

A Day in Your Life – Thanks to Public Health



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Introduction

While most people know public health is important, they aren't always sure what it is or how it affects their lives. The purpose of "A Day in Your Life – Thanks to Public Health"* is to illustrate how the efforts of public health touch every North Dakotan every day.

Public health protects and improves communities by preventing epidemics and the spread of disease; promoting healthy lifestyles for children and families; protecting against hazards in homes, work, communities and the environment; ensuring high-quality health-care services; safeguarding and improving the quality of the environment; and preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about public health.

**Adapted from a public health promotion originating in the Colorado Health Department*

A Day in Your Life – Thanks to Public Health

It's morning, and the first rays of sunlight peek through your bedroom curtains.

You breathe deeply and enjoy the clean North Dakota air.

You're thankful that public health monitoring and clean air programs protect the air you breathe.



You take a shower and brush your teeth, knowing that the water won't make you sick because safe drinking water is the responsibility of public health.

You check your smile in the mirror and realize you can't remember your last cavity, thanks in part to the fluoride public health helps add to the water.





At the breakfast table, your children drink their milk, which is safe to drink because public health checks and monitors it from the dairy to the grocery store.

Your sister – who just had her first child – calls. She says her doctor suggested she enroll in the Women’s, Infants and Children program (WIC), a public health service that ensures children get the proper nutrition to help them grow strong and healthy.

You walk outside, put your children in the car and buckle them up in their car seats. You make sure you buckle your seat belt, too.

Public health and other safety organizations have worked hard to promote the importance of wearing seat belts and using car seats correctly, helping to reduce highway deaths and injuries in North Dakota.



Playmates greet your children at the day-care center. You know they'll stay safe while you're at work because the day-care staff have been trained about the importance of hand washing and other techniques to avoid the spread of diseases.

As you leave, you see a sign about the importance of immunizations. Thanks to the vaccinations your children have received, you know they're safe from many life-threatening diseases like polio and measles.



You arrive at work and find a flyer about a new exercise program tacked to the bulletin board. You sign up, remembering the public health studies that show you can reduce the risks of many diseases by staying physically active.





You feel good at work because your company is a smoke-free workplace. Public health has led efforts locally and nationally to protect workers from the harm of secondhand smoke.



A coworker takes you to lunch at your favorite nearby restaurant. As you wait to be seated, you notice the food service license signed by the state health officer, which means the restaurant was inspected by public health specialists. You know the food is sanitary and has been cooked and handled properly.



On the way home after work, you pick up your children and stop for a quick walk in the park. The small pond in the park is clean, and your children are pleasantly surprised to see the family of ducks that have made the pond home. You realize that, once again, public health has improved the quality of your life by monitoring the environment.

As you drive home, you meet a garbage truck.
Thanks to the efforts of public health, garbage
is picked up and disposed of in licensed landfills,
keeping the neighborhood clean and safe.

You remember some public health messages you've
heard about the importance of recycling, so you
make a mental note to take your separated items
to the recycling center in the morning.





When you get home, you call your father to see how your grandmother is doing. He says she is still in the hospital but is feeling much better. He mentions she will go back to the nursing home in a few days.

You know she's getting quality care at both facilities because public health conducts inspections to ensure a commitment to quality standards. Even the ambulance that took your grandmother to the hospital has met public health standards for emergency medical services.

When you get your mail, you are pleased to see a letter from your cousin, whose son recently was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. The letter describes how public health is helping to pay for some of his doctor visits and medical treatment. You are happy to know that your cousin's son is receiving the medical care he needs.



After supper, you relax with your family and watch the news. The announcer introduces a public health spokesperson who talks about a new type of influenza that is making people



sick. The spokesperson explains the symptoms of the disease, how many people have gotten sick, how they are doing now, and what you and your family can do to protect yourselves.

You are very relieved to see that public health officials are on top of the issue.

You put your children to bed. As you tuck them in, you think about the day and all the ways public health touches your life.

Public health really is for everybody, every day and everywhere.





NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

More information about public health in North Dakota is available from
the North Dakota Department of Health (701.328.2372 or www.ndhealth.gov)
or from your local public health unit.