Public Health Facts

What is public health?
Public Health is the science and art of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. Public Health helps improve the health and well being of people in local communities and around the globe.

How is our local Public Health Department protecting the community?
Santa Barbara County has a robust Public Health Department that provides a variety of services through the community including:

- Health care for individuals with Medi-Cal, Medicare and those who are uninsured or under-insured
- Investigation of infectious diseases that have the potential to spread
- Home visitation of mothers and children who are at high risk
- Nutrition counseling and vouchers for low-income women and young children
- Training and preparation for disasters and emergencies in our community
- Inspecting restaurants and other food facilities to assure they are safe
- Oversight of emergency medical services such as ambulances and paramedics

What are the greatest public health achievements in the United States?

- Vaccination
- Motor-vehicle safety
- Safer workplaces
- Control of infectious diseases
- Declines in deaths from coronary heart disease and strokes
- Safer and healthier foods
- Healthier mothers and babies
- Family Planning
- Fluoridation of drinking water
- Recognition of tobacco use as a health hazard

How has public health made a difference? (American Journal of Public Health)
Between 1950 and 2000, a number of health conditions have seen tremendous declines due to research breakthroughs, policy advances, and clinical innovations including:

- Strokes have declined 66.3% and heart disease has declined 56.1%
- Uterine and cervical cancers have declined by 72.5%
- HIV/AIDS has declined by 67.9%
- Influenza and pneumonia have declined by 55.9%
- Unintentional injuries have declined by 55.3%

What are some areas of concern in public health now? (www.whatispublichealth.org)

- 70% of deaths are attributable to chronic diseases in the United States today
- 16 – 24 year olds experience the largest rate of traffic deaths in the United States
- 50% of smokers will die from smoking related diseases if they continue to smoke
- Diabetes is one of the fastest growing public health concerns in the world