

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.

Adults Need Vaccines Too

Immunizations are not just for children. Protection from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time. You may also be at risk for vaccine-preventable disease due to your age, job, lifestyle, travel, or health conditions. Adult immunizations are important to help keep people from getting and spreading serious diseases that could result in poor health, missed work, medical bills, or not being able to care for family.

There are certain vaccines that are expressly for adults, such as the pneumococcal vaccine to guard against pneumonia, because adults, especially seniors, are more susceptible. Sometimes there are vaccines that need to be given as a booster because the effectiveness of some childhood vaccines can wear off, such as pertussis, also known as whooping cough. Other vaccines we all need at regular intervals no matter what our age, such as tetanus and the flu vaccine.

There are seven vaccines that adults should receive according to their age, either as a child or after the age of 19. Anyone 6 months or older needs a seasonal flu (influenza) vaccine every year. Flu vaccine is especially important for people with chronic health conditions,



Important Dates

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

www.marchofdimes.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/prevention.html

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

National Cervical Cancer Coalition

www.nccc-online.org

January 8–14 is National Folic Acid Awareness Week

National Birth Defects Prevention Network

www.nbdpn.org/faaw.php

February is American Heart Month

American Heart Association

www.americanheart.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/heartdisease

February is National Cancer Prevention Month

American Institute for Cancer Research

www.aicr.org

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

February is National Children's Dental Health Month

American Dental Association

www.ada.org

February 3 is National Wear Red Day

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Health Information Center

www.hearttruth.gov

www.womenheart.org

www.goredforwomen.org



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pregnant women, and older adults.

Every adult should get the Tdap vaccine, if they did not receive it as an adolescent, to protect against pertussis (whooping cough), and then a Td (tetanus, diphtheria) booster shot every 10 years.

In addition, women should get the Tdap vaccine each time they are pregnant, preferably between 27 and 36 weeks. Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, is a respiratory disease caused by *Bordetella pertussis* bacterium. Whooping cough is particularly serious for infants and young children. It can cause extreme coughing, hospitalization, and even death.

The HPV, or human papilloma virus, which protects against the human papilloma viruses that causes most cervical cancers, anal cancer, and genital warts, is recommended for adults 19–26 years of age if they did not receive it as an adolescent.

An estimated 1 million Americans get shingles every year, and half of them are 60 years or older. Not everyone knows that there is a vaccine to protect against it. The vaccine is for people 60 years and older even if they do not remember having had chicken pox, because most everyone is exposed in their lifetime.

Pneumococcal vaccines protect against pneumococcal disease, including infections in the lungs and bloodstream. The vaccines are recommended for all adults over 65 years of age and for adults younger than 65 who have certain chronic health conditions. Check with your health care provider.

The measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine is important for adults born in the U.S. in 1957 or later who have not received the MMR vaccine or who had lab tests that showed that they are not immune to measles.

The chicken pox (or varicella) vaccine is recommended for adults unless they:

- Were U.S.-born before 1980, except health care personnel and pregnant women
- Have a history of varicella based on diagnosis or verification of varicella disease by a health care provider;
- Have a history of herpes zoster based on diagnosis or verification of herpes zoster by a health care provider; or

- Have laboratory evidence of immunity or laboratory confirmation of disease

People with chronic medical conditions may need certain vaccines. These conditions include diabetes, COPD, asthma, and cardiac disease or being a smoker. You should always speak with your health care provider about what vaccines you may need. There are some people who should not be vaccinated. They include adults with specific health conditions who should not get certain vaccines or who should wait to get them.

For more information on vaccinations visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines or <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/adults.htm>.

Winter Weather Safety



In New Hampshire, winter brings its share of dangers even for life-long, hardy New Englanders. Here are some steps to take to make sure you and your family are safe this season.

Your Home

There are certain actions you should take to make sure your home is safe during the winter months, such as: have your heating system serviced by a professional to make sure it is clean and in proper working order; inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys; install a smoke detector on every floor if you don't have one

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already, and if you do check the batteries every month; have a safe alternate heating source and alternate fuel available in case of extended power outages; and install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector on each floor. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly. It is emitted by the burning of fossil fuels and the symptoms of CO poisoning include: headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Never use grills, camp stoves, or generators indoors, including in the garage or basement. Locate generators at least 20 feet from the house when in use. Get everyone out of your home immediately if the CO detector sounds and call 911.

