



New Britain Health Department

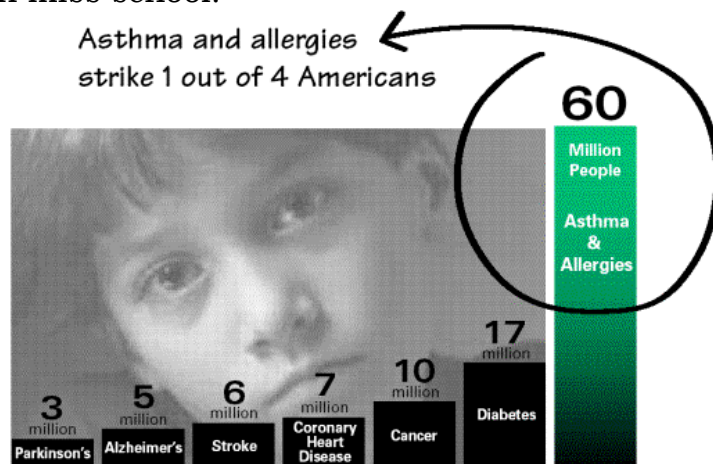
*“Dedicated to Promoting the
Public’s Health”*

*New Britain:
A City for All
People*

Volume 1 Issue 4

Asthma – New Guidelines Stress Prevention of Symptoms

Asthma is a chronic disease of the respiratory system. In a person with asthma, the airways of the lungs are always inflamed. It is one of the most common chronic illnesses among children in the U.S. It is one of the chief reasons children miss school.



Do you or your children suffer from asthma?
There are new guidelines in asthma management that stress *prevention* of symptoms instead of just treating them.

How can you do this?

- ◆Have a Daily Action Plan. You and your doctor decide how to manage your asthma and specifically what to do every day even if you are not having symptoms, what to do on days when you are having mild symptoms and on days when you are having severe symptoms. If your child is in school, the school nurse should have a copy of the Plan.
- ◆Recognize your triggers. Talk over with your doctor how to avoid triggers or what to do if you can't avoid them.
- ◆Exercise! Exercise is good for you and makes your heart and lungs stronger. Follow your Daily Action Plan if necessary to avoid an asthma attack while exercising.

Daily medications, not just emergency inhalers when you are having symptoms, and lifestyle can improve your asthma control and prevent attacks. Talk it over with your doctor.

Contact the American Lung Association (www.lungusa.org) for more information.

New Britain Health Department

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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: Flu Shots

Flu season has started. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu shot. **A flu shot will not cause you to get the flu!** The viruses in a flu shot are killed and cannot make you ill.

Medicare will pay for flu shots. Contact your primary care provider or watch the local newspaper for times and locations of flu clinics.

Stay healthy this winter – get a flu shot!

Carbon Monoxide The Quiet Killer



It's time to close your windows and turn on the furnace – time for a safety check of all your fuel-burning appliances – gas and oil furnaces, wood, kerosene and pellet stoves, water heaters, gas dryers and stoves and unvented gas fireplaces.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless and deadly gas produced by incomplete burning of fossil fuels – natural gas, oil, kerosene, coal or wood. Carbon monoxide replaces oxygen in your blood, preventing the blood from carrying oxygen to your body.

The first symptoms of CO poisoning may include headache, dizziness, fatigue or nausea. These symptoms can seem like cold or flu symptoms and are often overlooked. If these symptoms go away when you leave the house and come back when you return or if everyone in the home has these symptoms at the same time, this may be a sign of CO poisoning. Higher levels of CO can cause loss of consciousness, brain damage and death.

What should you do if you suspect CO in your home?

Leave your home immediately! Call 911 or the Connecticut Poison Control Center (800-222-1222) from a cell phone or a neighbor's house *after you have left your house!* Call the local fire department to test for CO or call your fuel supplier or a licensed heating contractor for an emergency inspection.

How can you prevent CO poisoning? Install a CO detector in your home near the bedrooms. Have your heating systems, chimney flues and gas appliances checked yearly and cleaned and serviced as needed. Never run cars, lawn mowers, generators or other internal combustion engines in enclosed spaces like the garage, porch or basement.

Keep your home safe this winter!



Taking Medications Properly

Some medicine should *always* be taken with food. Some should *never* be taken at the same time as you eat. With some you cannot eat certain kinds of foods. Some should be taken in the morning and some should be taken at bedtime to work best.

How can you tell which is which?

Ask your pharmacist or your doctor or read the papers that come with your prescription.

For your medicines to work properly, it is important to take them correctly.

Keep Your Kids Active – Even in Cold Weather

Exercise helps control weight, keeps bones strong, helps girls relieve menstrual discomfort, enhances mental function and improves sleep. People who are active have healthier immune systems and catch fewer colds. Just 15 minutes of brisk activity a day can make a difference in your child's health!

