



LUCE-MACKINAC-ALGER-SCHOOLCRAFT DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE APRIL 2010

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World Meningitis Day, Saturday 24th April,

Meningitis is the name given to the inflammation of the membranes, called the meninges, which surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by many different organisms including bacteria, viruses and fungi. Some of the bacteria can also cause septicaemia (blood poisoning) as well as meningitis. Vaccines are the only way to prevent meningitis and there are a number available against the different types and strains of bacteria. However, until there are vaccines against all causative bacteria it is vital to know the signs and symptoms and the actions to take.



What are the signs and symptoms of meningitis?

High fever, headache, and stiff neck are common symptoms of meningitis in anyone over the age of 2 years. These symptoms can develop over several hours, or they may take 1 to 2 days. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In newborns and small infants, the classic symptoms of fever, headache, and neck stiffness may be absent or difficult to detect, and the infant may only appear slow or inactive, or be irritable, have vomiting, or be feeding poorly. As the disease progresses, patients of any age may have seizures.

Info Source: <http://www.comoonline.org>

April is National Donate Life Month

Be an Organ and Tissue Donor

Help Create a Donation Friendly America!

Each organ and tissue donor saves or improves the lives of as many as 50 people. Giving the "Gift of Life" may lighten the grief of the donor's own family. Many donor families say that knowing other lives have been saved helps them cope with their tragic loss.

1. **Register with your state donor registry.**
2. **Designate your decision on your driver's license.**
Do this when you obtain or renew your license.
3. **Sign a donor card now.** Carry the donor card with you until you can designate your donation decision on your driver's license or join a donor registry.

▪Talk to your family now about your donation decision.

Help your family understand your wish to be an organ and tissue donor before a crisis occurs. Then they will be prepared to serve as your advocate for donation.

Info Source: <http://www.organdonor.gov/>

Organ/Tissue Donor Card

I wish to donate my organs and tissues. I wish to give:

any needed organs and tissues

only the following organs and tissues:

Donor Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____

Witness _____

The WHO agenda (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION)

WHO operates in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing landscape. The boundaries of public health action have become blurred, extending into other sectors that influence health opportunities and outcomes. WHO responds to these challenges using a six-point agenda. The six points address two health objectives, two strategic needs, and two operational approaches. The overall performance of WHO will be measured by the impact of its work on women's health and health in Africa.



- 1. Promoting development:** During the past decade, health has achieved unprecedented prominence as a key driver of socioeconomic progress, and more resources than ever are being invested in health. Yet poverty continues to contribute to poor health, and poor health anchors large populations in poverty. Health development is directed by the ethical principle of equity: Access to life-saving or health-promoting interventions should not be denied for unfair reasons, including those with economic or social roots. Commitment to this principle ensures that WHO activities aimed at health development give priority to health outcomes in poor, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. Attainment of the health-related Millennium Development Goals, preventing and treating chronic diseases and addressing the neglected tropical diseases are the cornerstones of the health and development agenda.
- 2. Fostering health security:** Shared vulnerability to health security threats demands collective action. One of the greatest threats to international health security arises from outbreaks of emerging and epidemic-prone diseases. Such outbreaks are occurring in increasing numbers, fueled by such factors as rapid urbanization, environmental mismanagement, the way food is produced and traded, and the way antibiotics are used and misused. The world's ability to defend itself collectively against outbreaks has been strengthened since June 2007, when the revised International Health Regulations came into force.
- 3. Strengthening health systems:** For health improvement to operate as a poverty-reduction strategy, health services must reach poor and underserved populations. Health systems in many parts of the world are unable to do so, making the strengthening of health systems a high priority for WHO. Areas being addressed include the provision of adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff, sufficient financing, suitable systems for collecting vital statistics, and access to appropriate technology including essential drugs.
- 4. Harnessing research, information and evidence:** Evidence provides the foundation for setting priorities, defining strategies, and measuring results. WHO generates authoritative health information, in consultation with leading experts, to set norms and standards, articulate evidence-based policy options and monitor the evolving global health situation.
- 5. Enhancing partnerships:** WHO carries out its work with the support and collaboration of many partners, including UN agencies and other international organizations, donors, civil society and the private sector. WHO uses the strategic power of evidence to encourage partners implementing programs within countries to align their activities with best technical guidelines and practices, as well as with the priorities established by countries.
- 6. Improving performance:** WHO participates in ongoing reforms aimed at improving its efficiency and effectiveness, both at the international level and within countries. WHO aims to ensure that its strongest asset - its staff - works in an environment that is motivating and rewarding. WHO plans its budget and activities through results-based management, with clear expected results to measure performance at country, regional and international levels.

Info Source: <http://www.who.int/about/agenda/>

National Autism Awareness Month

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause for autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families today. In February 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued their ADDM autism prevalence report. The report, which looked at a sample of 8 year olds in 2000 and 2002, concluded that the prevalence of autism had risen to 1 in every 150 American children, and almost 1 in 94 boys. The issuance of this report caused a media uproar, but the news was not a surprise to the Autism Society or to the 1.5 million Americans living with the effects of autism spectrum disorder. Nonetheless, the spotlight shown on autism as a result of the prevalence increase opens opportunities for the nation to consider how to serve these families facing a lifetime of supports for their children.



