



New Britain Health Department

“Dedicated to Promoting the Public’s Health”

*New Britain:
A City for All
People*

Volume 1 Issue 3

Fall, 2007

It’s Back to School Time

In the excitement of getting your children started in school, don’t forget about their immunizations! “Shots” are required before your child can go to school.

For kindergarten through 7th grade, children need proof that they’ve had 4 doses of DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis), the last one after the 4th birthday, 3 polio shots, 2 MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), 3 doses of Hep B and 1 of Varicella (chicken pox) for students K-4th grades. **All new students regardless of grade also need a PPD to test for tuberculosis.**

For grades 8-12, at least 3 doses of DTP, the last one after the 4th birthday, 3 doses of polio, the last one after the 4th birthday, 2 MMR, 3 Hep B and, for students 13 and over, a second dose of Varicella.

If your child is a New Britain resident he can receive immunizations free at the New Britain Health Department. PPDs are \$3.00 each.

To make sure we are available to do immunizations for the start of school, the Health Department has extended our usual immunizations schedule as follows:

Monday, August 27- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Tuesday, August 28- AM IMMUNIZATIONS ONLY
Wednesday, August 29- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Friday, August 31- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
NO TB TESTS TODAY AS THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS CLOSED
MONDAY
Monday, September 3- LABOR DAY – CLOSED
Tuesday, September 4- AM IMMUNIZATIONS ONLY
Wednesday, September 5- NO AM IMMUNIZATIONS 1:00PM-3:30PM
Friday September 7-9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Monday September 10- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Tuesday September 11- AM IMMUNIZATIONS ONLY
Wednesday, September 12- - 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Friday, September 14- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Monday, September 17- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Tuesday, September 18- AM IMMUNIZATIONS ONLY
Wednesday, September 19- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
Friday, Sept 21- 9:00AM-12noon and 1:00PM-3:30PM
No Thursday immunizations.

Other than these dates, we give immunizations during our regular immunization clinic hours listed at right.

New Britain Health Department

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EUGENE M. CICCONE, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

Hours of Operation
M-F 8:15AM-4:00PM
(860) 612-2771

Immunization Clinic
Monday and Friday
9AM-11AM
Wednesday 1PM-3PM

STD Clinic
Tuesday and Thursday
2PM-3:30PM

Tuberculosis Clinic
First Wednesday of every month. For New Britain residents only. Call for information.
TB skin tests are performed during the immunization clinics.

Senior News

People 60 and older who have ever had chicken pox are at risk for developing **shingles**. Shingles is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chicken pox. There is a new vaccine, **Zostavax**, to help prevent shingles outbreaks. Ask your doctor if s/he recommends the vaccination for you.

Ways to Cut Calories, Not Taste, From Your Diet

Cutting just 100 calories every day and adding walking to your daily activities can help you improve your health, help you lose weight and actually give you more energy.

- Low-fat cheeses have a lot more flavor than the fat-free ones and can help you strip calories. Choose 50% reduced fat (about equal to 2% milk) or 70% reduced fat (about equal to 1% milk).
- When you eat out, ask for a “doggie bag” before you start to eat. Put half your entrée in it to take home for lunch tomorrow.
- Make a sandwich on whole wheat bread instead of on a croissant or bagel.
- Use no-calorie spray “butter” instead of butter, margarine or gravy on mashed or baked potatoes, vegetables or toast.

New Immunizations for You and Your Children

Connecticut now requires **varicella vaccination** against chicken pox for school entry at all grade levels. People of all ages who have never had chicken pox can be vaccinated.

There is now a vaccine for girls and young women 9 to 26 years against **Human Papillomavirus**. These are viruses that cause the majority of cervical cancer. The vaccination will not treat cancer, but if a woman or girl is vaccinated before she acquires the virus infection, the vaccine can help protect her. The vaccine is available free of charge at the Health Department for girls aged 9 to 18 years.

Vaccination against **meningococcal disease** is recommended for all students entering high school or college.



Shingles on the back caused by the chicken pox virus

Keep Your Family Healthy

Now that school is back in session, it is important to keep your family healthy. Here are some tips to better your odds of stopping the germ cycle.

Wash hands often with warm water and soap. Families who wash or apply a sanitizing gel (like Purell) after using the bathroom, before preparing food and after diaper changes have a 59% lower incidence of gastrointestinal illness and 20 percent less respiratory illness.

Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth to keep germs at bay.

Disinfect toys, kitchen counters, phones and frequently touched items with a chlorine bleach base wipe.

Don't share drinks or water bottles

Get a flu shot. Best times for vaccinations are October and November.

Make sure your child covers his mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

Don't leave tissues lying around the house.

Wash soiled clothing or bedding as soon as possible.

Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

A Tip for Slimmer Kids

Just 15 minutes a day of brisk exercise – kicking a ball around, bicycling or swimming – may be enough to keep children from becoming obese.

Short bursts of intense exercise seemed to have the greatest effect, but children in the studies who did just 15 minutes of moderate exercise – equal to a brisk walk – were 50% less likely than inactive children to be obese.

The less children exercised, the more likely they were to be obese.

Obesity is on the rise in our country – 60% of people are overweight or obese and the problems often start in childhood. Being overweight often leads to problems with diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure.

