

What is Public Health?

Public Health is the practice of putting in place systems, policies, and services that prevent disease and improve the health of the **entire population**. In the past twenty years U.S. public health efforts have made tremendous strides in improving general health of the population and increasing lifespan. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) some of the U.S. public health accomplishments include **improving control of infectious diseases** like AIDS and tuberculosis, **improving motor vehicle safety, improvements in vaccine-preventable diseases, better maternal infant care, improvement on tobacco control, aggressive steps that have led to fewer childhood cases of lead poisoning, and reducing heart disease**. Additionally, major advancements have been made in **public safety preparedness** since the terrorist attacks of 2001.

Public Health Saves Lives

Public Health, added **25 years** to life span

- ... reduced HIV/AIDS deaths by **70%**
- ... protected **13,000** lives annually by requiring seat belts
- ... saved **33,000** lives annually by vaccinations
- ... achieved FDA regulation of tobacco

Public Health Saves Money

Every \$1 spent on prevention saved \$5.60 in health spending.

- *When you're heading places... every \$1 invested in a child safety seat has a \$42 return in avoided medical costs; each seatbelt saves about 13,000 lives in the U.S.*
- *Get your checkup... childhood immunizations save \$9.9 million in direct health care costs; save 33,000 lives; prevent 14 million cases of diseases.*
- *When children are at school, every \$1 invested in early education and quality care saves as much as \$13 in future costs.*
- *When you drink water... every \$1 invested in fluoridated water, \$40 saved in dental care.*
- *When you're at work... every \$1 invested in an effective workplace safety program may save \$4 to \$6 in avoided illnesses, injuries, and fatalities.*
- *When you're on the move... every \$1 invested in biking and walking opportunities can return benefits up to \$11.80.*
- *For every \$1 invested in food and nutrition education, there is a \$10 return in reduced healthcare costs.*

Continued investment in prevention will help us and our children live even longer, healthier, and more productive lives while bringing down health care costs.

What role does Jackson County Health Department play in public health?

The many achievements made nationally by public health are mirrored at the local level. Jackson County Health Department improves health by:

Controlling Infectious Diseases

- Initiates and promotes actions to decrease the spread of disease.
- Tracks and monitors infectious diseases reported to the health department by health care providers.
- Offers STD testing and treatment through the [Sexual Health \(STD\) programs](#).
- Provides testing and treatment for both active and latent [tuberculosis \(TB\)](#).
- Provides services for individuals who are HIV+ in 19 county region through [Southern Illinois HIV Care Connect](#) with a focus on keeping clients in care and reducing the spread of disease.
- Regulates [water](#) and [private sewage systems](#) in Jackson County.
- Ensures food safety by requiring [permits and inspections](#).
- Provides assistance to food service establishments when a [boil water alert](#) is in effect.
- Registers and [inspects piercing and body art establishments](#) to ensure disease prevention procedures are being followed.
- Conducts surveillance for birds and mosquitoes infected with [West Nile Virus](#) and takes steps to reduce the spread of disease.

Motor-vehicle Safety

- Provides materials for [The Illinois Yellow Dot Program](#) which is a statewide initiative to provide vital medical information on vehicle drivers and passengers to first responders. You complete a medical card on yourself and family members and place the cards in the glove box compartment. Saving time in treating car accident victims can be the difference in saving lives.

Improvements in Vaccine Preventable Disease

- Offers walk-in [vaccine clinics](#) three days a week.
- Administers all of the required [vaccines](#) on the child/adolescent and teens/adult immunization schedule.
- Provides technical assistance to healthcare providers on immunizations.
- Provide reminders and support to clients to get vaccinated.
- Offer flu clinics throughout the county.

Healthier Mothers and Babies

- Supports families through the [WIC Program](#) with nutrition education and vouchers for healthy food, assistance accessing community services and education on parenting and healthy lifestyles.
- Encourages mothers to [breastfeed infants](#) and offers breast pumps, information and guidance.
- Screens for [lead exposure](#) and provides assistance to families with elevated lead levels.
- Provides genetic [diagnosis and counseling services](#) at monthly clinic staffed by geneticist and genetic counselor from STL.
- Reduces unintended pregnancies by offering [Family Planning](#) services including pap smears, clinical breast exams, and birth control education and methods.

Improvement in Tobacco Control

- Enforces [Illinois Smoke Free Act](#) which bans smoking from workplaces.
- Promotes the [Illinois Quitline](#) for those wanting to quit smoking.
- Assists communities and multi-unit housing in adopting smoke-free policies.

Decline in Deaths from Heart Disease and Stroke

- Promotes healthy lifestyles and improved systems for preventing the risk factors for heart disease through the [Jackson County Healthy Communities Coalition](#) and Jackson County Healthy Living Action Team.
- Assists schools in adopting school health programming including the [CATCH Program](#) which makes learning about nutrition and physical activity fun and brings schools, families, and communities together to teach children how to be healthy for a lifetime.
- Promotes diabetes prevention and services through the Project Power Program.

Public Safety Preparedness

- Works with partners through the Jackson County Public Health and Medical Preparedness Coalition to ensure all hazard response plans are developed and practiced. Ensures agency ready to respond to any public health emergency.

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