Help your whole family stay active this winter by finding activities you can do even on cold or wet days.

Activity doesn't have to mean going to a gym to work out. Find safe places to walk. New Britain has lots of parks where you can safely walk away from traffic. Button up in raincoats and boots and get outside to walk or play.

Let your children walk to school every day.

Instead of using the drive-through window, park and everyone can walk into a restaurant.

If your child has asthma, talk to your pediatrician about making a plan to keep your asthmatic child active this winter.

Make a walking chart for each member of the family and keep track of how far each person walks every day.

The less children exercise, the more likely they are to be obese.



Old Fashioned Apple Crisp

Here's a sweet way to work in an extra serving of fruit and a couple grams of fiber with just a few extra calories.

2 large baking apples, peeled, cored and sliced (4 cups)

(Note: recipe suggests Granny Smith apples, but adds that Macouns or Braeburns would work well.)

1/3 cup old-fashioned rolled oats

1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar

1/3 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 tsp cinnamon

1/4 tsp nutmeg

1/4 cup margarine (regular stick)

1 cup light whipped topping (optional but is included in nutrition information below)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray an 8 X 8-inch round cake pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place the apples in the bottom of the prepared pan; they should almost fill the pan.
3. In a medium bowl, stir together the oats, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg. Cut in the margarine with a pastry blender or 2 knives until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs, 2-3 minutes. Spoon this mixture on top of the apples. Bake until the top is crispy and lightly browned, 30-35 minutes. Top each serving with 2 Tbsp of whipped topping (if desired).

Serving size: 1/8 of recipe

Servings: 8

Calories 168

Fat 7 g

Saturated Fat 7 g

Cholesterol 0 mg

Sodium 72 mg

Carbohydrate 25 g

Fiber 2 g

Protein 1 g

Everyone should get 5 to 7 servings of fruits and vegetables every day



FDA Warning:

Children Under 2 Years Old Should Not Take Over-the-Counter Cough and Cold Medicines

Children under 2 shouldn't use cold and cough medicines. They can cause fatal overdoses in young children, U.S. safety reviewers said. The Food and Drug Administration reviewers say an educational campaign should be started to alert parents that nonprescription cold medicines can lead to fatal overdoses and other side effects in young children. Between 1969 and Sept. 13, 2006, 54 children, most less than 1 year old, died from taking cold preparations with decongestants, the reviewers said in a report posted on the agency's Web site.

"There is a lot of data in adults showing these medicines are effective, but the question is whether this applies to children," said Joel Schiffenbauer, deputy director of the FDA's office of nonprescription products.

In 2004 and 2005, an estimated 1,519 children under 2 were treated in U.S. emergency rooms because of harmful reactions to the drugs, according to a report in January from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Get Relief from Headaches...

...In 15 minutes... Take a snack break

Going too long between meals can sometimes make it worse. Just avoid common "trigger" foods such as chocolate, processed meats or aged cheeses.

.....

...In 5 minutes... Try a relaxation exercise

Lie down & slowly breathe in through your nose & out through your mouth. Focus on the movement of your breath by resting one hand on your abdomen & one hand on your chest.

.....

...In 1 minute... Apply a heat pack to the back of your upper neck to ease tense muscles



Do You Have the Winter Blues?

If you experience two or more of these symptoms each year in the fall and into the spring you may suffer from the winter blues:

Increased feelings of lethargy

Difficulty waking up in the mornings as the days get shorter

Difficulty concentrating and thinking creatively in comparison to the summer months

Incorrectly blaming oneself for things that go wrong

Difficulty performing tasks that normally seem to be easy/enjoyable

Increased craving for carbohydrate-rich food like chocolate and sodas

85% of people with the winter blues can overcome these symptoms with various forms of therapy.

Light Boxes: Light boxes emit high intensities of light of 2,500 to 10,000 lux (as compared to a normal light fixture that emits 250 to 500 lux) and **produce similar effects to the sun's natural rays.** The high intensities of light are best used daily and in the early morning for periods of 30 minutes to two hours. People find their symptoms are gone after just 2 weeks of use.

Exercise and its benefits for the blues. Aerobic exercise has proven to help combat feeling of the blues in the winter.

Diet: What to Eat and Why: Eat larger portions of complex carbohydrates, like pasta and rice, and healthy simple carbohydrates like fruits and fruit juices during meals, and stay away from unhealthy snacks that will cause momentary relief, but ultimately decrease energy.

Sleep Strategies that help: Winter blues sufferers should make an effort to expose themselves to sunlight in the early morning.

