

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.

Diabetes Prevention

A recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stated that the number of people in the United States with diabetes now tops 29 million, which includes 12.3% of the adult population in the country. This means one in every eight American adults has diabetes. Another 86 million adults, or one third of the entire population of the country, have blood sugar levels high enough to be classified as pre-diabetes. Nine out of ten of these people don't even know they have it.

Diabetes is a disorder that makes the body unable to process blood sugar, the fuel for our bodies that



comes from digested food. With the help of a hormone called insulin, which is produced by an organ called the pancreas, different cells can use the blood sugar, also called glucose, for energy. When the pancreas does not make insulin, or enough insulin, or the body does not respond to insulin, this glucose builds up in the bloodstream. Over time this damages nerves and blood vessels and can cause heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, dental problems, and lead to amputations.

Important Dates

July is Fireworks Safety Month

National Council on Fireworks Safety

www.fireworkssafety.org

July is UV Safety Month

American Academy of Ophthalmology

www.aao.org

July is Eye Injury Prevention Month

Federal Occupational Health

www.foh.dhhs.gov/Public/NYCU/eyeinjury.asp

August is National Breastfeeding Month

United States Breastfeeding Committee

www.usbreastfeeding.org

August is National Immunization Awareness Month

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/vaccines

August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

Prevent Blindness America

www.preventblindness.org

August 1-7 is World Breastfeeding Week

La Leche League International

www.llli.org

“The rapid increase in the number of cases of diabetes in the U.S. is alarming,” said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at the NH Department of Health and Human Services. “This is a difficult disease to manage for doctors and patients and comes with a high cost, both to our healthcare system and in lives lost. I urge everyone to look at their risk factors, talk with their healthcare providers, and make some changes to reduce their chances of developing diabetes.”

Scientists are not yet sure of the actions in the body that cause diabetes, but they believe genes and environmental factors both contribute. There are two main types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2. Type 1 is an autoimmune disease that results in the destruction of



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the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas called beta cells. Type 1 diabetes typically occurs in children and young adults, though it can appear at any age. In type 2 diabetes, the most common form, is the result of a combination of factors. Doctors are not sure of the exact cause, but insulin resistance develops, meaning the tissues of the body, such as muscle and liver, cannot use insulin effectively anymore. The body therefore produces more insulin in response. When the body can no longer produce enough insulin to compensate for this inability to use insulin, type 2 diabetes is the result. Symptoms can be subtle and many people with type 2 diabetes go undiagnosed for years.

There are risk factors for type 2 diabetes, however, the most common one being overweight or obesity. Once virtually unheard of in young people, type 2 diabetes is becoming more common in overweight and obese children and adolescents. Some other risk factors are genetics, poor diet, lack of exercise, and certain ethnicities, such as Pacific Islanders, African Americans, and Alaska Natives.

Some steps people can take to help reduce their chances of developing diabetes include:

- losing weight
- maintaining a healthy weight
- exercising regularly
- eating a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables

To learn more, speak with your healthcare provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/diabetes or the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services website at www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdpc/diabetes/index.htm.

MERS-CoV Update

Since the MERS-CoV virus emerged in the Middle East in 2012, it has infected at least 700 cases of infection have been identified in people and 250 deaths. The MERS, for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, coronavirus is related to the SARS virus that caused an epidemic in 2002–03, but scientists have not yet determined where it came from. The virus has been found in camels and there is research being conducted to determine if people are catching the disease from these

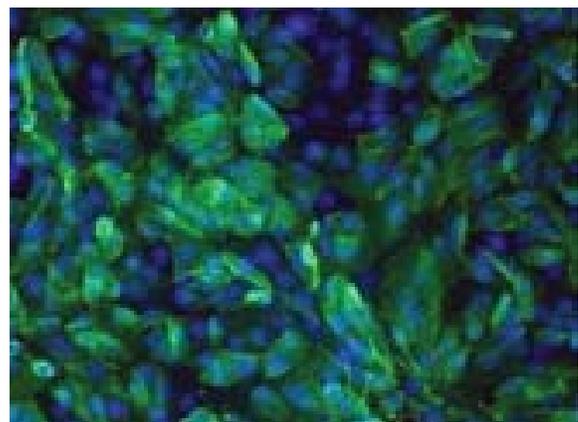
animals. Coronaviruses are from a virus family related to the common cold.

The MERS-CoV virus causes severe respiratory illness in patients. Most of the cases have been in Middle Eastern countries (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen). Travel to these countries, or contact with someone who has, has brought cases to other countries including Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, the Philippines, and even the United States.

