

Public Health News

C O O P E R C O U N T Y P U B L I C H E A L T H C E N T E R

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Have regular physical exams to help prevent and control high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Medical Transportation provided by Services for Independent Living on Mondays in Cooper and Howard County.

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FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH

According to the Center For Disease Control (CDC), all people can take steps to reduce their risk of heart disease and heart attack. While there are uncontrollable risk factors such as age, sex, race, past history of heart attack, there are still things that you can do to decrease your risk:

1. **Prevent and control high blood cholesterol.** High blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease. Preventing and treating high blood cholesterol includes eating a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber, keeping a healthy weight, and getting regular exercise. All adults should have their cholesterol levels checked once every five years. If yours is high, your doctor may prescribe medicines to help lower it .
2. **Prevent and control high blood pressure.** Lifestyle actions such as healthy diet, regular physical activity, not smoking, and healthy weight will help you to keep normal blood pressure levels. All adults

should have their blood pressure checked on a regular basis.

3. **Prevent and control diabetes.** People with diabetes have an increased risk of heart disease but can reduce their risk. Also, people can take steps to reduce their risk for diabetes in the first place, through weight loss and regular physical activity.
4. **No tobacco.** Smoking increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. Never smoking is one of the best things a person can do to lower their risk. And, quitting smoking will also help lower a person's risk of heart disease. A person's risk of heart attack decreases soon after quitting. If you smoke, your doctor can suggest programs to help you quit smoking.
5. **Moderate alcohol use.** Excessive alcohol use increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke. People who drink should do so only in moderation and

always responsibly.

6. **Maintain a healthy weight.** Healthy weight status in adults is usually assessed by using weight and height to compute the body mass index. An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese. Overweight is a BMI between 25 and 29.9. Normal weight is a BMI of 18 to 24.9. Proper diet and regular physical activity can help to maintain a healthy weight.
7. **Regular physical activity.** Adults should engage in moderate level physical activities for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
8. **Diet and Nutrition.** Along with healthy weight and regular physical activity, an overall healthy diet can help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels and prevent obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. This includes eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, lowering saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.

THYROID DISEASE



Hypothyroidism is a very common medical condition. Over five million Americans may be affected with this condition.

Your thyroid is a small butterfly-shaped gland located just below your Adam's apple. Although it weighs less than an ounce, it has an enormous impact on your health and your body's metabolism.

When your thyroid produces too much of the hormone thyroxine, a condition called **hyperthyroidism** results. Hyperthyroidism can accelerate your body's metabolism causing sudden weight loss, rapid heart rate or irregular rhythm, sweating, and nervousness or irritability. Other symptoms associated with hyperthyroidism include increased sensitivity to heat, more frequent bowel movements, changes in menstrual patterns, and difficulty

sleeping.

The most common cause of hyperthyroidism is Grave's disease. Grave's disease occurs when your immune system mistakenly attacks your thyroid gland and causes it to overproduce thyroxine. Doctors don't know what causes Grave's disease and there is no cure. However, there are several treatments to control the condition including the use of radioactive iodine, beta blockers, anti-thyroid medications, and surgery.

Hypothyroidism is the result of the thyroid gland producing too little thyroxine. The signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism vary widely depending on the severity of the hormone deficiency. In general, symptoms include fatigue, increased sensitivity to cold, unexplained weight gain, muscle aches and weakness, heavier than normal menstrual periods, and depression.

There may be a number of factors that lead to hypothyroidism including Hashimoto's thyroiditis (an autoimmune disorder leading to inflammation of the thyroid). Underproduction of thyroid hormones can lead to an overproduction of the Thyroid Stimu-

lating Hormone (TSH), which can lead to the formation of a goiter (enlarged thyroid gland). Treatment for hypothyroidism may include radiation therapy, thyroid surgery, and/or medications. Levothyroxine, a synthetic thyroid hormone, treatment is usually lifelong.

Diagnosis of both conditions is usually based on physical exam, symptoms, and a simple blood test. Call your health care provider for more information.

The thyroid gland controls your body's metabolism"

TAKE FOLIC ACID BEFORE YOU'RE PREGNANT!

The January 2007 issue of Public Health News contained articles on the importance of taking folic acid supplements daily to prevent the birth defects referred to as neural tube defects (NTD).

Spina Bifida occurs when the neural tube, which forms the brain and spinal cord, fails to close properly. The closing of

the neural tube is normally complete by the 28th day after conception. **Before a woman knows that she is pregnant.** Anencephaly is a more severe form of this birth defect.

