

Understanding Community Health

How Different Sources Help Tell the Story

Community health is more than the health of individual people, it's the bigger picture. In this quarter's newsletter, we'll explore how different sources of information come together to provide a clearer understanding of the health of Mohave County. We'll also highlight how, by working alongside residents, stakeholders, and community partners can build a healthier, stronger community for everyone.

In this issue:



Community Health vs. Individual Health

What's the difference and why it matters for all of us.



Community Snapshot

Where community health information comes from and how it all connects.



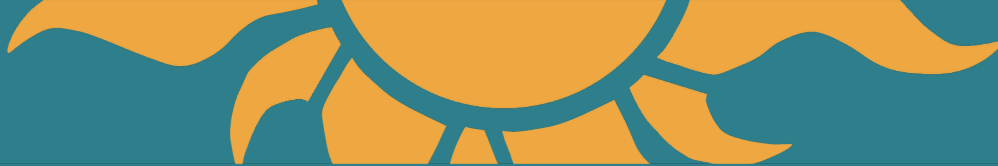
How Wastewater Monitoring Works

Following the journey from our daily lives to useful health information.



Myth vs. Facts

Clearing up myths and misunderstandings



Wastewater Monitoring: One Piece of the Community Health Puzzle

Every day, people infected with certain viruses may shed tiny pieces of those viruses when they use the restroom, even if they have mild symptoms or no symptoms. These tiny traces enter the wastewater system and mix together with wastewater from homes and businesses.

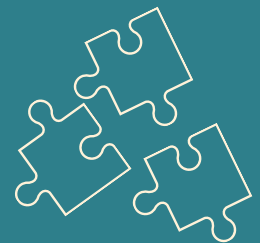
At the wastewater treatment facility, a small sample of the combined wastewater is collected. Public health laboratories measure tiny amounts of specific viruses in the sample to better understand community health trends. The testing is designed to measure community-wide trends, not to identify individuals, households, or neighborhoods.

Wastewater monitoring is one of several tools public health uses to understand what's happening across a community. When combined with laboratory testing, disease reports, healthcare data, and community surveys, it helps provide a more complete picture of community health.

Looking at these sources together helps public health identify changes in disease trends, support planning, and evaluate whether public health actions are having an impact.

HOW THE INFORMATION HELPS

- Identify changes in community disease trends.
- Monitor health trends over time.
- Support public health planning and decision-making.
- Evaluate the impact of public health actions.
- Provide another source of information during outbreaks or seasonal illness.



Wastewater monitoring cannot identify a person, household, or neighborhood. It cannot predict whether any one person will become sick, diagnose disease, or replace guidance from your healthcare provider.

Instead, it provides one more piece of information that helps public health better understand community health trends.

TRANSLATION STATION

Health jargon simplified so it actually makes sense.

Community Health

The health of everyone in a community, not just one person. It looks at patterns that affect us all.

Wastewater

Water from sinks, showers, toilets, and businesses that flows into the sewer system.

Community Snapshot

A picture of community health created by combining information from many trusted sources.

Early Warning Tool

A source of information that helps public health identify changes in health trends early so communities can respond sooner.

Community Snapshot Every Piece Helps Tell the Story

Imagine trying to complete a puzzle with only one piece. You might recognize a color or shape, but you couldn't see the whole picture. Community health works the same way.

Public health doesn't rely on just one source of information. Instead, we bring together many pieces, such as community surveys, laboratory testing, disease reports, healthcare data, and wastewater monitoring, to better understand what's happening across Mohave County.

Each source adds another piece to the picture. Looking at these sources together helps public health identify trends, respond to emerging health concerns, and plan programs that meet the community's needs. It also helps us understand whether our efforts are making a difference over time.

No single source tells the whole story, but together, they help create a clearer picture of community health.

Community Health vs. Individual Health

Your health is personal. It includes the choices you make, the care you receive, and how healthy you are as an individual.

Community health looks at the bigger picture. Instead of focusing on one person, it looks for patterns across an entire community. Public health uses information from many trusted sources to understand what is affecting the health of residents and where support may be needed.

For example, one person with the flu is treated by a healthcare provider. If many people across the county begin getting sick around the same time, public health looks for patterns to help identify what's happening and how to reduce the spread of illness. The same approach can be used to better understand concerns such as chronic disease, heat-related illness, or access to healthcare.

Healthy communities depend on more than medical care. Safe drinking water, clean air, access to nutritious food, safe places to be active, education, housing, transportation, and strong community partnerships all play a role in helping people live healthier lives.

Putting the pieces together:

Individual health focuses on one person. Community health looks at how we can work together to improve the health and well-being of everyone.

Sources:
CDC
CDC Foundation

Individual Health vs. Community Health	
 Individual Health	 Community Health
 One person	 Entire community
 Personal medical care	 Prevention and planning
 Doctor's office	 Schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, healthcare, and public health
 "How am I doing?"	 "How are we doing?"
 Individual health focuses on one person. Community health looks at the bigger picture so we can work together to build a healthier community for everyone.	

MYTHS

VS

FACTS

Wastewater Monitoring



MYTH

Wastewater monitoring identifies individuals.



FACT

Wastewater samples are collected after wastewater from many homes and businesses have already been combined at the wastewater plant.



MYTH

Wastewater monitoring is the only way community health is monitored.



FACT

Public health professionals also use information from healthcare providers, laboratories, disease reporting, and environmental monitoring.



MYTH

Finding something in wastewater means the drinking water isn't safe.



FACT

Wastewater and drinking water are separate systems. Drinking water is treated, tested, and monitored separately to help ensure it meets safety standards.

About This Newsletter

This health literacy newsletter is brought to you by the Mohave County Department of Public Health (MCDPH). It was created in response to feedback from residents who shared that health information can feel overwhelming, insurance is confusing, medical terms aren't always explained clearly, while time with providers often feel limited. Your voices helped shape this effort and continue to guide the topics we share.

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