

# Healthy Living Update



Be prepared for winter: pack a winter survival kit in your car.

## This month at Public Health:

### Immunization Clinics:

- December 5  
1:00-6:00pm
- December 9  
1:00-5:00pm
- December 15  
1:00-6:00 pm
- December 19  
1:00-6:00pm

### OPOP:

- December 12
- December 13
- December 19
- December 20

### Cholesterol Screenings

- December 9  
8:00-11:00am
- December 21  
8:00-11:00am

**Please call for an appointment.**

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## Winter is Here – Are You Prepared?

It happens every year.

And by “it”, we mean winter.

Yet, every year, winter seems to take people by surprise. That’s why now is the perfect time to prepare for those winter storms that will hit.

It’s especially important to be prepared when you hit the road this winter. Plan your trip and check the latest weather reports often so nothing takes you by surprise.

Here are some other valuable tips:

- Winterize your vehicle before the winter season
- Keep your gas tank near full
- Avoid traveling alone
- Let someone know your route and schedule
- Carry a winter survival kit

Not sure what to pack in your winter survival kit? Here’s what emergency

responders say you should have in your kit:

- Cell phone and charger
- Blankets/sleeping bags
- Flashlight and batteries
- Knife
- Non-perishable food
- Extra clothing
- Large, empty can with cover and tissues
- Smaller can, with matches to melt snow for drinking water
- Sack of sand or cat litter
- Shovel
- Windshield scraper and brush
- Basic tool kit
- Tow rope
- Jumper cables
- Water container
- Road maps and compass
- Battery operated NOAA Weather Radio

For more information, visit our website:

[www.bismarck.org/publichealth](http://www.bismarck.org/publichealth).

## Staying Fit, Even In the Middle of Winter

It's cold outside. And for many, that's a great excuse to veg out on the couch, and put off exercise until the ice melts. But, the truth is...we need exercise year round, no matter what the weather is like.

So how can you get in a good workout when it's -30 degrees outside? There are a few options: dress for the weather and continue exercising outdoors, or move your workout indoors. Here's how to make both options work:

If you prefer to exercise outdoors, follow these tips from the Mayo Clinic:

- **Stay safe during cold-weather exercise.** Almost everyone can exercise safely during cold weather. But if you have certain conditions, such as asthma, heart problems or Raynaud's disease, check with your doctor before you workout in cold weather.

- **Dress in layers.** Then you can remove a layer when you start to sweat, and put back on as needed.
- **Protect your hands, feet and ears.** When it's cold, blood flow is concentrated on your body's core, leaving your hands and feet vulnerable to frostbite. Try wearing a thin pair of gloves under a pair of heavier gloves.
- **Pay attention to weather conditions and wind chill.** If the temperature dips well below 0 F or the wind chill is extreme, consider taking a break or choosing an indoor activity instead.

If the thought of exercising outside sends chills down your spine, here are some ideas for indoor workouts:

- Walk at an indoor location, like the mall.
- Join a health club.

- Create a home gym.
- Take the stairs. Spend as little as 20 minutes at a time climbing up and down the stairs for an intense, efficient workout.
- Hit the pool. Try swimming, water aerobics, or even just walking or running laps in the water.
- Visit a library. Check out the exercise video section – a great, inexpensive way to add some variety to your winter workout!

For more ideas to stay fit this winter, visit our websites: [www.bismarck.org/publichealth](http://www.bismarck.org/publichealth)

### Predicting Winter

Are you ready for a cold winter? According to the Farmer's Almanac, this winter will be a very cold winter with average snowfall.

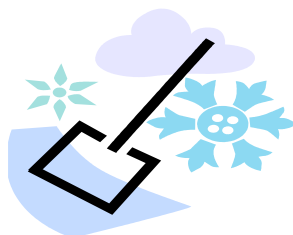
That's based on science and weather models and computers likely play a very big role in that prediction. But there are other ways to predict the winter weather. Many people say their arthritis can predict the weather. Here are three of our favorite methods (and by "favorite" we mean "fun, but not necessarily accurate!"):

#### Woolly Bear Caterpillars

According to legend, the wider the middle brown section is (i.e., the more brown segments there are), the milder the coming winter will be.