Medication: Some people might find that anti-depressant medicine, in conjunction with other forms of therapy, assist mood.

City of New Britain Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Every year thousands of children are poisoned by lead. Childhood Lead poisoning is one of the most common yet most preventable environmental health problems facing Connecticut children. Lead Poisoning affects children regardless of their race, economic status or geographic location.

Any amount of lead in the body is unsafe and can cause permanent damage to a child's health.

What does the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program do?

- provide bilingual educational material to families and local pediatricians
- provide individualized case management to families that have a child with lead levels above 10µg/dL
- perform visual inspections of a residence
- provide individualized case management plans to children with leads levels above 20 µg/dL, along with a thorough inspection, performed with the Health Departments Certified Sanitarians
- perform annual Lead screenings at the 10 Elementary Schools, 3 parochial schools in the city as well as Human Resource Agency Inc. (HRA) preschool and daycares
- provide free Lead Screenings at the New Britain Health Department Health Clinic
- provide educational information at Community Health Fairs
- provided all school nurses with lead recall binders and updates pertaining to new recalls

Most children do not show signs of lead poisoning until they are very severely poisoned.

Sources of Lead:

- Lead paint is found in Homes built before 1978
- Lead may be found in dust, soil, food and water
- Lead may be found in some imported ceramic dinnerware, mini-blinds made before 1996, toys and cosmetics.
- Lead is also found in ethnic home remedies and is used in some hobbies and occupations.

How can I abate any lead hazards?

The Department of Municipal Developments Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant Program is a lead abatement program that offers 100% financing and a 10-year forgivable loan. For more information please call: (860) 826-3330

New Britain Health Department

MRSA is the abbreviation for Methicillin Resistant

The problem occurs when a person who is colonized

Director's Spotlight: MRSA

Staphylococcus Aureus, a bacterium which is sometimes found colonizing (living) in the nares (nostrils), rectum and vagina of human beings. This bacterium can sometimes be found on the skin of colonized individuals.

It may also be found on the surfaces of objects that have come in close contact with people who are colonized. These may be wrestling mats and other sports equipment, personal care items such as razors or toothbrushes, and hospital surfaces, such as beds or tables.

MRSA does not necessarily cause infection in colonized people. Like all bacteria, however, it can cause infection if it is present in an area where a break in the normal skin barrier occurs.

These infections are usually:

- a. Cellulitis: which is an infection of the deeper layers of the skin resembling sunburn, at times with "streaks" of red in the direction of the body.
- b. Abscess: which contains, pus, a collection of bacteria and white blood cells. The abscesses may be small, the size of a pimple, or large like a "boil", or may be a group of boils that are connected, a "carbuncle".

There are two forms of MRSA:

1. Hospital Acquired: HA-MRSA
2. Community Acquired: CA-MRSA

The concern among health professionals about MRSA is related to the difficulty we experience when we treat someone who is infected with this bacterium. The antibiotic Methicillin to which this bacterium is resistant is the preferred antibiotic to treat infections with Staphylococcus aureus. Most Staphylococcus aureus infections are sensitive to this antibiotic, which is only available intravenously. They are also sensitive to other antibiotics, which are available by mouth. They are called Methicillin Sensitive Staphylococcus Aureus (MSSA). They are found in the same locations as their cousin, MRSA.

with MRSA then becomes infected with it. The MRSA bacterium is not necessarily more able to cause disease than the MSSA variety, but when it does, we have fewer antibiotics we can use to treat it. If this infection occurs with a CA-MRSA strain, the antibiotic choices are fewer than for the MSSA variety, but usually include oral medications. If this infection occurs with a HA-MRSA strain, the choices of antibiotics are very limited, and usually only available intravenously.

The best defense against becoming infected with this bacterium is to prevent colonization with it.

The best way to prevent colonization is to wash our hands with soap and water. Since we do not know who is colonized with this bacterium, good hand washing should be our practice whenever we have close contact with someone who may be colonized, such as a patient we are visiting in the hospital. Showering after contact athletic events, not sharing personal hygiene implements such as razors, toothbrushes and combs and general good personal hygiene are the best ways of limiting colonization and possibly preventing disease.

When there is a student who is known to have a MRSA infection, such as a skin abscess, covering the abscess to limit exposure and antibiotic treatment should be sufficient to reduce to a minimum the chance of spread to someone who is not colonized with this bacterium.

This bacterium has existed for many years, actually since just before the release of Methicillin in this country. It has become a public health issue recently because of the apparent increase of colonization as a result of antibiotic use. As we kill bacteria with antibiotics both in and out of the hospital, we only kill the sensitive varieties. Those that are resistant then, tend to become the major form. Through limited use of antibiotics and good personal hygiene, we may be able to reduce colonization by these more resistant bacteria.