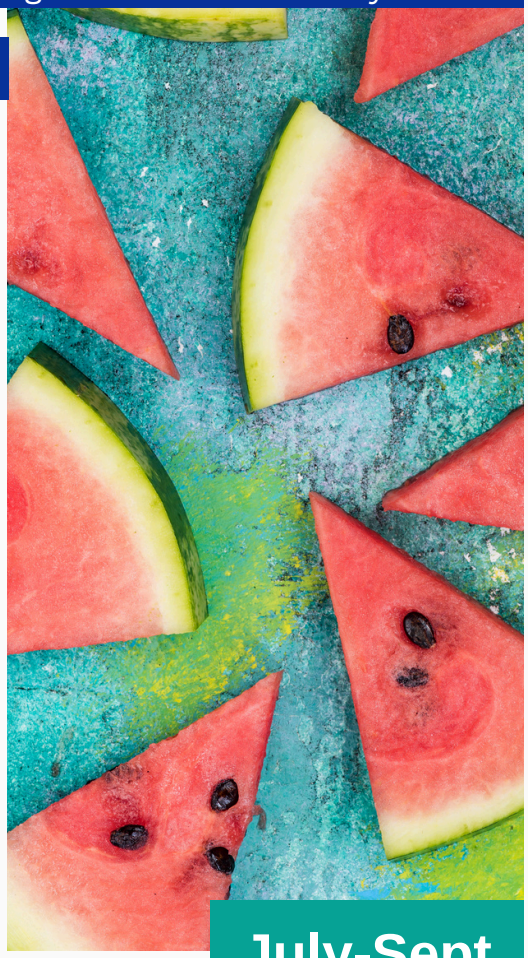
HEALTH DEPARTMENT HERALD

It looks like our Wisconsin summer has arrived! Family vacations, festivals, outdoor and other summer activities are underway and will keep us busy as we celebrate the season. Public health has been busy also! One exciting update from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services is the initiation of the Rural Health Transformation Program, which has identified several initiatives to ensure rural communities have access to high-quality health care. We will continue to share updates and information about this program to our community.



July-Sept 2026

Communicable Disease Update

Well, respiratory viruses are finally on the decline! It will be interesting to see how long this will last. Historically we have seen a **summer wave of COVID** ever since that virus first appeared. While FDA advisors have recommended an updated strain for this fall's vaccine, it will still need to go through additional steps for approval, manufacturing, and then availability to those who choose to receive it later this fall.

There have been no poultry or dairy cattle cases of **Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)** in Wisconsin since March, and the state has transitioned to a reduced milk testing frequency. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is doing an excellent job at this. It is still important to continue to protect our flocks and herds through continued monitoring and biosecurity measures. Avian influenza has recently appeared in both dairy herds and poultry flocks in other areas of the country.

Measles continues to persist in areas of the U. S., with continued transmission in Arizona, Utah, and Virginia. As travel season is now in full force, the CDC is anticipating additional cases. Remember the SMCHD has VFC and VFA measles vaccine available!

Call 715-526-4808 to make an appointment.



For the latest measles updates from the CDC scan here:

HEALTH DEPARTMENT HERALD

July is UV Safety Month- Should I use Sunscreen?



As we enter the sunny and HOT days of our Wisconsin summer, it is important to remember that extended sun exposure can be a health risk. UV exposure from the sun is the main cause of skin cancers, and sunscreen use is an important prevention method. But there is conflicting advice circulating out there. In general, it makes sense that applying a topical barrier will reduce the UV amount that reaches our skin. While it is difficult to study the effectiveness against skin cancer (as most people apply less sunscreen that is recommended, and people need to be followed over a long period of time), there is research that has shown that daily use reduces certain types of skin cancer. Studies have also shown that sunscreen can reduce pre-cancerous spots and moles in children, and is effective in preventing wrinkles and pigmentation.

Is sunscreen safe?

