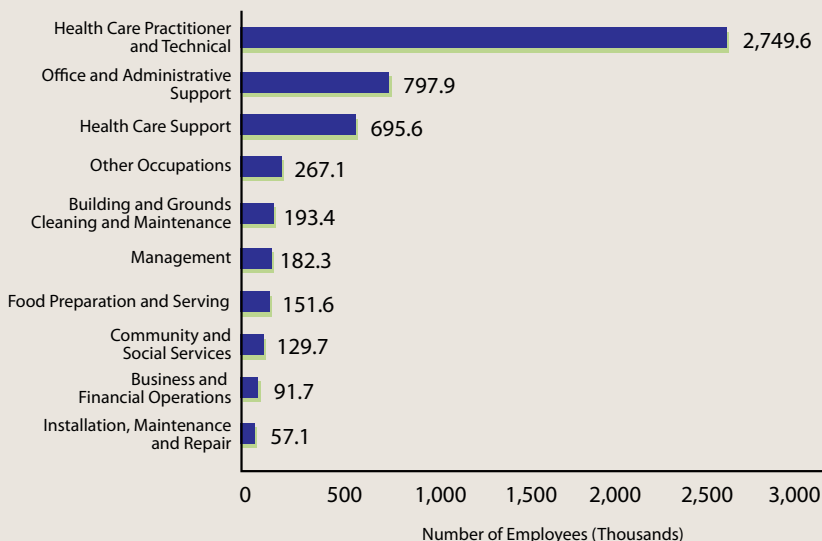
Kid's Corner is a state licensed facility that serves children ages birth to 12. They've made it a commitment to promote Kindergarten readiness focusing on children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. To implement a program like the one at Kid's Corner visit the Arbor Day Foundation's website at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).



# How LOCAL HEALTHCARE Impacts the LOCAL ECONOMY

Hospitals and other health care services contribute a lot to our nation's economy...and even more locally. You can count on these facilities as a mainstay even in times of recession. According to the American Hospital Association, every hospital dollar spent helps promote other business activity. It's a ripple effect that leads to trillions of dollars in economic activity throughout the nation. In rural communities, hospitals are often one of the largest employers, and one of the few options for retaining young people who might otherwise move to a larger community. Hospitals employ workers from a variety of skill levels making them an attractive option for many job seekers. They often pay better, provide insurance and other benefits which may not be available elsewhere locally.

Some additional ways hospitals and local health care services contribute to the economic base of communities is by offering tuition reimbursement, partnering with local colleges to provide training, implementing mentoring programs, and providing care for free or on a sliding scale to families with limited financial means. When you choose to use the services you have locally, you are helping to stabilize your local economy.



Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006 National Industry-specific Occupational Employment and Wage. Data released May 2007. [http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics3\\_622000.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics3_622000.htm).

## Grant to Support Development of a Statewide Oral Health Plan Task Force Members Needed!

As a rural health partner, you know that thousands of Missourians do not have access to affordable dental care, resulting in overall health problems for some of our state's most vulnerable populations.

As a first step in combating this problem, the DHSS has secured a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to bring together stakeholders to identify needs, determine access barriers, and develop a statewide oral health plan. The grant also includes funding for a statewide oral health assessment for the adult and senior population and an update of a population-based model to illustrate oral health workforce needs and areas where sufficient dental health services are not available.

"Our goal is to involve as many partners in the Oral Health Task Force as possible and to use accurate, recent data to make decisions about our state's most critical oral health needs," said Marie Peoples, Chief, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at DHSS. "We believe a statewide plan, created in collaboration with partners from across the state, will provide an excellent road map for improving access to oral health services."

Task Force members are being recruited NOW! If you are interested in getting involved, contact Brenda Myers, DHSS Project Specialist, at 573-522-2422.



# RESOLVING Rural Healthcare Needs

The Office of Primary Care and Rural Health understands the importance of having and keeping medical professionals in rural areas. The Office consists of the Office of Primary Care, Office of Rural Health, and the Oral Health Program. The focus of this article is on the Office of Rural Health. Future newsletters will provide information on the Office of Primary Care and the Oral Health Program.

The Office of Rural Health works with internal and external partners to assist critical access and other rural hospitals with quality improvement initiatives and provide advanced life support training to hospital teams. Critical access hospitals (CAH) are small rural hospitals with less than 25 beds and have an average daily patient stay of 96 hours or less.

The Office with assistance from the Missouri Hospital Association, Missouri Rural Health Association and contractors are able to provide a variety of services and technical assistance including but not limited to the following:

- Balanced Scorecard – A strategic management approach to measuring and managing performance giving the hospital a balanced view of their financial and operational perspective.
- Kansas Quality Health Indicator – A Kansas webpage where hospitals can input and monitor selected benchmark indicators on a real-time basis.
- Sponsors an annual CAH Conference – to cover performance measurement initiatives and legislative updates
- Co-sponsors MRHA Conference – to cover health system issues for rural providers
- Technical assistance is provided in various venues such as:
  - Arranging three regional meetings to obtain input from the CAHs to identify health related concerns in their regions.
  - Sponsoring quarterly CAH Network meetings to ensure input from partners on rural health issues.
  - Office of Rural Health staff monitor recommendations from the Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force to address prompt treatment for Stroke and STEMI (heart attacks). Several CAHs are representatives at the taskforce meetings.
  - Assisting rural healthcare providers with any issue they may have, such as health profession shortage areas


## PARTNERING FOR YOU

The Missouri Rural Health Association is a nonprofit, grass roots, member driven organization whose mission is to safeguard and improve the health of rural Missourians. MRHA accomplishes its mission by engaging in partnerships and providing leadership on rural issues through advocacy, communication, education and research. MRHA consists of nearly 100 members representing rural constituencies with a background that ranges from health providers, community health users, local, state and federal agencies, educators and local organizations. When these groups work together communities benefit.