#### Pig Spleen

Legendary pig spleen forecaster Gus Wickstrom divided a pig spleen into six areas, each representing one month. The top of the spleen (closest to the pig's head) shows the current month. The bottom indicates the end of the six month period. Where the spleen thickens, a change in the weather is indicated, usually pointing to a cold spell. Where there's a pronounced bulge, expect even more inclement weather. Gus could even read wind and rain into the variations of the spleen.



#### Persimmon Seeds

Cut open a persimmon seed (find one in the supermarket, a locally-grown one will reflect your local weather). Look at the shape of the kernel inside.

- If the kernel is **spoon-shaped**, lots of heavy, wet snow will fall (the spoon represents a shovel!)
- If it is **fork-shaped**, you can expect powdery, light snow and a mild winter.
- If the kernel is **knife-shaped**, expect to be "cut" by icy, cutting winds.

Bottom line: winter is coming, like it or not. So why not have a little fun in trying to guess just how harsh the next few months will be? Make sure you're prepared for the worst – and think spring!

## Accreditation Update: Community Health Improvement Plan

The Community Health Improvement Plan is the second prerequisite for Public Health Accreditation.

The Community Health Improvement Plan is driven by the process of the Community Health Assessment. The document will address issues broader than just what public health is responsible for, but what the entire public health system is responsible for addressing. It is a long term effort with broad participation.

Here's what the Community Health Improvement Plan will do:

- It will set forth the community's priorities around the health issues
- It will talk about strategies the community and other members and partners of the health department will implement.
- It will identify the community policies that are required to improve the health of population.
- It will identify what sectors in the public health systems that are responsible for implement which strategies.
- It will also provide indicators that will monitor the progress towards

that have been identified in the Community Health Assessment. and set forth in the objectives and community strategies.

meeting those objectives and implementing those strategies.

There should also be alignment between various levels of community improvement plans.

Our public health community health improvement plan should align with state community health improvement plan and the tribal community health plan.

There will be more information provided on the Community Strategic Plan in our upcoming issues of our newsletter. To learn more about the Public Health Accreditation go to <http://www.phaboard.org>.

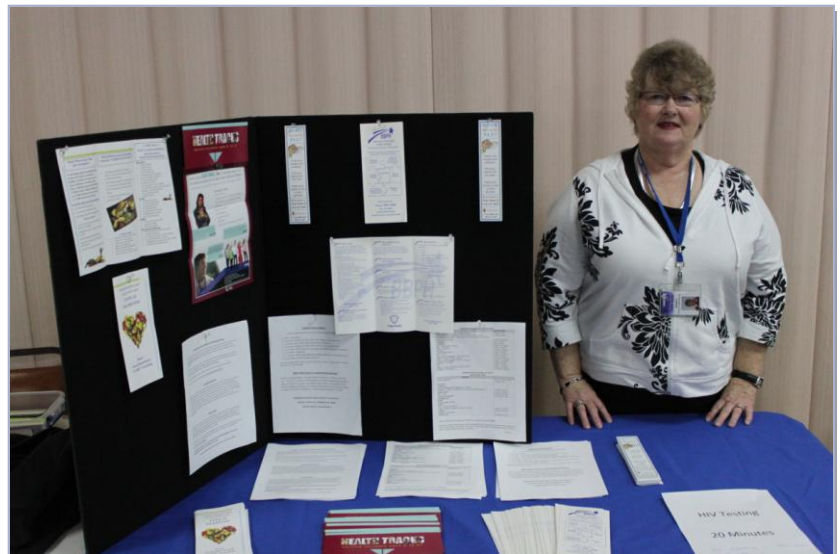
## Give the Gift of Activity

Video games are an easy gift to give all the kids and teens on your list. But this Christmas, think outside the video game box and give the young people in your life the gift of activity.

Here are some ideas:

- **Sleds.** It only takes a few inches of snow for sledding. Sleds and toboggans are fun and there's a lot of exercise going back up the hill.
- **Binoculars.** This is one sure way of getting the kids interested in watching wildlife. Some high-quality binoculars are made especially for kids.
- **Cranium Hullabaloo.** This game prompts kids to jump, dance and run around and encourages following directions, color and shape recognition. It's geared for kids ages four and up.
- **Dance, Dance Revolution.** If you must buy a video game, consider buying a game like DDR – not only will kids get cardio exercise, it also helps build coordination, balance, rhythm, reaction time, and motor control...and it's FUN!