For those of you who are hesitant about using chemical sunscreen (there are chemical and mineral-based types), the FDA's message is that the amount of chemicals from certain types of sunscreen were too low to be a risk. Recently, the FDA is requesting more data to confirm chemical sunscreen safety. So, more info will be coming to guide both recommendations and personal decision-making.

Does sunscreen harm coral? A recent study concluded that there was no good evidence that the amount of sunscreen found in the environment harms coral, and that warming weather is more harmful.
If you are interested in reviewing their conclusions, scan here:

The best type of sunscreen is one that you will use **a lot** of, **regularly**.

And it is best to use these **5 LAYERS** of protection to defend against the sun:



Slip on sun protective clothing



Slop on SPF 30 (or higher) sunscreen



Slap on a broad-brimmed hat



Seek shade



Slide on wrap-around sunglasses

Special thanks to Your Local Epidemiologist (YLE).

HEALTH DEPARTMENT HERALD

August is National Immunization Awareness Month



Vaccination has been one of the most effective tools in public health. But the amount and content of immunization messages and debates in the news and within social circles can be exhausting. Recommendations have changed, then changed back. Advisory Boards have been established, then sidelined. It can be very difficult to find the information you need in order to make vaccine decisions for you and your family. With that in mind, the SMCHD wants to celebrate National Immunization Awareness Month by acknowledging that not one type of messaging is right for all individuals.



Some prefer **story-telling.**

If that is you, please scan this QR code to hear personal stories of those who have been **personally affected** by a vaccine-preventable illness.



Some base their decision on **data**.

If that is you, please scan this QR Code to see the declines in vaccine-preventable diseases since the introduction of vaccines.

Whichever method you prefer, it is important to find a reliable source in making decisions about vaccines. The SMCHD is always available to provide information about vaccines, and to help answer any questions you may have.

August is National Breastfeeding Month



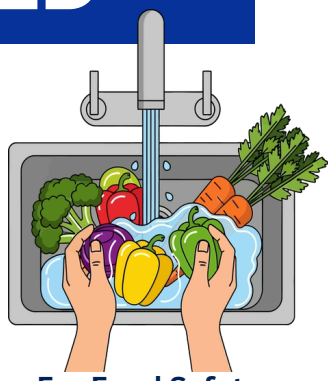
August is National Breastfeeding Awareness Month, and breastfeeding has many benefits to both mom and baby. Breastfeeding has been shown to decrease the rate of certain infections and diseases, such as cancers and type 2 diabetes in moms. It has been shown to boost immunity in infants, and also decreases the rate of ear infections and asthma. Breastmilk is easier to digest compared to formula, and contains colostrum and a composition of protein, fats, vitamins and minerals that are essential for an infant's healthy growth and development.

The Shawano County WIC Department supports breastfeeding. For more information, give WIC a call at 715-526-2822.

WIC SHAWANO COUNTY

HEALTH DEPARTMENT HERALD

September is National Food Safety Education Month



For Food Safety resources, scan here!

Did you know the SMCHD monitors and investigates foodborne illnesses and outbreaks? Many reportable illnesses affect the gastrointestinal tract, often called enteric illnesses or “food poisoning,” and are usually spread through food or water contaminated with fecal matter. When someone tests positive for a reportable enteric illness, a public health nurse follows up to identify possible exposures and share prevention tips. If additional cases appear, the nurse works with WI DHS epidemiologists and the State Lab of Hygiene to determine whether an outbreak is occurring and what actions are needed to protect the public. You can view current outbreaks on the WI DHS website.

CLICK HERE » **dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm**



Tick Update

Wow what a start to our “tick season!” According to Wisconsin DHS, tick activity is reaching its peak for the season. **Here are some recommendations when you plan to enjoy our Wisconsin Outdoors:**

- Wear Long Sleeves, Long Pants and Socks When Outdoors
- Use Insect Repellent
- Wear Clothes and Gear Treated with Permethrin
- Do Daily Tick Checks
- Take a Bath or Shower After Spending TIme Outdoors
- Dry Your Clothes on High Heat for 10 Minutes

If you are interested in viewing the WI DHS Tick Surveillance Report, please visit this link **dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03757-2026-21.pdf**



The SMCHD has Tick Kits available at no charge! Stop in at our office to pick one up, and stay prepared for tick season!



