

TARRANT COUNTY

NEWS & INFORMATION



January 2015



www.tarrantcounty.com

A Happier and Healthier New Year!

The New Year is an opportunity for Tarrant County residents to set goals for a healthier lifestyle and to develop habits that have lifelong benefits.

“The new year gives everyone a fresh start and a chance to make good on the many aims they have been thinking about the past few months,” said Tarrant County Public Health Director Vinny Taneja. “The best way to accomplish those goals is to check-off items and develop healthy habits.

There are so many easy things we can all do to live a happier and healthier life.”

What individuals can do:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables. (www.LiveAMoreColorfulLife.org)
- Cut sugar consumption and substitute water for sodas.
- Control your portion sizes to help cut calories.
- Be active and play outside.
- Quit smoking with help from TCPH’s free program - “Freedom From Smoking”.
- Choose to walk somewhere instead of using a car.
- Wash hands frequently to fight the flu and other illnesses.
- Get vaccinated.
- Simplify your life to reduce stress.
- Sleep adequately.

What families can do:

- Eat at least one meal a day at the table together.
- Eat one less fast food family meal a month.
- Have a no TV/computer day at least once a week.
- Put down the smart phones and talk to each other.
- Take a social media break.
- Schedule a family walk or event outside together every week.
- Volunteer as a family.
- Grow a vegetable garden together.
- Schedule annual medical check-ups.

What communities can do:

- Support prevention efforts to decrease the amount of obesity and chronic diseases in our community, such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and stroke.
- Advocate for healthy food choices at school and work
- Help support walkable neighborhoods and smoke-free environments.
- Join a neighborhood association and request that a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) be conducted jointly by your health and planning departments.
- Identify at least three things you think would improve the health of your community and share them with your elected officials/leaders.

“Get up and move around,” said Taneja. “When residents get out in the community they also move towards a healthier lifestyle and their goals fall into place.”

Taneja encouraged Tarrant County residents to visit the Health Department’s newly redesigned website (<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>) to learn more about what the department does to prevent disease, promote health and protect you. For additional information, residents can call 817-321-4700.

Tens of millions of Americans suffer every day from preventable diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some forms of cancer. All of these conditions rob them of their health and quality of life, said Taneja.

Notice of Delayed Opening of County Clerk Offices

All County Clerk offices in Tarrant County courthouses and subcourthouses will have a delayed opening on Monday, January 5. All locations will open at 8:30 a.m. – with the exception of the Southlake Sub-courthouse, which will open at 9 a.m. This delayed opening is to allow employees to be sworn-in for the County Clerk’s new term of office.



Courthouse Tours After Stock Show Parade

The Tarrant County Historical Commission will provide guided tours of the 1895 Courthouse, Saturday, January 18, after the downtown parade for the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo. The 40-minute tours will begin at 11 a.m., with the last tour leaving at 3 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Tarrant County Commissioners Court will be at 10 a.m., Tuesday, January 13.

Safety Tips for Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

Wood stoves and fireplaces are becoming a very common heat source in homes. Careful attention to safety can minimize their fire hazard. The Tarrant County Fire Marshal has tips on how to use them safely:

- Be sure the fireplace or stove is installed properly. Woodstoves should have adequate clearance (36”) from combustible surfaces, and proper floor support and protection.
- Woodstoves should be of good quality, solid construction and design and should be UL listed.
- Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary – especially if it has not been used for some time.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening, to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, unwanted material from going in and help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.
- A stove should be burned hot twice a day for 15-30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote buildup.
- Don’t use excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite creosote in the chimney by overbuilding the fire.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- Keep flammable materials away from your fireplace mantel. A spark from the fireplace could easily ignite these materials.
- Before you go to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. NEVER close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.
- If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package. NEVER break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire or use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.