



Health Counts

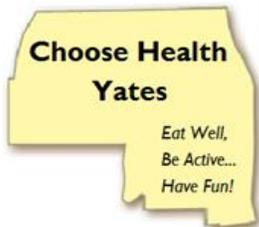


May is Older Americans' Month

We have much to be grateful for in this land of ours. We can start with the aging generations that have supported us from childhood and continue to offer wisdom and expertise in so many areas. It is from their contributions to society we are able to continue to enjoy what we now have. At the end of May, we will honor those who came before us and gave their all to defend our nation and provide us with a future. It takes "generations" to make a healthy and prosperous nation overall.

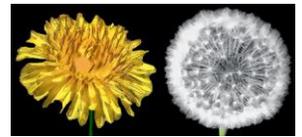
May Observance - Mental Health Month

Good mental health is a precious commodity. When someone struggles with a mental disorder, the effects can be devastating in every aspect of his/her life. Often times the condition or illness is not recognized or identified due to any social stigma that accompanies mental illness. However, not attending to this health condition promptly, can delay interventions and cause long-term suffering. If someone has a form of cancer, prompt diagnosis is important to early treatment (where cancers are categorized in stages and treatment regimens are determined) and recovery can begin. The same is true for mental disorders. Mental health practitioners believe people should "get informed, get screened, and get help", "**B4Stage4**". To learn more about mental health care, go to: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/b4stage4-changing-way-we-think-about-mental-health>. As a nation, we cannot afford to overlook "some" diseases that afflict many of our citizens since health data shows, "**1 in 5 American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year**". Seek help for yourself or anyone you care for if mental health becomes a health issue in your family.



With chronic diseases being common problems in Yates County, the Public Health Department has determined chronic disease is a priority for direction of care for the next several years as part of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). You will see many human-service agencies and health care organizations working together to address concerns related to chronic diseases. Prevention of disease is the ultimate goal. Many first steps can be accomplished by individuals learning how they can stay healthy and what they can do to regain their health, if a health condition arises. With state and national health care initiatives in practice, we are all in this together, but personal responsibility for yourself and your family definitely is vital to a healthy future for Yates County residents. Check out what you can do to stay healthy and get involved with community programs addressing common health issues through – exercise, locate or grow healthy food options, practice disease prevention with vaccinations, adopt safety first as your motto, and remain active mentally and physically.

Yates County Public Health would like to know what you think about in regard to "Public Health". A short survey has been created to learn what your thoughts are. Please go to the following link to participate in this survey. Thank you! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/yatescountybranding>



How appropriate the month of May was chosen as National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month with the reawakening of plants and animals in springtime that sometime cause asthma and allergy problems.

Asthma is a chronic disease that anyone can have, but often children are affected. School district nurses are seeing more and more children with asthma. In fact, asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. It stands to reason if a youngster is having trouble breathing, getting up and going to school each day may be a bit of a problem.

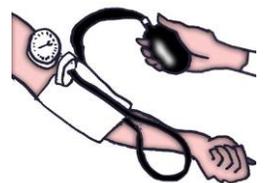
Airways that carry air in and out of the lungs are affected with this disease.

- The airways become sore, swollen and sensitive to agents that can cause allergic reactions. As a result, the airways become narrower, causing the lungs to get less air.
- With less air to the lungs, a person can start to wheeze, cough at night, having difficulty breathing after physical exercise, have chest tightness, and shortness of breath.
- To diagnose asthma, your doctor will recommend lung function tests, take a medical history, and do a physical exam. Allergy tests may also become part of the diagnostic tool. Many times someone who has asthma has family members with asthma too.
- When asthma symptoms worsen, it's called an asthma attack. Asthma attacks can require emergency care and have been known to be fatal in some instances.
- Asthma attacks can occur when you are exposed to "asthma triggers" like tobacco smoke, dust mites, outdoor air pollution, cockroach allergen, pets, mold, and smoke from burning wood or grass.
- Traditionally asthma is treated in 2 ways; one with a quick-relief kind of medication to stop the symptoms and the second form of treatment is for long-term care and control to prevent the symptoms from occurring.

Do you know your **blood pressure numbers**? Yates County Public Health is collaborating with other local agencies on a blood pressure study. High blood pressure is a problem for many area residents and can cause several chronic disease problems. If you don't know your numbers, learn them. If you have high blood pressure, take steps now to get it under control. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is a **serious illness** often called the "silent killer" because many people are unaware of the health issue they have. They may not feel symptoms at first.

High blood pressure can cause life-threatening illnesses like:

- kidney problems
- stroke
- heart failure
- blindness
- heart attacks



Some people are more likely than others to have hypertension, but anyone can have it. Your risk is higher if you are overweight, eat foods high in salt and sodium, not eating foods with potassium, do not exercise regularly, have diabetes, smoke, and drink alcohol heavily.

Medications can help control high blood pressure. The top number is called "systolic" and is the pressure when your heart beats; the second number is "diastolic" and is the pressure when your heart is relaxed. If your systolic blood pressure is 140 or greater and diastolic pressure is 90 or greater, your blood pressure is considered "uncontrolled".

How can you control blood pressure?

***You need to check your pressure routinely.** *If needed, take high blood pressure medication every day. *Exercise regularly. *Eat foods low in salt. *Lose weight or keep it at a healthy level. ***Do not smoke.** *Limit alcohol * Check with your doctor regularly about your pressure.