

FOCUS

On Public Health

Cherokee County Health Department

Wise Words from Dr. Bone

By: M.A. Bone, MD

When Smokers Quit!

An interesting graph was recently distributed by the American Cancer Society (ACS) which showed the benefits one receives by ceasing to smoke.

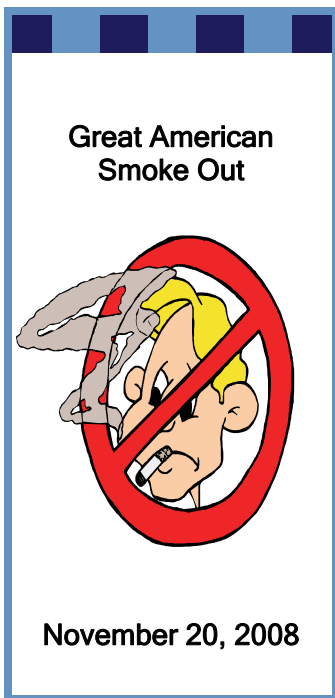
- 20 minutes after the last cigarette, blood pressure drops to normal, the pulse rate returns to normal, and body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal.
- 8 hours later - the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal and the oxygen level increases to normal.
- 24 hours later - chances of heart attack decreases
- 48 hours later - nerve endings start re-growing. The senses of taste and smell are enhanced.

- 2 weeks to 3 months later - circulation improves, walking becomes easier and lung function increases up to 30 percent.
- 1 to 9 months later - coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decrease. Cilia re-grow in the lungs increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs and reduce infection. The body's overall energy increases.
- 1 year later - excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker.
- 5 years later - lung cancer death rate for an average smoker (one pack daily) decreases. Stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker after 5-15 years of not smoking. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus is

half that of a smoker.

- 10 years later - the lung cancer death rate is similar to that of non smokers. Precancerous cells are replaced. Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases.
- 15 years plus - the risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker.

These benefits certainly out weigh the risks of smoking. Don't you agree? If you know someone who wants to quit smoking, share this information and encourage participation in the Great American Smoke out sponsored by the ACS on November 20th, 2008!



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Comments from the PHP Coordinator

By: Rhonda Jones

Welcome to the updated version of Cherokee County Health Department's (CCHD) quarterly newsletter. For the past four years, *Focus*

on Preparedness has been published by the Public Health Preparedness (PHP) Department. We have tried to keep you informed on matters of

preparedness and educate you on a variety of diseases and food safety issues.

In an effort to provide you (Continued on page 4)

Food Safety Tips

By: Charlotte Sanders

Each year around the holidays we receive all kinds of tips on food safety. This is good but I want to provide you with basic safety guidelines to use all the time - not just "around holidays".

When you purchase foods at the store, be sure to **keep raw meats separate** from other foods (especially produce) in your shopping cart and grocery bags. Raw meats that are wrapped for display often leak. Put meat into a plastic bag to prevent drips that may contaminate other food.



When preparing food, always **wash hands** before you begin to prepare food and after

handling raw meats. Use warm water, soap and paper towels. **Keep your kitchen and utensils clean.** Sanitize cutting boards, knives and countertops that come into contact with raw meat by using a solution of bleach water (1 tsp/gallon) or antibacterial cleaner. Do not re-use wash cloths after wiping countertops, especially after cleaning up raw meat juice.

Always **wash all produce**, especially if it is to be eaten raw. Produce should be washed by thorough rinsing in running water with manual agitation rather than by soaking in standing water. Tough-skinned produce, such as melons, should be scrubbed by a brush or cloth during washing.

Cook food thoroughly to safe temperatures. *USE A FOOD THERMOMETER!* These temperatures are

recommendations for consumers from the USDA:

- Whole turkey or chicken - 180 degrees F (minimum)
- Ground turkey or chicken - 165 degrees F (minimum)
- Casseroles or stuffing - 165 degrees F (minimum)
- Pork - 160 degrees F (minimum)
- Ground meat or egg dishes- 160 degrees F (minimum)
- All other meat products - 145 degrees F (minimum)

Refrigerate foods immediately. Do not leave food on the counter to "cool down". Break solid food (meat) into small pieces and cool in uncovered containers in the refrigerator. Only cover the container after the food is below 41 degrees F.

When serving food, do not allow perishable food to sit at room temperature **for more than two hours.** Keep track. After two hours, refrigerate, reheat or throw it away. Arrange and serve food on several small platters instead of one large one. Keep the rest of the food either hot or cold. **Keep hot foods hot** (above 140 degrees F)! Use warming trays, etc., if possible. **Keep cold foods cold.** Nest dishes in bowls of ice, if possible.

