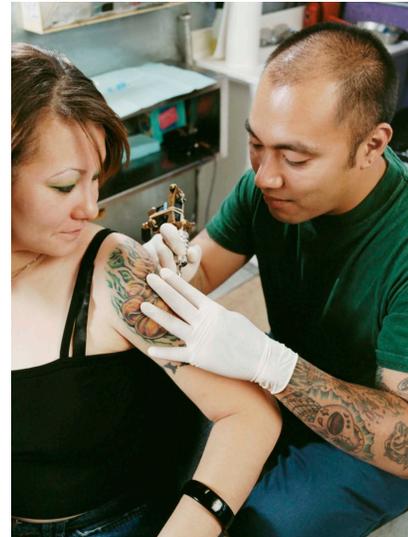


A Day in the Life of Public Health

From the time you get up in the morning till you go to bed at night, public health is involved in your life. Let me walk you through A Day in the Life of Public Health:

- When you got up this morning, you had to make food choices for breakfast. We provide you messages on healthy food choices.
- You have a yearning for that cigarette you are trying to give up. We work with the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline to help you quit smoking.
- Hopefully, you brushed your teeth. We work with communities to fluoridate water supplies.
- You got in the car and buckled in your children, put the baby in the car seat, and buckled your own seatbelt. We encourage seat belt use and provide car seats to those who need them.
- You dropped the kids off at school, where they will interact with other kids. All should have their mandated immunizations to protect them from childhood diseases. We provide immunizations.
- You go to work where most of your office workers seem to be sick. We investigate disease outbreaks.
- You go to lunch at a local restaurant. We inspect food service facilities.
- You decide not to go back to work since everyone's sick anyway, and think you'll get that tattoo you've been dreaming about. We license tattoo artists.
- You've got some time on your hands, so you decide to get a haircut. We license and inspect barber shops.
- You decide to visit your grandma to show off your new tattoo and hairdo. She's at a local nursing home facility. We license nursing homes.
- You pick the kids up from the after-school program. It's one of our model after-school programs that provides lots of physical activity and healthy snacks.
- You stop off at the grocery store where you see a friend selecting fresh fruits and produce. You know she's on WIC, the special nutrition program for women, infants and children. We administer the program.
- You go home where your security alarm is going off. False alarm. But we license security alarm operators.



The Oklahoma State Department of Health licenses tattoo artists.



- You start to prepare dinner. You wash your fruits and vegetables to help prevent contamination from E. coli bacteria. The Public Health Laboratory analyzes food specimens during foodborne illness outbreaks.
- Your sister calls and says she has enrolled in the Children First program. This is a special nurse visitation program provided by county health departments to visit first-time mothers in their home and teach them about caring for their new baby.
- After dinner you go for a walk and let the kids ride their bikes. We work with communities to provide safe sidewalks and bike trails to encourage physical activity, and we promote the use of bicycle helmets.
- (OPTIONAL – for warm summer months into early fall): While outside, you also make sure everyone has used insect repellent containing DEET to prevent mosquito bites and tick bites. We investigate cases of West Nile virus caused by mosquito bites, and Rocky Mountain Spotted fever, caused by tick bites.
- Your children begin working on their homework. One has to prepare a report using health statistics. You go to the state health department web site, which has numerous statistical resources.
- You put the baby to bed in a crib that meets current federal safety standards and is free of bumper pads so the baby cannot suffocate. You place the baby on its back, the safest position. We provide education on baby care and child safety.
- On the 10 o'clock television news, you learn of a rare syphilis outbreak among adolescents in the state. We investigate sexually transmitted diseases and work to prevent them from occurring.
- You go to bed with your spouse or significant other. And...well...we provide birth control!
- (OPTIONAL – for winter months into early spring): Overnight, a blizzard hits your community. When you turn on the TV or radio the next morning, you hear messages warning about slips and falls and carbon monoxide poisoning. We provide those types of risk communications during a weather or public health event.
- (OPTIONAL – for spring and summer storm months): Overnight, a tornado hits your community. When you turn on the TV or radio the next morning, you hear messages warning about taking care to wear shoes or gloves in the cleanup, and that your local health department will be providing tetanus shots for those involved in the cleanup.

So indeed, public health is at work every day to keep Oklahomans healthy!



Oklahoma State
Department of Health

Terry L. Cline, PhD
Commissioner