

# FEMA offers information on what preparedness really means

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is focusing on changing perceptions about emergency preparedness, and helping Americans understand what it truly means to be Ready. Being Ready is all about taking four simple but all-important steps: get an Emergency Supply Kit; make a Family Emergency Plan; be informed about emergencies and their appropriate responses; and get involved in community preparedness initiatives.

Being Ready also means including your pets in the planning. According to FEMA Acting Regional Administrator Dennis Hunsinger, the time to make proper provisions for pets is before disaster strikes.

"Including pets, working animals and livestock in disaster planning can be vital to peace of mind and should be part and parcel of basic emergency preparedness," said Hunsinger. "If you must evacuate your home, it's always best to take your pets with you, but plan ahead. Work with your office of emer-

gency management to learn about evacuation policies and pet shelters."

Sound animal disaster preparedness planning should encompass: one week's emergency rations and water; identification tags, leg bands or tattoos; pet first aid kits; and current photos of your animals, filed with your important papers. If you use a 'pet sitter' while on vacation, discuss disaster plans and evacuation sites, and if your regular veterinarian does not have a disaster plan, locate one who does.

Detailed plans for pet and livestock owners are available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), but basic guidance includes:

- If you must evacuate, take your pets with you. If you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pet.
- Make a backup-up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with

neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate pets if you are unable to do so. Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for

at least three days, maybe longer.

- Ensure that pets and livestock have some form of identification that can facilitate their return.
- Do not corner wild animals

or try to rescue them. Call your local animal control office or wildlife resource officer.

- Do not approach wild animals that have taken refuge in your home. Open a window or

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## Heart attacks and smoking connected

One year after passing smoking bans, communities in North America and Europe had 17 percent fewer heart attacks compared to communities without smoking restrictions, and the number of heart attacks kept decreasing with time, according to a report in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

The report is a meta-analysis of 13 studies in which researchers examined changes in heart attack rates after smoking bans were enacted in communities in the United States, Canada and Europe. The researchers found that heart attack rates started to drop immediately following implementation of the law, reaching 17 percent after one year, then continuing to decline over time, with about a 36 percent drop three years after enacting the restrictions.

"While we obviously won't bring heart attack rates to zero, these findings give us evidence that in the short- to medium-term, smoking bans will prevent a lot of heart attacks," said James M. Lightwood, Ph.D., co-author of the study and assistant adjunct professor in the

department of clinical pharmacy at the University of California-San Francisco. "The studies on this issue now have long enough follow-up periods so that we can see exactly how big the effect is."

Lightwood also noted that the community effect is consistent with probable individual risk and exposure scenarios.

For example, according to the American Heart Association's Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics 2009 Update, non-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work have a 25 percent to 30 percent increased risk of developing heart disease. This new research suggests that the individual increased risk may be higher, said Lightwood.

"This study adds to the already strong evidence that secondhand smoke causes heart attacks, and that passing 100 percent smoke-free laws in all workplaces and public places is something we can do to protect the public," Lightwood said. "Now we have a better understanding of how you can predict what will happen if you impose a smoking-free law."

David Goff, M.D., Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Prevention and Professor of Public Health Sciences and Internal Medicine at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C., and an American Heart Association national spokesperson, said the paper provides strong support for the contention that smoke free laws will improve public health. "This is good evidence that the benefits are realistic and consistent with reasonable estimates of the harm imposed by secondhand smoke," Goff said.

"It is important to move forward now with widespread implementation of smoke-free laws," he added. "At a time of great concern over the financial sustainability of our healthcare system, smoke free laws represent an inexpensive approach to reducing heart attacks, and, probably, other cardiovascular conditions."

Stanton Glantz, Ph.D., co-authored the study. Author disclosures are on the manuscript.

The National Cancer Institute funded the study.

## Heart disease topic of free talk

Overview of heart and vascular disease will be the topic of a free 90-minute presentation on Thursday, October 15,

at 6:00 p.m.

Appropriate health care and lifestyle changes can help prevent and even reverse the progression of cardiovascular disease (CVD), the largest single killer of American men and women. With one in three Americans living with one or more types of CVD, it is more important than ever to take care of your heart. The presentation will include an overview of CVD including the latest evidence-based information on its causes, diagnosis, treatments, and outcomes.

Call to reserve your space at this free event by calling 503-681-1700. This will be held at the Tuality Healthcare Community Education Center, 334 SE 8th Ave., Hillsboro.


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1229 N. Adair  
 PO Box 543  
 Cornelius, OR 97113-0543  
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