The Missouri Rural Health Association works to provide education, training and networking opportunities for its members. MRHA supports legislation of rural health interests that enhance the quality and quantity of services and activities for the public's health. The Association is committed to providing education on legislative issues and participating in coalitions that advance the interest of the public's health

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a member of the Missouri Rural Health Association visit them online at [www.morha.org](http://www.morha.org) or call (573) 636-5554.

# SAFE SNOW REMOVAL



When your driveway is covered with snow, getting it cleared away can seem like an urgent task. Doctors say shoveling snow is great exercise, in moderation. But shoveling too much, too fast, could lead to a heart attack.

## Here are some tips for minimizing that danger.

- Get your doctor's permission before shoveling snow, if you have a history of heart problems.
- Go slow. Your heart rate and blood pressure can shoot up quickly because shoveling is such a strenuous activity, and you might not even realize it. Stretch out at the start, and take your time getting the sidewalk and driveway cleared.
- Lift with your legs. It's just like moving a heavy box or piece of furniture. If you bend your back, all you're likely to get is an injured back.
- Take frequent breaks. When you find yourself out of breath, stop and rest for a while. The snow will still be there when you start shoveling again.
- Instead of lifting the snow and throwing it, use a snow shovel that will let you push it aside with less effort.
- If you feel tightness in your chest, stop shoveling immediately and take a break.
- Dress warmly. Your heart isn't the only thing at risk if you shovel too much snow. Cover your extremities to keep them safe from frostbite.

## ONE MINUTE WORKOUT

A little extra movement can mean a lot to your body when you have to sit down on the job.

### Do 10 reps of each of the following:

- March your feet.
- Use right leg only, stand up, sit down.
- Use left leg only, stand up, sit down.
- Hands on hips, lift and lower knees.
- Hands rest on abs, squeeze and release.

# COLOR CONFUSION

It's a myth that greenish mucus alone means you have something worse than a cold. Recurring discolored mucus should be mentioned to your doctor but when a bacterial infection is present, you will often have additional symptoms; such as, persistent high fever, decreased appetite, cough, or severe nasal congestion. In that case you may need antibiotics.



## Sensing a STROKE

If any of these symptoms appear it is important to get help immediately. The more quickly a stroke victim gets treatment, the better their chance for recovery.

### Here is a list of risk factors for stroke:

high blood pressure  
smoking  
heart disease  
high cholesterol level  
excess alcohol intake  
obesity  
sedentary lifestyle  
diabetes  
elevated hematocrit (increase in red blood cells)  
use of oral contraceptives (especially for women who smoke)  
stress

*(information from the Stanford Stroke Center)*

During a regular check-up your doctor can let you know if you're at a high risk for stroke. Otherwise your body might let you know through one or more of the following signs:

- Sudden weakness, numbness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg -This often occurs on one side of the body.
- Loss of speech or trouble talking or understanding language
- Sudden loss of vision, particularly in only one eye
- Sudden, severe headache with no apparent cause
- Unexplained dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

# A Healthy Recipe for Your

# New Year

When the weather turns cold, there's nothing more satisfying than a hot, healthy bowl of soup. And when you can make the bowl out of bread, you have a nutritious meal that really sticks to your ribs. But you don't have to go out to a restaurant to have your own version of this healthy meal. You can do it yourself, quickly and easily -- and here's how.

For the bowl, buy any round loaf of bread from your local grocery or bakery. Sourdough bread works well. Use a small knife to cut out the middle of the loaf, and set the bread aside until your soup is ready.

*You can fill the bowl with any soup you want. But for a healthy twist with an Asian flavor, try this recipe:*

## Chicken Vegetable Peanut Butter Soup

- 8 cups chicken broth
- 2 1/2 cups of diced, cooked chicken
- 1 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1 cups diced potatoes
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 3/4 cup chopped celery
- 3/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- salt & pepper to taste

- - Combine broth, chicken, potatoes, and carrots. Bring the soup to a boil, then simmer over medium heat for 10-15 minutes, until vegetables are tender.
- - Add tomatoes, celery, onion, green pepper and garlic. Simmer for about 10 more minutes.
- - Add peanut butter, and stir until it is blended into soup. Salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for 3 more minutes.

## KIDS HEALTH TIP



## Sleep Matters

Getting enough sleep helps your brain function better. When well rested your memory is sharper, you can concentrate and your body can fight off sickness. Follow these guidelines for healthy sleep habits.

1. Go to bed at the same time each night.
2. Don't eat right before going to bed.
3. Avoid caffeine in the evening.
4. Sleep with either no lights on or a nightlight.
5. Turn off the TV. Don't watch it in bed.
6. Keep your room quiet.