During the course of the year all clients that come to the clinic for pregnancy testing are asked the same question: "Do you take a multi-vitamin

containing folic acid daily?" Unfortunately, 90% to 95% of women that come to the clinic for pregnancy testing are not currently taking a folic acid supplement. And, approximately 90% to 95% of these women did not plan their pregnancy. Women in Cooper County are still not aware of this vital information. It is strongly recommended that all

women and girls of child-bearing age to take heart to this Public Health message: **One in every 2000 babies are born with a Neural tube defect. Taking 400 mcg of folic acid daily could prevent your baby from being the one affected.**

Call us at 660-882-2626 for more information.

I N F L U E N Z A V A C C I N E – I T ’ S N O T T O O L A T E



**Flu Clinic—Wednesday, February 13th
9:00 to 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.**

Although October or November is the

best time to get vaccinated against seasonal influenza, you can still get vaccinated in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

We have had some laboratory confirmed cases of influenza in Cooper County. So if you are planning to get a flu shot, now is a good time to do it.

Cooper County Public Health Center will be hosting one last walk-in flu clinic on Wednesday, February 13th from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. For Children over 3 years of age and adults. We do still have a few doses of preservative free vaccine available for infants 6 to 35 months of age. Please call to check on availability of that vaccine and to schedule an appointment.

If you cannot attend the flu clinic, please call us at 660-882-2626 to schedule an appointment.

H O W I S F L U S P R E A D ?

The flu usually spreads from person to person in respiratory droplets when people who are infected cough or sneeze.

People may occasionally become infected by touching something with influenza virus on it and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Healthy adults may be able to infect others 1 day before getting symptoms and up to 5 days after getting sick. Therefore, it is possible to give

someone the flu before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick.

The following steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illness such as the flu:

- **Cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.**
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water,** especially after you cough or

sneeze.

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- **If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings.**
- **Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.

“If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings.”



C E R V I C A L C A N C E R S C R E E N I N G

Cervical cancer screening is an important tool in the prevention of cervical cancer because there are often no symptoms in the early stages of the disease. Symptoms that may be present include: bleeding, pain during intercourse, and vaginal discharge. Advanced symptoms may include: loss of appetite, weight loss, fatigue, pelvic pain, back pain, leg pain, heavy bleeding, or leaking of urine or feces.

According to the American Cancer Society, risk factors for cervical cancer include: human papilloma virus (HPV) infection, smoking, HIV infection, Chlamydia infection, dietary factors, hormonal contraception, multiple pregnancies, and a family history of cervical cancer. The high-risk strains of HPV that are

prime risk factors for cervical cancer include 16, 18, & 31. Although, there are 12 other types that are classified as high risk. The HPV virus is thought to trigger alterations in the cells of the cervix that lead to the development of cervical Intra-epithelial neoplasia and cancer. Condom use does not always prevent transmission of the

HPV virus because HPV can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact with infected areas. The best prevention is **awareness** of the link between HPV and cervical cancer, **yearly pap tests**—after becoming sexually active, and **getting vaccinated** against HPV. Call the health department at **660-882-2626** for more information on the Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine or to schedule an appointment.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Public Health Makes Life Better

Cooper County Public Health Center Annual Report for 2007 is now available. Interested persons may pick up a copy in the office between 9 a.m. and 5p.m.—Monday through Friday. The office is closed from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. for lunch.

A VALUABLE SERVICE AT NO COST

The Services for Independent Living received a grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health to expand their transportation program into rural counties. They found, through surveys and community needs assessments, that medical transportation for people with disabilities is almost non-existent. Their main goal is to provide **non-emergency medical transportation to at least ten (10) individuals with disabilities on a weekly basis in each of the following counties:**

- Cooper & Howard Counties—Monday
- Callaway & Montgomery Counties—Tuesday

- Audrain County—Wednesday
- Rural Boone County—Thursday
- Randolph County—Friday

There is no cost associated with this service, so the adage “nothing is for free” does not apply. **The only eligibility criteria is that the rider is a person with a disability.** Of course, if you have someone that accompanies you to the appointment, that is allowable also. Their vehicles are lift-equipped and are driven by experienced professionals. The schedule is included to assist you with making your medical appointments. Transportation is provided on a first-come first-serve basis — so

make your reservations quickly.

The Services for Independent Living requests that you call them afterward to let them know how you felt about your experience with them and to schedule another ride.

For more information or to schedule a ride call **573-874-1646**, extension **233**.



Medical Transportation for People with Disabilities — provided by Services for Independent Living