

Environmental Health AND YOU

Every day, you probably use more Environmental Health services than you realize. The following panels are examples of what Environmental Health does on a typical day to protect your health and the health of the community.



Environmental Health AND YOU

Morning shower

If your home is not connected to a public sewer or public water, Environmental Health partners with the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources to give you information to keep your septic system functioning properly and ensure your private well water is safe. This helps keep harmful bacterial contamination from threatening your household water, the community's water resources, and the yard your children play in.



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Mealtime

You can be sure that a cold glass of mealtime milk is healthy and safe, thanks to a cooperative certification effort. We work with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to ensure that all Grade A milk produced in Iowa is regulated in a nationally uniform way. This guarantees it meets sanitary standards that ensure public health safety.

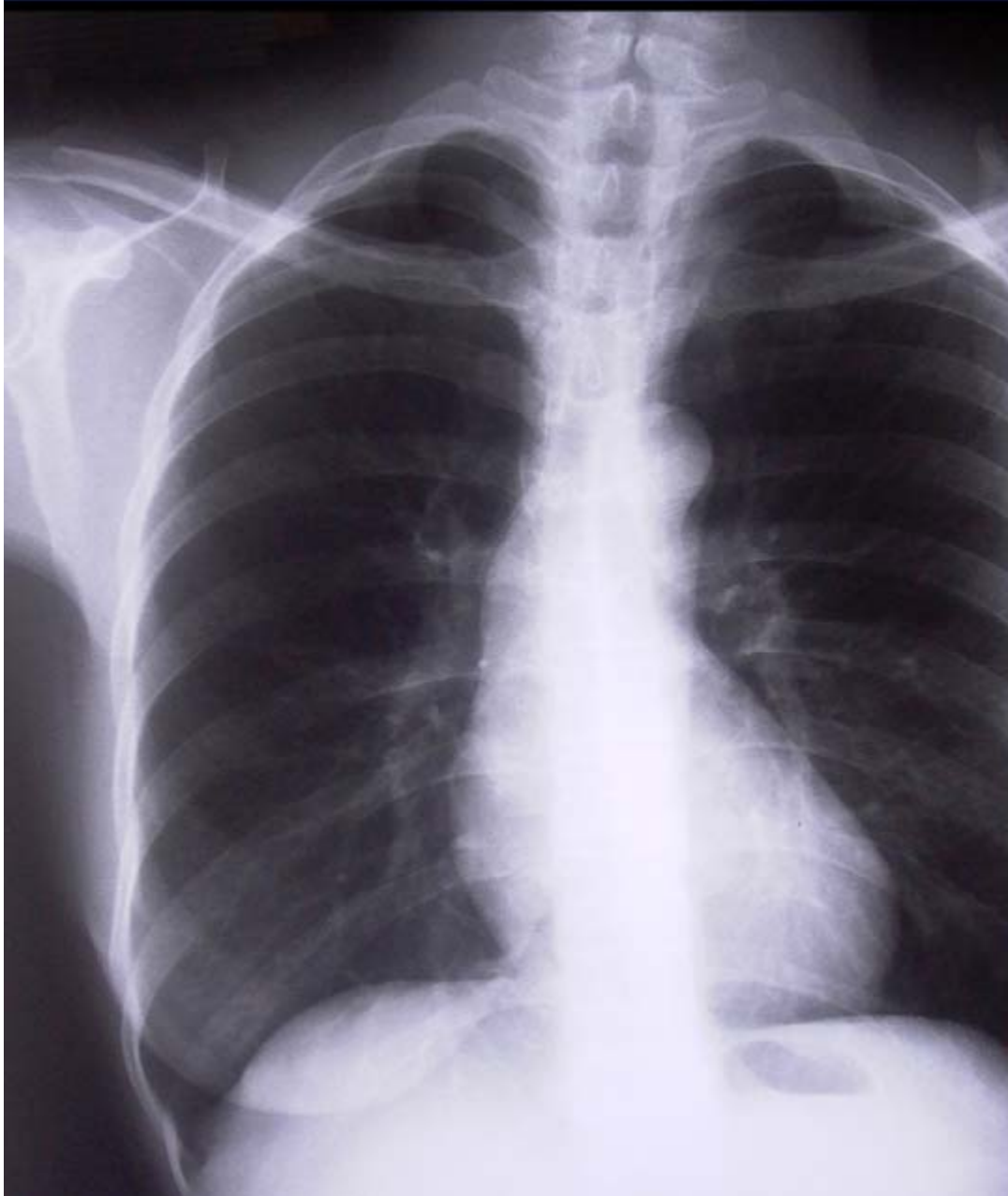
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Children off to school

Schools work to ensure your child has a learning environment that is sanitary and safe. Environmental Health provides guidance to schools to keep your children safe and responds to concerns about disease outbreaks.



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At the doctor's office

You can't see, smell, hear or feel it. It can save lives, but also endanger lives. The use of radiation must be carefully monitored. Environmental Health protects Iowans from unnecessary and potentially harmful exposure to radiation. Whether it is medical equipment or a tanning booth, we register or license facilities and operators of equipment that produce radiation, so that the equipment is used, maintained, and operated by trained staff. We also certify radon testers and laboratories; certify experts who can stop radon from getting into a home and teach the public about radon.



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Lunch with friends

By providing education and support to local health departments Environmental Health is always working to ensure the safety of your food. We work with the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals to prevent, investigate, and respond to outbreaks of food-borne illness. We also participate in a nine-state CDC project to conduct food safety studies to determine the best ways to keep food safe.



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Family outing

Keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to prevent illness. All it takes is 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song) of vigorous scrubbing with warm water and soap to do the job. Remember to wash your hands before and after preparing or eating food; after using the bathroom; after visiting a petting zoo or playing with a family pet; after you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose; or anytime your hands get dirty.



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Water recreation

Local Environmental Health agencies regularly inspect public swimming pools and spas for safety and cleanliness, and help owners make needed corrections. By working with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, you and your family are also kept safe from unhealthy conditions at natural recreational waters like lakes, rivers, and beaches.



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Playtime

You can reduce the risk of serious injury for you and your family by properly using safety gear. Environmental Health has programs to teach you how to prevent injuries and how to properly use safety gear. Additionally, staff works with the Consumer Product Safety Commission to make sure recalled products have been taken off shelves by conducting spot-checks of stores.

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Playing in the yard

The mosquitoes are swarming, but you're not concerned about West Nile virus because you know how to protect yourself against those annoying insects. You regularly check for and eliminate standing water in your yard, and are using an insect repellent containing DEET or Picaridin that you heard about on the news. In addition to promoting these messages, Environmental Health monitors Iowa for the presence of West Nile virus, and for the mosquitoes that can carry this and other diseases.

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Keeping a healthy home

The best way to prevent health issues in your home is to do routine maintenance. A healthy home is one that is clean, dry, ventilated, pest-free, safe, contaminant-free, and well-maintained. If your home was built before 1978, it may contain lead-based paint. If you see peeling or cracking paint, fix it immediately and keep children away from the area until it is repaired.



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Late night news

When health issues make the local news, Environmental Health is there with accurate information to keep people safe. Following a natural disaster, Environmental Health provides information about how people can stay healthy while cleaning up their flooded homes. When a food-borne outbreak is reported at a local restaurant, Environmental Health investigates the outbreak, finds the source, and alerts the public when necessary.



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Bedtime

While you sleep, Environmental Health is wide awake, ready to respond to natural or man-made disasters, outbreaks of illness and disease, and other public health emergencies. Staff is available 24/7, 365 days a year to promote and protect the health of Iowans.

