

Public Health Notes

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NH DHHS Mission Statement: To join communities and families in providing opportunities for citizens to achieve health and independence.

National Infant Immunization Week

April 18-25 is National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW), an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate the achievements of immunization programs in protecting children and promoting healthy communities. NIIW will be celebrated as part of World Immunization Week, an initiative of the World Health Organization.

Since vaccines started to become widely available, many childhood illnesses have virtually disappeared.

- Through immunization, we can now protect infants and children from 14 vaccine-preventable diseases before age two.
- In the 1950's, nearly every child developed measles, and unfortunately, some even died from this serious disease. Today, many practicing physicians have never seen a case of measles.
- The National Immunization Survey has consistently shown that childhood immunization rates for vaccines routinely recommended for children remain at or near record levels.

It's easy to think of these as diseases of the past. But the truth is they still exist. Children in the U.S. can—and do—still get some of these diseases. One example of the seriousness of vaccine preventable diseases is an increase in measles cases, a highly contagious virus. Measles was declared eliminated in the US in 2000 due to the success of measles vaccination, but the disease has been making a comeback, due to decreasing vaccination. Data from 2014 shows a higher than normal number of cases of measles nationally and in some states. An outbreak that began in Disneyland in California in December 2014 has already infected over 130 people.

Speak with your healthcare provider if you have

Important Dates

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

Brain Injury Association of America

www.biausa.org

March is National Colorectal Awareness Month

Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation

www.preventcancer.org/colorectal

March is National Nutrition Month

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

www.eatright.org

March 2-8 is National Sleep Awareness Week

National Sleep Foundation

www.sleepfoundation.org

March 15-21 is National Poison Prevention Week

Poison Prevention Council

www.poisonprevention.org

March 18 is Kick Butts Day

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

www.kickbuttsday.org

March 22 is World Water Day

UN Water

www.unwater.org

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month

SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for

Alcohol & Drug Information

www.ncadd.org

April is National Cancer Control Month

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

April is Stress Awareness Month

American Counseling Association

www.counseling.org

questions. To learn more visit the DHHS Immunization Program [webpage](#).



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April 6-12 is National Public Health Week

American Public Health Association

www.nphw.org

April 7 is World Health Day

World Health Organization

www.who.org

April 18-25 is National Infant Immunization Week

CDC, National Immunization Program

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niww/index.html

Body Art Safety

Did you know that in New Hampshire, minors (those under age 18) are prohibited from getting a tattoo, even with parental permission? Body artists are licensed by



the Department of Health and Human Services and body artists must work in a location that is approved by the town in which it is located. Unclean needles and other unsafe practices place someone at risk for HIV,

Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and other blood-borne illnesses, so it is essential that proper sterilization practices are followed. Before getting any body art, make sure the person who will be doing the tattooing and the establishment are licensed for your own safety. For more information visit www.dhhs.nh.gov/oos/blc/index.htm or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/body_art/more-info.html.

Raw Milk

In New Hampshire, the production and processing of milk and milk products is regulated by the Department of Health and Human Services, Food Protection Section. The Dairy Sanitation Program is responsible

for the licensing and inspection of the 134 permitted farms and 41 licensed milk processing facilities in the State. The program conducts routine facility inspections and collects samples for testing by the Public Health Laboratory. RSA 184:30-a allows for the sale of raw milk to the final consumer from milk producers, milk plants, and stores, and the production and sale within the State of raw milk yogurt and aged cheese. All other milk products are required to be made with pasteurized milk. Raw milk producers who sell more than 80 quarts of raw milk per day or who sell their raw milk in stores and anyone processing milk is required to be licensed and inspected.

Milk is often called “nature’s perfect food.” Some people prefer to drink raw milk because they believe it is more natural, more nutritious, or tastes better to them. Both raw and pasteurized milk are good sources of protein, carbohydrates, calcium, and other nutrients. Vitamin C is reduced by pasteurization, but even raw milk is not a good source of vitamin



C. Another reason given for drinking raw milk is that it provides “good bacteria.” However, unless a cow has an intramammary infection or a systemic disease, her milk does not contain any bacteria when it is produced at the mammary glands. Any bacteria in the milk is introduced in the udder or teats or during milking, handling, and storage, and if “good bacteria” are getting into the milk, the risk is there that bad bacteria will get in too. Cattle are the main reservoir for *E. coli* O157:H7 and can also be a reservoir for Salmonella, Campylobacter, Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, and Coxiella. Listeria can

be found in farmyards in the soil, water, forage, and silage. These pathogens can be shed in the milk of apparently healthy cows or introduced into the milk from environmental or fecal contamination of teats, udders, and milking equipment.