Refrigerate leftovers immediately. Reheat all leftovers (or previously cooked foods) to at least **165 degrees F.**



Each year over 200,000 people are hospitalized with the flu in the U.S. And of the millions of people who become sick with the flu, 36,000 will die. Although the highest rate of infection occurs in children, the elderly, and those with

chronic diseases and weakened immune systems, **anyone can get the flu.**

Influenza and other respiratory infections are spread from person-to-person by tiny droplets that are sent through the

air when an infected person talks, sneezes, coughs, or laughs. Flu can also be spread when a person touches a surface with the virus on it then touches their eyes, nose or mouth. Influenza can be spread before the

infected person even knows they are sick.

People become ill 1 to 4 days after the flu virus enters the body and symptoms usually come on quickly. Symptoms may include: high fever, (Continued on page 6)



Flu Facts

By: Rhonda Jones



Immunization Awareness

By: Serena Perez



Vaccines are available through the Cherokee County Health Department (CCHD) in Rusk and Jacksonville. Vaccines are available to children at no cost if they have Medicaid. For children who do not have Medicaid the cost is \$7 for 1 vaccine and \$10 for multiple vaccines. These vaccines are offered to the public through the Texas Vaccine for Children program. Please contact CCHD for further details.

CCHD also has many vaccines available for adults. Influenza vaccine costs \$20 and pneumococcal vaccine costs \$30.00 if they are private paid, but there is no charge to the client if they have Medicare Part B as a primary for payment. Please contact either CCHD location for more information.

Rusk 903-683-4688

Jacksonville 903-586-6191

How can parents sort out conflicting information about vaccines?

Decisions about vaccine safety must be based on well-controlled scientific studies. Parents are often confronted with “scientific” information found on television, on the internet, in magazines and in books that conflicts with information provided by healthcare professionals. But few parents have the background in microbiology, immunology, epidemiology and statistics to separate good scientific studies from poor studies. Parents and physicians benefit from the expert guidance of specialist with experience and training in these disciplines.

Committees of these experts are composed of scientists, clinicians and other caregivers who are as passionately devoted to our children’s health as they are to their own

children’s health. They serve the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/nip), the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org) and other groups. These organizations provide excellent information to parents and healthcare professionals through their web sites. Their task is to determine whether scientific studies are carefully performed, published in reputable journals and, most importantly, reproducible. Information that fails to meet these standards is viewed as unreliable.

When it comes to issues of vaccine safety, these groups have served us well. They were the first to figure out that intestinal blockage was a rare consequence of the first rotavirus vaccine, and the vaccine was quickly discontinued. Also, they recommended a change

from the oral polio vaccine, which was a rare cause of paralysis, to the polio shot when it was clear that the risks of the oral polio vaccine outweighed its benefits.

These groups have also investigated possible relationships between vaccine and asthma, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, SIDS and autism. No studies have reliably established a causal link between vaccines and these diseases - if they did, the questioned vaccines would be withdrawn from use.

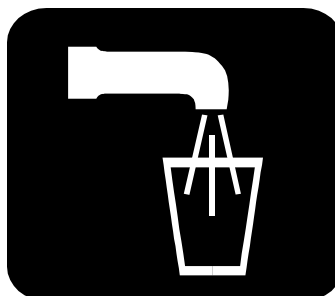
*Credit given to ‘The Vaccine Education Center at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’

Handy Hints for Preparedness

Purifying Water

It is possible that potable (safe drinking) water may be in short supply or unavailable during an emergency. The following methods can be used to purify water that is available for drinking, cooking or medical use.

- Heat water to a rolling boil for 1 minute then cool



- Use water purification tablets
- Add 8 drops of unscented liquid bleach per gallon of water (16 drops if the water is cloudy)
- Let the bleach/water solution stand for 30 minutes. If the solution does not smell or taste of bleach, add another 6 drops of bleach and let the solution stand for another 15 minutes before using.



Breast Cancer Update

By: Pam Davis



According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most common cancer for women in the United States. The chance of a woman developing breast cancer in her lifetime is 1 in 8. The chance of dying from breast cancer is about 1 in 35. More than 40,000 women will die from the disease this year. The good news is that breast cancer death rates are going down which is probably the results of earlier detection and improved treatments. Currently there are over 2.5 million breast cancer survivors living in the U.S.

If you're worried about developing breast cancer, or if you know someone who has been diagnosed with the disease, one way

to deal with your concerns is to get as much information as possible. A good source of information is the American Cancer Society website at <http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp>

Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that grows in one or both of the breasts. Most breast cancers usually develop in the ducts or lobules, also known as the milk-producing areas of the breast. In a few cases, the cancer develops in other breast tissues.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women (after lung cancer). Although African-American women have a

slightly lower incidence of breast cancer after age 40 than Caucasian women, they have a slightly higher incidence rate of breast cancer before age 40. However, African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer at every age. Breast cancer is much less common in males. By comparison, the disease is about 100 times more common in women than men.