Visit one of our websites for more ideas to give the gift of activity!



Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health Wellness Supervisor Vonnie Ereth participated in "Project Homeless Connect", a day for those in need to find the resources they need. Vonnie provided health education, and even did head lice checks. Other participants included the Salvation Army, AID Incorporated, Custer Health, Youthworks, Ruth Meiers Hospitality House, and the Welcome House, just to name a few.

To learn more, visit our website, [www.bismarck.org/publichealth](http://www.bismarck.org/publichealth)

## Healthy Holiday Eating

The holiday season means get-togethers with family and friends, holiday treats, and for many, weight gain. But it *is* possible to enjoy all the holiday goodies, without gaining a pound. According to the American Heart Association, it's all about choices.

Here are some examples of how you can indulge in your favorite holiday drinks, without the guilt, or the weight gain:

### Eggnog:

- **Mix it up.** Fill your glass with half to three-quarter parts of low-fat or skim milk and one part eggnog. You'll still get the flavor without all the calories.
- **Take out the alcohol.** This simple step will reduce the caloric content.

### Hot Chocolate:

- **Skip the heavy stuff.** If you order hot chocolate at a restaurant or coffee shop, ask that it be made with low-fat or skim milk, and without the whipped cream.
- **Do some research.** To make instant hot chocolate at home, look for product packets marked "low-fat" or "low sugar". Be sure to add the mix to either low-fat or skim milk, or hot water.

**For more healthy holiday eating tips, visit our website:**

[www.bismarck.org/publichealth](http://www.bismarck.org/publichealth)



## World AIDS Day: December 1<sup>st</sup>

World AIDS Day is celebrated around the world. It has become one of the most recognized international health days and a key opportunity to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on, and celebrate victories such as increased access to treatment and prevention services.

World AIDS Day kicks off the campaign to 2015 and is about "Getting to Zero." Zero New HIV Infections, Zero Discrimination and Zero AIDS Related Deaths.

Only one third of the 15 million people living with HIV in need of life long treatment are receiving it and new infections continue to outpace the number of people starting treatment.

Two of the 10 goals for 2015 include:

- *Sexual transmission of HIV reduced by half*
- *All new HIV infections prevented among people who use drugs*

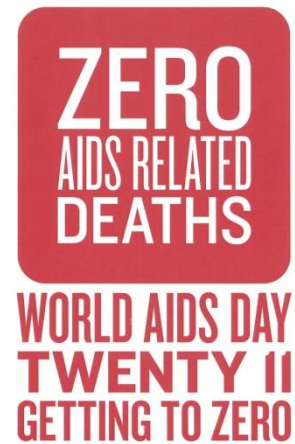
## December 2011 ~ Health Awareness

Take a well-deserved break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays, and celebrate your health. Here's a list of some health issues being brought to the forefront this month:

- Safe Toys and Gifts Month
- National Handwashing Awareness Week: (December 4-10)
- World AIDS Day: December 1
- International Day of Disabled Persons: December 3

And just for fun, add these to your calendar too:

- Santa's List Day: December 4
- Pearl Harbor Day: December 7
- National Chocolate Covered Anything Day: December 16
- Bake Cookies Day: December 18
- Look on the Bright Side Day: December 21
- National Eggnog Day: December 23
- Christmas Day: December 25
- Make Cut Out Snowflakes Day: December 27
- New Year's Eve: December 31



People who engage in behaviors, such as unprotected sex or needle-sharing, are at risk of being infected and should be tested. The more partners, the greater the risk of infection. If you think you might have been exposed to HIV, you should get tested.

In North Dakota, testing is done free and confidentially and with rapid-testing, results are available within 20 minutes. Call BBPH to set up an appointment.

Additional information is available at [www.ndhealth.gov/hiv](http://www.ndhealth.gov/hiv) and [www.worldaidscampaign.org](http://www.worldaidscampaign.org).

