



# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY Public Health Laboratory

Phone: (805) 781-5507 Fax: (805) 781-1023 [www.sloPublicHealth.org/lab](http://www.sloPublicHealth.org/lab)

---

## Bulletin

April 2011

### Public Health Week April 4-10, 2011

We hope all our readers appreciate the efforts of the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Laboratory and the Public Health Department, but we wouldn't be surprised if you had difficulty answering the question, "What is Public Health?"

Public Health is... vaccinations to prevent epidemics, vital records, food safety, prevention of HIV infections by education, learning to take care of a baby—before & after birth, restaurant hygiene reports, accurate lab test results used in science-based decisions, and messages to avoiding alcohol during pregnancy, to eat healthy, and to start children on a proper diet and exercise to prevent obesity and all its complications.

Public Health is tracking down the cause of outbreaks such as Salmonella in peanut butter, E coli O157 in spinach greens, unpasteurized fruit juices or raw milk. Public Health finds the problem and designs a solution that protects people from another similar event. Public Health finds out why people are getting sick when the usual causes are ruled out, and discovers new diseases: Legionnaires Disease, West Nile Virus, SARS, Hantavirus and many others.

Public Health answers questions such as "Is the disease rate increasing?" "What medicine should be used?" "Where can I find someone who knows about this illness?"

Public Health messages can be deceptively simple: "Wash Your hands." "Cover your cough" "Buckle up", "Stop Smoking" "Eat right and get exercise", "Recycle", "Drive safely, Work safely, Play safely", "Cook Your Burger thoroughly"

Public Health is your ally against the spread of TB, HIV and Hepatitis, the rise of antibiotic resistance in microbes, tobacco, obesity, illegal drug use, dead batteries in landfills, swimming in risky waters, and preparing a salad on a cutting board after raw chicken.

A clinical laboratory provides diagnostic test results to a physician for the treatment and care of a patient. A Public Health laboratory tests specimens from human, animals, insects as well as food, water and other environmental samples, providing results to a Health Officer and other public health professionals so that a population is protected.

Look around you and you'll see public health at work. Celebrate the efforts of Public Health April 4-10.

### Visit the Updated SLO Public Health Laboratory website

The SLO Public health Laboratory website—updated in numerous categories—went live on Monday February 28, 2011. The URL is recorded below, Please browse and bookmark this site. <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/health/healthtesting/laboratory.htm>

If you would like to receive the Bulletin as an email, please reply to [jbeebe@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:jbeebe@co.slo.ca.us).