The results of these studies suggest that even a modest increase of 15 minutes of moderate and vigorous physical activity in children might result in an important reduction in overweight and obese children.

What you can do as a parent or grandparent:

- Go for a walk with your child every day
- Let your child walk to school or walk with your child
- Invest in a soccer ball, kick ball or basketball and encourage you child to play or play with him/her
- Find a safe place for your child to ride a bike or run around



Make exercise family time. Daily exercise with your children, spouse, friends or a pet can have dramatic effects on your own health. We're not talking marathons. 15 minutes of moderate to brisk walking every day may be all it takes to improve your cardio-vascular health and help you control your weight. For senior citizens, it will improve balance and help keep bones strong.

"I Never Get Flu Shots Because They Gave Me the Flu"

Flu immunizations are made with inactivated (killed) viruses. They cannot "give" you the flu. If you have already caught the flu, even if you aren't sick yet, the vaccination won't help prevent you from getting sick. It takes about 2 weeks after you get the shot for your body to build up immunity to the virus. That's why it is important to get your flu shots before flu season, ideally in October or November.

The CDC says there will be an ample supply of vaccinations this year. Children ages 6 months to 5 years, people over 50, pregnant women, people living in nursing homes and anyone with heart disease, asthma, COPD, diabetes and COPD are at highest risk for complications from the flu and should receive a flu shot every year. However, anyone over 6 months old who wants to reduce the chance of getting the flu can get vaccinated. People 5 to 49 who are not pregnant can get the nasal spray and don't have to get injected.

You should not get a flu shot if you are allergic to eggs or have a fever the day you plan to get the shot.

If you have any questions about receiving a flu shot, talk to your doctor.

The New Britain Health Department will be giving flu shots for free to people who have Medicare. They are given at the New Britain Senior Center at 55 Pearl St. Watch your newspaper for times and dates.



Why Should I Stop Smoking?

- I may live long enough to enjoy retirement, grandchildren, etc.
- I'll feel better
- I'll save money
- What is the best reason for *you*?

Emergency Planning: Snow, Electrical Outages, Hurricanes

Everyone laughs about the crowds in the grocery stores buying milk, bread and toilet paper every time a big New England snow storm is predicted. But year round, every family should be able to provide at least 3 to 5 days of emergency supplies for itself.

Prepare ahead.

1) Make a disaster supply kit. This can be a cardboard box, duffle bag or a trash can. It should contain bottled water, food, first-aid supplies, clothing, bedding and medications. Don't forget pet food. Store it in a convenient place and put a smaller version in your car. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Remember to change the stored water and rotate the food supplies every six months. You will need one gallon of water per person per day. Choose foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking. Examples are ready-to eat meats, fruits and vegetables, powdered milk, canned or bottled juices, milk, soup, peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix. If you are relying on canned goods, be sure you have a non-electric can opener. Don't forget baby foods and diapers. Make a list of your medications.

2) A battery-powered radio can help you keep informed of what's happening – be sure to check the batteries occasionally or get a wind-up radio that requires no batteries. In the event of a city-wide emergency, you will be advised of the emergency steps you will need to take to ensure your safety. This information would be broadcast over radio stations WTIC-AM (1080 AM) and WTIC-FM (96.6 FM) as well as Nutmeg Community Television and Nutmeg Government & Education channels and local commercial channels.

3) Choose an out-of-town contact to keep informed of your whereabouts and welfare. In case of wide-spread disruption of power or communications, getting through to one person who can notify the rest of your family will be important.

If you would like more information on emergency planning, call your local Red Cross office.

Radon, A Killer in Your Home?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas produced by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water. Air pressure inside your home is usually lower than pressure in the soil around your home's foundation. Because of this difference in pressure, your house acts like a vacuum, drawing radon in through foundation cracks and other openings. Radon may also be present in well water and can be released into the air in your home when water is used for showering and other household uses. In a small number of homes, the building materials (e.g., granite and certain concrete products) can give off radon. In the United States, radon gas in soils is the principal source of elevated radon levels in homes.



Breathing radon in indoor air can cause lung cancer. Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe it. This can damage lung tissue and increase your chances of developing lung cancer. People who smoke have an even greater risk. Radon in indoor air is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon can cause lung cancer in anybody, but people who smoke are at an increased risk. Also, your risk of developing radon-related lung cancer increases with higher levels of radon exposure.

Radon gas can also enter homes through the water supply. Radon dissolves and builds up in water from underground sources, such as wells. The radon in your water can enter the air in your home when you use water for household activities such as showering, washing clothes and cooking. If your water comes from a lake, river, or reservoir (surface water), radon is not a concern. The radon is released into the air before it reaches your home.

Radon is a colorless, odorless gas. Testing is the only way to find out if your home has elevated radon levels. The Department of Public Health Radon Program recommends that Connecticut residents throughout the state test the air in their homes for radon. You can measure the radon in your air using approved test devices. It is recommended that you have a professional test for radon in your home.

The New Britain Health Department provides free radon in air testing devices. For a list of Radon Measurement Professionals and/or a free test kit please call the New Britain Health Department, The Division of Environmental Health at 612-1600.