Pasteurization, or heating of raw milk to a specific temperature for a sufficient period of time, destroys the pathogens. Good practices by the dairy farmer, as well as inspections and testing of raw milk, help monitor sanitation but do not guarantee safety because the presence of pathogenic bacteria in raw milk is unpredictable. The CDC reported 86 outbreaks due to consumption of raw milk and raw milk products between 1998 and 2008, which resulted in 1,676 illnesses, 191 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths. There have also been outbreaks linked to pasteurized milk and milk products, generally due to post-pasteurization contamination. But because the consumption of raw milk is estimated at only 1–3% of the population, the real risk of getting very sick from drinking raw milk is much greater than from pasteurized milk.

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-index.html.

Norovirus



As expected, there has been an increase in cases of norovirus (sometimes called “stomach flu”) in New Hampshire and across the country this winter. The symptoms of norovirus include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, and sometimes low-grade

fever. People can have only one, a few, or all of these symptoms. The virus infects people of all ages.

Norovirus is spread from person to person via contamination from feces, and it can remain on surfaces for some time, so it is important to clean surfaces regularly. “The single best way to prevent becoming infected with norovirus or giving it to someone else is to wash your hands, well and often,” said Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist. “Good hand hygiene is important in not only preventing norovirus, but many other illnesses as well.

People generally recover in a few days, but dehydration and other complications can occur. If your symptoms get worse or you cannot rehydrate, seek medical attention. The very young, seniors, and those with weakened immune systems are at greater risk.

For more information on norovirus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus.htm.

Ebola Update

Though Ebola has been in the news much less as of late, it is still an ongoing crisis in West Africa. As of this writing, there have been over 23,000 cases and 9,500 deaths identified due to Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in this outbreak.

Transmission continues in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The symptoms of Ebola usually begin with non-specific symptoms, such as fever, headache, joint pain, muscle aches, and weakness before progressing to diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain. In some cases, symptoms can become more severe with internal and external bleeding in a small percentage of patients. The incubation period for Ebola ranges from 2 to 21 days, but is most commonly 8–10 days. Researchers do not understand why some people are able to recover from Ebola and others are not, but the access to medical care is very different in the United States than in some West African countries and the more extensive care may play a role.

The reality is that the chances of more cases in the United States is low, while the outbreak in West Africa continues. Ebola is only spread through direct

contact with the bodily fluids, such as blood, urine, vomit, and saliva, of someone who is sick with Ebola. A patient cannot transmit Ebola to anyone else until they exhibit symptoms, unlike some illnesses. Ebola is not transmitted through air, water, or food. All travelers from outbreak affected countries are being routed through five airports for entry screening in the United States—Chicago’s O’Hare, Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson, New York’s JFK, Newark, and Washington’s Dulles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) staff are screening travelers for symptoms as well as providing them with information about monitoring for illness. State and local health departments will then be involved in following anyone who may have potentially been exposed to someone with Ebola for 21 days.

In New Hampshire, public health officials at DHHS and the Manchester and Nashua Health Departments have been working with hospitals, other State agencies, first responders, federal officials, clinicians, and schools to share information, ensure appropriate plans are in place, and to practice procedures to make sure New Hampshire is prepared in case there is ever an Ebola patient in the Granite State.

For more information about Ebola and this outbreak, visit www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/ebola/index.htm or the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola.



Quitting Tobacco

The DHHS Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is offering free nicotine replacement therapy, in the form of the patch, to NH residents who want to quit smoking or chewing tobacco. For those whose New Year’s resolution is to quit smoking, they are in good company. It is a popular goal and many, many people succeed. Although 16.2% of New Hampshire adults currently smoke, there are more former smokers (31%) in the State. Planning ahead to quit tobacco use can help make this healthy resolution a reality. Two good resources to help people quit are www.TryToStopNH.org and 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), where any resident can get free advice, counseling, support, and while supplies last, free patches.



“Making a quit plan can be a step toward a successful quit,” said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at DHHS. “And quitting with both counseling and

nicotine replacement therapy will increase the odds of a successful quit. The Department currently offers free tobacco treatment counseling and nicotine replacement patches to residents who call 1-800-QUIT-NOW and are eligible.”

To be eligible for the free patches, residents must be at least 18, be ready to quit within 30 days, be willing to participate in free telephone counseling, and be screened for safe use of the patch. There are more former smokers in the U.S.—nearly 50 million—than current smokers. Planning ahead can help make your healthy resolution a reality. For inspiration, look to successful quitters. Beatrice, a busy mother of two boys, shared her quit story in CDC’s Tips From Former Smokers campaign www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/videos/beatrice-videos.html.

For more information about the DHHS Division of Public Health Services or the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program visit www.dhhs.nh.gov.