The virus does not transmit easily between people. The two cases recently identified in the United States, in Indiana and Florida, were the result of travel to Saudi Arabia, and no transmission to other people was identified from these two cases.

Symptoms caused by the virus can include fever, cough, respiratory infection, difficulty breathing, or other acute lung infection–related illness. People are not at risk if they have not traveled recently to the Middle East or have not come in contact with someone who has who has a respiratory illness.

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control is tracking this virus closely and is in contact regularly with health officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html or www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/mers.htm.



Immunization Awareness Month

Children

You want to do what is best for your children. You know about the importance of car seats, baby gates, and other ways to keep them safe. But, did you know that one of the best ways to protect your children is to make sure they have **all** of their vaccinations?

Immunizations can save your child's life. Because of advances in medical science, your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children are no longer common in the U.S.—primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. Polio is one example of the great impact that vaccines have had in the United States. Polio was once America's most-feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country, but today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccination is very safe and effective. Vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and health care professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of injection, but this is minimal compared with the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent. Serious side effects following vaccination, such as severe allergic reaction, are very rare. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

Immunization protects others you care about. Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, we have seen resurgences of measles and whooping cough (pertussis) over the past few years. For example, more than 48,000 cases of whooping cough were reported in the U.S. in 2012. During this time, 20 deaths were reported—the majority of these deaths were in children younger than 3 months of age. Unfortunately, some babies are too young to be completely vaccinated and some people may not be able to receive certain vaccinations due to severe allergies, weakened immune systems from conditions such as leukemia, or other reasons. To help keep them safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be denied attendance at schools or daycare facilities. Your child will be excluded from attendance if a case of vaccine-preventable illness occurs in your child's school and they are not vaccinated, for their own safety. Some vaccine-preventable diseases can result in prolonged disabilities and can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills or long-term disability care. Getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and is covered by the Vaccines for

national
IMMUNIZATION
awareness month



VACCINES

are not just for kids.



Children (VFC) program in New Hampshire, so there is no charge for childhood vaccines up through age 18.

Immunization protects future generations.

Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists in people. By vaccinating children against rubella (German measles), the risk that pregnant women will pass this virus on to their fetus or newborn has been dramatically decreased, and birth defects associated with that virus are rarely seen in the U.S. If we continue vaccinating now, and vaccinating completely, parents in the future may be able to trust that some of the diseases of today will no longer be around to harm children in the future.

Children, Preteens, and Teens

As they get older, kids are at increased risk for some infections. Plus the protection provided by some of the childhood vaccines begins to wear off, so kids need a booster dose. You may have heard about pertussis (whooping cough) outbreaks recently. Vaccine-preventable diseases are still real. The vaccines for preteens and teens can help protect your kids, as well as their friends, community, and other family members.

There are four recommended vaccines that preteens should get when they are 11–12 years old. Plus it's not too late to get any shots they may have missed. You can use any health care visit, including sports physicals or some sick visits, to get the shots your kids need. The vaccines for preteens and teens are:

- **HPV vaccine for both boys and girls**, which protects against the types of HPV that most commonly cause cancer. HPV can cause cancers of the cervix, vulva and vagina in women and cancers of the penis in men. In both women and men, HPV also causes mouth/throat cancer, anal cancer and genital warts.
- **Tdap vaccine**, which is a booster against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Pertussis, or

whooping cough, can keep kids out of school and activities for weeks. It can also be spread to babies, and this can be very dangerous and sometimes deadly.

- **Meningococcal vaccine**, which protects against meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria and is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis – a serious infection around the brain and spinal cord.
- **Influenza (flu) vaccine**, because even healthy kids can get the flu, and it can be serious. All kids, including your preteens and teens, should get the flu vaccine *every year*.

Talk with a doctor, nurse, or clinic about the vaccines for preteens and teens. Even though they may not realize it, your kids still need you for more than getting a ride somewhere. They need you to continue protecting their health by getting them these important and life-saving vaccines.

Adults

Adults are not getting the vaccines they need.

The latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that vaccination rates for adults are extremely low. For example, rates for Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) and zoster (shingles) vaccination are 20% or less for adults who are recommended to get them. Even high-risk groups are not getting the vaccines they need—only 20% of adults 64 years or younger who are high risk for complications from pneumococcal disease are vaccinated. This means that each year tens of thousands of adults needlessly suffer, are hospitalized, and even die as a result of diseases that could be prevented by vaccines. Most adults, however, don't realize that they need vaccines. A recent national survey revealed that most adults were not aware of recommended vaccines beyond influenza.

For more information about the importance of immunization, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. To visit the DHHS Immunization Program website go to www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/index.htm.