Environmental Public Health Tracking

USING EPHT DATA AND RESOURCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Promoting Health Benefits of Popular Pastime

What was the problem/situation?

Many people do not make the connection to unsafe natural waters outside of industrial areas where water contamination concerns are more on people's minds. Fishing is typically safe as well as consumption of the fish (if prepared appropriately) with the exception of certain areas and fish species due to heavy metal contamination. In most instances and for most people, the health benefits of eating fish outweigh the potential risks from contaminants. However, there are occasions when limited or no consumption of certain fish is appropriate as all fish contain various levels of mercury. The improper use and mishandling of lead fishing tackle, particularly in children, may also result in lead entering the body.

How was Tracking involved?

The Missouri Tracking Program participated in the Department of Conservation's Annual Kid's Fishing Day at Kellogg Lake in Carthage, Missouri. The Tracking Program staffed an educational station where over 300+ "Get Hooked on Healthy Fishing" packets, 250+ "Fish Activity Books", 150 "Sunny with a Chance of Heat Stroke" brochures with sample sunscreen packets, Fish Advisory Summary Booklets, tick cards with insect repellant packets, and individual fishing bobbers and fish rulers were distributed. Within the four hour event the Missouri Tracking Program educated 615 children and adults about the health benefits of eating fish outweighing the potential risks for contaminants while promoting the use of lead-free sinkers and fishing tackle.

What action was taken to resolve the problem?

This valuable information will allow the public to make informed decisions about eating fish, provides healthier cooking options, and takes action to reduce exposure to lead often associated with fishing tackle. This helps Missouri lower the number of children at risk of being exposed to harmful contaminants and elevated blood lead levels.

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