



HEALTH DEPARTMENT HERALD



Welcome Winter!

We are now well into our wonderful Wisconsin winter! While some people look forward to recreational activities that the cold and snow offer, others prefer to stay inside with a good book and a cup of hot cocoa. But everyone needs to be prepared for snow storms and bitter cold weather events! Here are some winter weather safety recommendations:

- Have a plan so that you can stay healthy, informed, calm and connected
- Stockpile a three-day supply of non-perishable food, water and personal supplies (don't forget your pets!)
- Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working
- Make an emergency supply kit in case of power outages
- Check weather forecasts frequently
- Winterize your home
- Check on your neighbors
- Have your furnace checked annually
- Make sure you are removing snow safely
- Get your vehicle ready with a service check-up
- Make an emergency supply kit for your vehicle



Jan-Mar.
2025

[Click here](#) for more information on winter safety tips and to find home weatherization and energy assistance resources.



Introducing our new Public Health Nurse!

Hello Shawano and Menominee Community, My Name is Jen Steinbach. I graduated from Michigan Technological University and have been a nurse for almost a year. I am passionate about teaching and health promotion. I am excited to use these passions to serve Shawano and Menominee Counties. In my free-time I love mountain biking, skiing, reading, and spending time with my husband Ben and cat Miss Puff.

January is National Radon Action Month

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is released from rocks, soil and water which can cause lung cancer. [This short video provides a basic overview of radon.](#)

In Wisconsin, there are several regional Radon Information Centers. Use this link to [contact our area's Radon Information Center](#) and find out how to get a radon test for your home.



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February is American Heart Month

High blood pressure (hypertension) is often referred to as “The Silent Killer” because it usually has no warning signs or symptoms. But the higher your blood pressure levels, the more risk you may have for heart disease, heart attack and stroke. That is why it is important to practice health living habits such as:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Keeping yourself at a healthy weight
- Being physically active
- Not smoking
- Limiting your alcohol use
- Getting enough sleep
- Monitor your blood pressure regularly
- Taking your blood pressure medications as directed.



For more information, please visit [Preventing High Blood Pressure | High Blood Pressure | CDC](#)

February 22, 2025 is also National Walking the Dog Day

Take some time this day to get some physical exercise to improve both you and your dog’s heart health! Sponsored by the SMCHD dogs:

Lala

Zoey



March is National Nutrition Month

This year's theme is "Food Connects Us" and this is a good time to put in a plug for our **WIC Department!** Food is a connecting factor for many of us. Food connects us to our cultures, our families and our friends. Sharing a meal is an opportunity to learn about its preparation, who made it and where the ingredients were sourced. Health, memories, traditions, seasons and access can all impact our relationship with food. While these factors influence the foods we eat, the foods we eat also affect our health. eatright.org/national-nutrition-month

Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, helps support a healthy immune system. Vitamin C is important for the growth and repair of tissue in the body, and aids in the absorption of iron. Vitamin C rich foods include bell peppers, oranges, broccoli, strawberries, tomatoes, kale, and cauliflower. It is important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to ensure adequate amounts of Vitamin C in the body. Factors that decrease Vitamin C include, smoking and a diet low in fruits and vegetables.

Vitamin D has several important functions. It is needed to maintain strong muscles and bones. It is also important for proper nerve function in the body, as well as aiding in the absorption of calcium and phosphorus. Vitamin D can be obtained from sunlight, food, and fortified beverages. Some food examples include beef liver, cheese, egg yolks, and fatty fish, like salmon or trout. Fortified food and beverage sources of Vitamin D include cereal, milk, and orange juice. Populations at an increased risk of Vitamin D deficiency are breastfed infants, older adults, and those with certain medical conditions, such as liver disease, cystic fibrosis, celiac disease, and Crohn's disease.

For more information or to see if you qualify, please call our office at 715-526-2822



Community Events/Observances

- **Jan. 23, 2025: Maternal Health Awareness Day.** This year’s theme is “Know What’s at Stake.”
- **Mar. 3, 2025: World Birth Defects Day**
- **Mar. 10, 2025, SAVE THE DATE: Shawano-Menominee Healthy Communities’ (SMHC) Community Health Improvement Meeting**
 - **WHERE:** College of Menominee Nation’s Cultural Learning Center



Shawano-Menominee
Healthy Communities



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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

This virus (which is widespread in wild birds) continues to spread through domestic poultry flocks and dairy herds. **While there have been no Wisconsin dairy cows affected, there have been two commercial poultry flocks infected (Barron and Burnett Counties), one backyard flock (Kenosha County), and one confirmed human case (Barron County).** At least 66 people have been infected throughout the country, most through exposure from the infected flocks or cattle. There have been at least 2 cases where the exposure is unknown. The virus has also been detected in unpasteurized “raw” milk in California, causing a recall of the product, and the USDA to expand its milk testing program. USDA is testing milk at the regional level, with additional testing at the farm level, if necessary, until dairy herds in an area are determined to be free of the virus. (Wisconsin milk is not currently being tested).

Conjunctivitis has been one of the most common symptoms, as well as respiratory and other flu-like symptoms. The SMCHD is monitoring this evolving situation and continues to reach out to its partners to plan for any public health interventions that may be needed.

[Click here for the most updated surveillance data for the Bird Flu](#)

Notable News

The SMCHD is very pleased to announce that it has been awarded a grant from Immunize Wisconsin, a coalition founded in 2022 to amplify the existing work being done by vaccination organizations and coalitions throughout Wisconsin. The funding period runs from January 1- June 30, 2025, and the SMCHD will utilize this grant funding to increase education and encourage vaccine uptake for people living in the rural parts of our jurisdiction. The department has been reaching out to the local partners who serve this population, and is excited to roll out new activities to meet the following objectives:

1. **Create partnerships with local rural organizations and**
2. **Ensure outreach, education and vaccination access activities are equitable and culturally competent.**

Stay tuned for future updates!



Feedback

The SMCHD is always looking for feedback from partners to help improve communication and services. If you would like to provide any feedback, you can reach the SMCHD at:

715-526-4808 or Public.health@shawanocountywi.gov

Or find us on Facebook at:

facebook.com/SMCHD



Pertussis/Respiratory Virus Updates

Our community is continuing to experience a high rate of pertussis infections, especially in the school-aged population. Our local health systems, schools and other partners are doing a great job working with us as we continue with surveillance and reaching out to cases to identify any household or other high risk exposed individuals that may be appropriate for preventative treatment. Remember to continue with good hygiene practices, staying home when sick, and talking to your provider about the pertussis vaccine (Dtap, Tdap). The SMCHD has pertussis vaccine available at no cost for VFC eligible children, and at this time for adults regardless of health insurance. Please contact us at 715-526-4808 to make an appointment to receive a pertussis vaccine

As of the week ending 12/28/2024, statewide influenza-like illness is HIGH, and COVID-19, influenza and RSV activity is **increasing**, based on emergency department, laboratory testing, wastewater data. [Click to view weekly reports](#)

Starting to feel under the weather? The SMCHD has FREE COVID-19 home tests available at the Shawano office for the general public.

Public Health: Prevent, Promote, Protect

Our Mission: Promote and Protect the Health of Shawano-Menominee Counties residents by providing quality services, fostering partnerships, and advocating for systems change.

Our Vision: The Shawano-Menominee Counties Health Department will be an engaged leader in inclusive communities which support optimal health for all.

