



**Public Health**  
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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Focuses on Climate Change and Potential Community Health Risks**

*The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Celebrates National Public Health Week, “Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance” April 7 – 13.*

Champaign, IL – April 7-13 is National Public Health Week. This year’s theme is “Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance”. Climate change may cause extreme weather events and changes in rainfall that increase the risk of death and disease. An increase in regional temperatures may also increase the spread of infectious disease through mosquito and tick-borne illnesses. The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) is urging citizens to take this week to not only develop an emergency preparedness plan, but to also to commit to some simple changes to make themselves and the climate healthier.

Suggested changes include:

- **Be Prepared.** Develop a basic emergency preparedness plan for your family.
- **Travel Differently.** When possible, leave your car at home and take public transportation, carpool, ride a bike or even walk.
- **Eat Differently.** Buy local products, especially those offered at farmer’s markets. Eat more fruit and vegetables, and less meat.
- **Green Your Work & Home.** Purchase recycled products, and make sure to recycle and reuse where possible. Conserve water and energy by turning off lights in unused rooms, and taking shorter showers.

“Climate change presents serious public health threats,” said Julie A. Pryde, Acting Public Health Administrator for CUPHD. “Extreme weather, such as tornadoes, heat waves, ice and snow storms, as well as the resurgence of various infectious diseases can all be attributed to climatic changes.”

National Public Health Week is an annual observance meant to draw attention to the often invisible public health programs and practitioners providing care and services on the national, state and local levels. Public Health works behind the scenes to prevent epidemics and the spread of disease; protect against environmental hazards; prevent injuries; promote healthy behaviors; respond to disasters and community recovery efforts; and ensure the quality and accessibility of health services.

Since the inception of National Public Health Week in 1995, the public health community has taken this opportunity to focus on key issues important to improving the public’s health. The staggering documented losses of September 11th and Hurricane Katrina aptly illustrate the tremendous need for each community and individual to have an effective emergency preparedness plan. The aggressive expansion of mosquito and tick-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus, Dengue Fever, Erlichiosis, Lyme Disease, and St. Louis encephalitis provide an pertinent picture of the results of global warming and climate change.

Although CUPHD and the surrounding public agencies prepare for a public health disaster, there are many steps that individuals must take to protect their families in the event of social disruption, like that which could be caused by an extreme weather event or outbreak of an infectious disease. CUPHD is asking local families to *Stock 2 for Flu*, by purchasing two non-perishable food items each and every time they visit a store, and continuing to do so until they have a two-week supply of food and water. Families can also prepare by creating a disaster readiness kit consisting of:

- Portable, battery-powered or crank radio and/or television with extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Sanitation and hygiene items (moist towelettes and toilet paper)
- Matches and waterproof container
- Whistle
- Extra clothing and blankets
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils, including a can opener

- Photocopies of credit and identification cards
- Cash and coins
- Special needs items, such as prescription medications, eye glasses, contact lens solutions and hearing aid batteries
- Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District has served the Champaign-Urbana community for over 70 years. Please join us in celebrating National Public Health Week 2008 by creating a family disaster plan and Stocking 2 for Flu.

For more information about CUPHD's programs and services, call 352-7961 or visit us on the web at [www.cuphd.org](http://www.cuphd.org). For more information on preparing for a disaster, go to [www.Stock2forFlu.com](http://www.Stock2forFlu.com).

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