Your Car

When traveling, be aware of current local weather conditions and forecasts. Keep your gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines. Use a wintertime formula for your windshield wiper fluid. Keep an emergency kit in your car in case you get stranded, which should include: cell phone and charger, blankets or extra clothes, food and water, booster cables, flares, tire pump, bag of sand or cat litter for traction, flashlight, first-aid kit, cash, and trash bags. If you must travel during a storm, inform a friend or relative of your proposed route and expected time of arrival. If you become stranded in your car, follow these safety rules:

- Stay in your car unless safety is no more than 100 yards away, but continue to move your arms and legs.
- Put a bright cloth on the antenna, turning on the inside light when the engine is running, and raising the hood when the snow stops falling.
- Make sure the tailpipe does not become blocked with snow.
- Run the engine and heater only 10 minutes every hour.
- Keep a downwind window cracked open for air.

Emergency Kit

It is important to prepare for emergencies, storms, and power outages year round, but especially in the winter because lack of power during cold weather is a danger and traveling may be difficult or impossible.

Therefore, everyone should keep a supply of food on hand that needs no cooking or refrigeration and water stored in clean containers. Have a battery-powered radio on hand with extra batteries. Have a first aid kit, extra pet food, extra baby supplies, medications, and cash on hand. Fill your car with gas before a storm and charge your cell phones.

You

When you are outside, whether at work or play, wear appropriate outdoor clothing for the weather. If you are going to be away from home, bring a change of clothes that are likely to get wet, because being wet will make you colder much more quickly. Wear layers of light, warm clothing, including waterproof boots. When participating in outdoor recreation, bring someone with you and carry a cell phone. Get a weather report before leaving.

Your Pets

Cold weather and ice and snow can be hard on pets too. Make sure they have enough water to drink because cold, dry air can make them more thirsty. Check their paws for ice or cuts if they are limping. Bring pets inside during cold weather or storms.

For more information, visit the NH Department of Health and Human Services at www.dhhs.nh.gov/tips/wintertips.htm.



Tobacco Report Shows Increase in Tobacco Use Among Young People in New Hampshire

New Hampshire tobacco retail sales to youth were higher in 2015 compared with the previous year, according to a new report from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A survey of 338 randomly selected licensed tobacco outlets across the State found that 16.6% of tobacco retail sales in 2015 were to children under that age of 18, an uptick from 2014, when 14.4% of sales were to youth.

“We’ve seen a slight but troubling increase in tobacco sales to young adults in recent years,” said Joe Harding, Director of the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services at DHHS. “Using tobacco is unsafe at any age, but poses a greater risk to the developing brains of New Hampshire youth. As a result, DHHS is working with the Division of Liquor Enforcement to develop a more diverse array of products and tools to educate merchants and youth.”

The number of sales to youth is not the same as actual tobacco use among youth. According to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), the rates of youth smoking in New Hampshire have declined 10.5% more than the past five years, from 27.9% in 2011 to 17.4% in 2015.

However, while use of tobacco products among youth is on the decline, some young smokers purchase products directly from a licensed tobacco retailer. Data from the 2015 YRBS shows that 13.6% of the 14,837 students who answered this question report they get their cigarettes from a store or gas station, indicating a need to improve merchant education and enforcement in New Hampshire.

“Obviously we strive for 100 percent compliance with New Hampshire’s tobacco laws, but these data show we have work to do,” Harding said. “We understand that some retailers struggle with turnover and we are developing tools to help them train staff and educate the public about the State’s tobacco laws and related penalties.”

The data were captured by the Synar compliance check program, a federally mandated effort from

the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), and includes reports from 338 merchants randomly selected out of 1,488 tobacco-licensed outlets across the State. In accordance with federal tobacco regulations, states are required to provide detailed information on progress made in enforcing youth tobacco access laws.

To read the full version of the 2017 NH Synar Results, visit the DHHS BDAS data page at www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bdas/data.htm.



New Hampshire Sixth Healthiest State According to New Study

The 2016 version of the United Health Foundation’s *America’s Health Rankings* report gives New Hampshire an overall sixth-place ranking among the 50 states and D.C. This year’s report looks at various health measure such as drug deaths, smoking, and obesity as well as environmental factors including air pollution levels, children in poverty, and certain infectious diseases. Policies including immunization rates, funding for public health, and lack of insurance were also reviewed. Clinical care measures, such as access to dental care, low birthweight babies, and preventable hospitalizations, as much as outcomes including diabetes, cardiovascular deaths and cancer rounded out the areas the report covers.

New Hampshire scored fifth in 2012, 2013, and 2015, but seventh in 2014, which are all increases from 2011 when the State was second. The benchmarks change slightly from year to year. To read the entire report go to www.americashealthrankings.org/.