

All Roads Lead to Public Health

Public health has the power to safeguard the health and well-being of everyone, every day, everywhere.

At the UNMC College of Public Health, we work to increase the odds that everyone everywhere can, and will, make healthy choices through prevention and health promotion.

The Harold M. and Beverly Maurer Center for Public Health will house UNMC's newest college and bring together experts in a multitude of disciplines to find solutions to chronic health conditions that affect citizens of Nebraska and beyond.

Our public health experts are dedicated to teaching a diversified workforce. We also work in concert with our public health partners, here and abroad, to understand the causes of disease, develop prevention strategies, and help communities empower themselves as they reach toward a healthier tomorrow.



An apple a day

Healthier lifestyles depend on fresh produce, lean meats and whole grains. In rural and in some urban areas, fully stocked grocery stores may be miles away. Research shows that without healthy choices, people are less likely to eat a healthy diet and more likely to be obese. The research and expertise of UNMC faculty can help cities make it easier for supermarkets to serve more people, through zoning and other changes in local statutes. Community garden projects—like Omaha's City Sprouts—are another way UNMC's students and faculty partner with neighborhoods to promote healthy eating.



Healthy mothers and babies

Did you know infant mortality has decreased 90 percent and maternal mortality has decreased 99 percent since 1900 — all because of advances in maternal and neonatal medicine, antibiotics, access to health care and better hygiene and nutrition programs? UNMC has nationally known experts in maternal and child health who seek new interventions to make sure no baby is born too small or too soon.



On-the-job safety

Did you know that Nebraska was ranked fifth in the highest number of workplace fatalities in the United States for 2009? UNMC teaches public health workers how to examine and develop programs to reduce occupational and agricultural injuries and helps rural and urban business owners create safer workplace environments.



Safer neighborhoods

Hundreds of people are injured in incidents of gun violence in Omaha each year. In 2010, The Nebraska Medical Center alone treated 114 cases of gun-related injuries. Nearly one-third of those injured were 18 or younger. A new partnership between Omaha's academic health centers — including UNMC — and the community-based organization, Impact One, is poised to help Omaha residents with gang intervention and lessen gun violence in the city.

Obesity, diabetes and heart disease

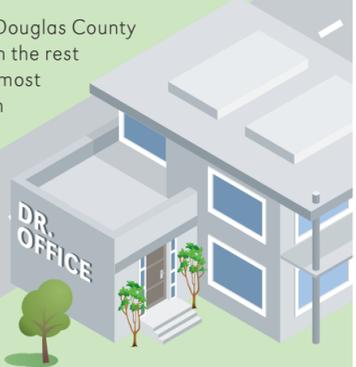
One-fourth of Nebraskans are obese, making the state the 18th heaviest in the nation. Obesity is one of the most important factors in the development of diabetes and heart disease. Studies show that people with prediabetes who lose weight and increase their physical activity can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. UNMC has widely recognized childhood obesity researchers who work in collaboration with Live Well Omaha to reduce childhood obesity rates and prevent early onset of diabetes.

Childhood vaccinations

Immunization is one of the most successful public health achievements of the 20th century. We also know outbreaks can occur when vaccination levels decrease. UNMC houses the Nebraska Public Health Laboratory, which monitors diseases that could lead to outbreaks. Its workers advocate the importance of immunizing all children, including the more than 25,000 babies born in Nebraska each year.

Sexually transmitted diseases

The rate of sexually transmitted diseases in Douglas County is at epidemic levels—50 percent higher than the rest of the United States. Every STD is treatable; most are curable. Through public health education and research, UNMC leaders promote positive reproductive health and responsible sexual behavior.



Seat belts and helmets

National traffic statistics show that motorists who wear a seat belt reduce their risk of death, during a car accident, by 45 percent. Head injuries are the leading cause of death for motorcycle riders. UNMC's public health experts support laws and programs that encourage safer behaviors on Nebraska roads.



Pollutant-free communities

Whether it is the air you breathe, the water you drink or the household chemicals under your sink, environmental exposures are everywhere. Knowing the potential short and long-term effects can help Nebraskans make healthier choices. To create safer, healthier environments, UNMC sends its experts into the community to promote smoke-free environments, study exposure to organic dust from hogs, cattle and grain and test the impact of chemical pollutants.