Currently, the Autism Society estimates that the lifetime cost of caring for a child with autism ranges from \$3.5 million to \$5 million, and that the United States is facing almost \$90 billion annually in costs for autism (this figure includes re-research, insurance costs and non-covered expenses, Medicaid waivers for autism, educational spending, housing, transportation, employment, in addition to related therapeutic services and caregiver costs).

Know the Signs: Early Identification Can Change Lives

Autism is treatable. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes.

Here are some signs to look for in the children in your life:

- Lack of or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Persistent fixation on parts of objects

Info Source: <http://www.autism-society.org>

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

When many people think of alcohol abusers, they picture teenagers sneaking drinks before high school football games or at unsupervised parties. However, alcohol abuse is prevalent within many demographic groups in the United States. People who abuse alcohol can be:



- College students who binge drink at local bars.
- Pregnant women who drink and put their babies at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome.
- Professionals who drink after a long day of work.
- Senior citizens who drink out of loneliness.

In 2007, more than one fifth (23.3 percent) of persons aged 12 or older participated in binge drinking at least once in the 30 days prior to taking SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). This translates to about 57.8 million people. The rate in 2007 is similar to the rate in 2006 (23.0 percent).

To recognize the serious problem of alcohol abuse, April is designated "Alcohol Awareness Month."

If you suspect that you might have a drinking problem, or you know someone who abuses alcohol, please contact SAMHSA's Health Information Network at 1-877-SAMHSA-7.

Warning Signs of Alcohol Abuse

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may have a problem with alcohol:

- Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
- Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
- Does your drinking worry your family?
- Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won't?
- Do you ever forget what you did while drinking?
- Do you get headaches or have a hangover after drinking?

Info Source :<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>

Emergency Departments See Rise In Flu-Like Illness

Some of the nation's emergency departments are noting increases in flu-like illness cases that appear to be pandemic H1N1.

Colleges are reporting the first increase in flu-like illness since the end of November, but it's not clear if these are early signs of a third pandemic flu wave.

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) said today that some of its members were anecdotally reporting a new wave of pandemic H1N1 patients coming to emergency departments and asked if other physicians were seeing similar patterns.

Carl Schultz, MD, professor of emergency medicine at the University of California at Irvine, told CIDRAP News that the increase in the number of influenza-like illnesses appears to be real, but he cautioned that many of the cases have not been confirmed as the pandemic H1N1 strain, because many departments stopped specifically testing for it because of low flu activity.

Schultz cautioned that the apparent increase in flu activity could be an aberration, and he added that there have been no official reports of increases in hospitalizations and deaths from flu-like illnesses. Though he said the uptick in flu-like illnesses could be from seasonal flu, the likelihood may be less, because seasonal flu usually starts in November and peaks in January and February.

"To see something rising this late would be unusual," Schultz said, adding that the pandemic H1N1 virus has not observed typical flu season patterns. He said physicians are waiting to see if the pattern they're seeing is just a blip or if it turns out to be a real spike in pandemic H1N1 activity.

Tom Skinner, a spokesman for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today that the CDC has nothing to report on any increase in flu activity, but he said it is keeping watch of flu-like illness trends across the nation.

Meanwhile, the American College Health Association (ACHA) today reported in its latest surveillance summary of influenza-like illnesses a 52% rise in cases, reflecting the first increase since the end of November. The attack rate at schools was 4.1 cases per 10,000 students. The ACHA said some colleges in the southeast and Midwest have reported slight increases in disease activity.

Schultz said that the rise in college flu-like illnesses isn't particularly alarming, because activity had dropped to such a low level that a 52% increase is not sizeable.

So far this week no states have reported an increase in flu activity. A spokesman for the Washington State Department of Health said today that pandemic H1N1 cases have slowed but not disappeared, the Associated Press (AP) reported today.

Five more people were hospitalized for H1N1 infections over the past week, but no new deaths have been reported.

The CDC is still urging all groups, especially those at high risk for complications such as pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions, to get vaccinated against pandemic H1N1 flu, especially now that vaccine supplies are plentiful.

The CDC is also reminding parents of children younger than 10 who have already received one dose of the vaccine that the youngsters need a second dose for optimal protection.

Info Source: <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu>



Key Facts About Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent seasonal flu is by getting a seasonal flu **vaccination** each year.

Every year in the United States, on average:

- 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu;
- more than [200,000](#) people are hospitalized from flu-related complications; and
- about [36,000](#) people die from flu-related causes.

Some people, such as older people, young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), are at increased risk for serious complications from seasonal flu illness.

This flu season, scientists believe that a new and very different flu virus (called novel 2009 H1N1) may cause a lot more people to get sick than during a regular flu season. It also may cause more hospital stays and deaths than regular seasonal flu. More information about the new H1N1 flu is available at www.cdc.gov.

Info Source: <http://www.cdc.gov>