Policy Corner

We all want to be healthy. But good health isn’t determined by our healthcare system alone. Health is also affected by the environments in which we live, work, play and age. These factors are known as the “social determinants of health.” Public policies and decisions also affect our health. Public health works to ensure that policy makers look at the potential health, environmental and social implications in their decision-making. This approach is called “**Health in All Policies**,” and it needs to happen both locally and at the state and federal levels. Public health departments can help educate and encourage their leaders to think about health impacts when new or revised policies are considered.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT HERALD

Notable News



We sadly say "goodbye" to Jen Steinbach, PHN. She has brought so much innovation and creativity to our department! We will miss you!

Our new **Social Media campaign** has kicked off! We are talking with our local partners to learn about how they work to ensure individuals and families can get the support they need to remain healthy and safe. Be sure to watch our Facebook page!

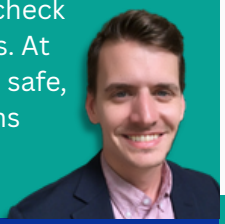
Our team recently completed a **QI Project** to improve our Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) follow-up.

Starting July 1st, we will be implementing our new WIC and Maternal Child Health (MCH) partnership initiative providing **Developmental Milestone Checklists** to parents of WIC-enrolled 6 and 12-month old children.

We continue to plan for our Community Health Assessment partner and community meeting...

Health Officer Reflections

As we enjoy the warm Wisconsin summer, it's important to keep safety in mind; on land, in the water, and even in the woods. Staying hydrated, using sunscreen, and taking breaks from the heat can help prevent illness on hot, humid days. When spending time at pools, lakes, or rivers, remember to supervise children closely, use life jackets when appropriate, and stay alert to changing water conditions. Summer also brings mosquitoes and ticks, so use repellent, wear protective clothing, and check yourself and your family after being outdoors. At SMCHD, we want everyone to have a healthy, safe, and fun summer, and a few simple precautions can help make that possible for all.



-Nick Mau, Health Officer

The SMCHD is always looking for feedback from partners to help improve communication and services. If you would like to provide any feedback, you can reach the SMCHD at:
715-526-4808 or Public.health@shawanocountywi.gov
Or find us on Facebook at: facebook.com/SMCHD

Emergency Preparedness Tip

We seem to be having our fair share of thunderstorms already this summer! Wind, flash flooding, hail and lightening can be dangerous. Ready.gov has some tips on staying safe:

- When thunder roars, go indoors!
- Pay attention to alerts and warnings
  - **NIXLE®** is Shawano County's alert system. You can sign up to receive alerts on the Shawano County Emergency Management website at: **co.shawano.wi.us/departments/emergency-management/general-information/**
- Avoid using electronic devices connected to an electrical outlet
- Avoid running water
- Turn Around. Don't Drown! Do not drive through flooded roadways.

More information is at:
https://www.ready.gov/thunderstorms-lightning

Ready

Other Community Events/Observances

July 4 - INDEPENDENCE DAY!
July 10 - Chronic Disease Awareness Day
July 11 - Kids Day (During Farmers Market)
July 28 - World Hepatitis Day
August 1 - World Lung Cancer Day
September 2-7 - Shawano County Fair
September 7 - LABOR DAY!
September 10 - World Suicide Prevention Day
September 21 - World Alzheimer's Day
September 22 - Falls Prevention Awareness Day
September 28 - World Rabies Day
September 29 - World Heart Day

Remember that the **Shawano Farmers Market** runs Saturdays, June 20 through October 10, 2026, at Franklin Park on the 200 block of South Washington Street.

Public Health: Prevent, Promote, Protect

Our Mission: Promote and Protect the Health of Shawano-Menominee Counites residents by providing quality services, fostering partnerships, and advocating for systems change.

Our Vision: The Shawano-Menominee Counties Health Department will be an engaged leader in inclusive communities which support optimal health for all.