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Services program (BCCS) offers clinical breast examinations, mammograms, pelvic examinations, and Pap tests throughout Texas at low-cost to [eligible](#) women. BCCS is partly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention.

BCCS screening and diagnostic services are provided to low income women with no health insurance. Services are provided in Texas at more than 200 local and regional health departments, community health centers, university-based teaching institutions, public and private hospitals, and other community based organizations. Cherokee County Health Department is a contractor for the BCCS program. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 903-683-4688 or 903-586-6191.

Comments from the PHP Coordinator Continued

THANK YOU

to all the volunteer nurses who work in hurricane shelters.

**You Are
The Best!**

with even more pertinent information, we have decided to expand our newsletter. Along with our new name, *Focus on Public Health*, will come articles from other programs at CCHD. We hope you find our efforts enlightening and informative.

Now on to preparedness issues. Hurricanes Gustav and Ike kept many of us busy during

September. I would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to all of the nurses who answered the call to work in Red Cross Shelters set up at Rusk Church of Christ, Central Baptist Church and First Methodist Church in Jacksonville. These nurses happily gave their time (many working multiple shifts), energy, and compassion to strangers who were in need.

I would also like to give kudos to the shelter managers who provided great leadership during a very difficult event.

Well done everyone!



Disease 101: Pertussis

By: Rhonda Jones

Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious infection of the respiratory system. It is caused by the *Bordetella pertussis* bacterium which lives in the mouth, nose and throat of infected persons. The bacteria are spread when tiny drops of fluid from the mouth and nose become airborne during coughing, sneezing or laughing. Other people become infected by inhaling the drops or by getting the drops on their hands and touching their mouths or noses.

Before vaccinations were available, pertussis killed 5,000 to 10,000 people in the U.S. every year. Now less than 30 deaths are attributed to pertussis yearly. Despite the effectiveness of the pertussis vaccine, immunity following vaccination is not lifelong. Neither is immunity following actually having the disease.

The first symptoms are similar to a common cold - a runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever, and a mild occasional cough. Symptoms usually appear 5 to 10 days after exposure, but can take as

long as 21 days. The cough gradually becomes severe and after 1 - 2 weeks the patient has coughing spells which can last for more than a minute. The characteristic high-pitched "whoop", which is more common in children, comes from breathing in after a coughing spell. The patient may turn blue, vomit, and become exhausted. Between coughing spells the patient usually appears normal. Coughing spells will increase in frequency for a couple of weeks, remain the same for 2 to 3 weeks, then gradually decrease. After the onset of pertussis, coughing spells can recur for months. Cough medicines usually do not help this kind of cough. Persons with pertussis are most infectious during the early stages of the illness up to about 2 weeks after the cough begins.

Although most people recover, complication of pertussis can be severe. It can be a critical illness in children younger than 1 year of age or those with lung disease. Less serious complications can include ear infections, loss of appetite and dehydration.

Pertussis is usually treated with a course of antibiotics

such as Zithromax. People in close contact with children or adults with pertussis will usually be treated with prophylactic antibiotics.

When providing care for a child being treated for pertussis, be sure to give the medications exactly as the doctor has ordered. Let the child get plenty of rest. A cool mist vaporizer can help loosen respiratory secretions and soothe irritated lungs and breathing passages. Make sure you follow the directions for keeping the vaporizer clean and mold-free. Keep home free of irritants that can trigger coughing spells such as tobacco smoke, aerosol sprays, smoke from cooking or fireplaces. Also watch for symptoms of dehydration such as thirst, irritability, sunken eyes, dry mouth and tongue, dry skin, crying without tears, and decreased urination.

Each child should get the pertussis vaccine at age 2, 4, 6, and 15 months of age then again between the ages of 4 and 6 years. A booster is available for adolescents and adults.

Pertussis Symptoms

- Runny nose
- Low grade fever
- Mild cough that gradually becomes severe
- Coughing spells lasting more than a minute.
- High-pitched "whoop" at the end of coughing spell



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On-line Resources

- www.cchdtexas.org
- www.cherokeeflu.com
- www.dshs.state.tx.us
- www.cdc.gov
- www.texasprepares.org

Flu Facts Continued

headache, body aches, sore throat, dry cough, and nasal congestion. Children may also experience otitis media, nausea and vomiting.

So how do you keep from catching the flu? The number one way is to wash your hands and wash them often, especially before eating or touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Other ways include:

- Get your flu shot each year
- Do not share things

with others that might be contaminated with the flu virus such as lipstick, drinks, utensils and food

- Avoid close contact with those who are sick
- When possible avoid close, crowded spaces
- If you have to take care of someone who is sick, wash your hands after being close to them or touching them

If you do get sick with the flu it is important that you stay home so as not to spread it to others.

Emergency warning signs in children with the flu that require urgent medical attention include:

- Fast or troubled breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return

with fever and worse cough

- Fever with rash

Emergency warning signs in adults with the flu that require urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting