



A publication of the Albany County Department of Health

HEALTHtoday

Fall 2010

Michael G. Breslin, Albany County Executive
James B. Crucetti, MD, MPH, Commissioner of Health

Inside This Issue:

- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Upcoming Events
- Quit Smoking
- Get Ready for Flu Season
- Did You Know?
- Available Resources

Upcoming Events

Rabies Vaccination Clinic:

Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010

Public Works Garage

Cohoes Avenue, Green Island

1:00—2:30pm for cats

2:30—4:00pm for dogs

Donation: \$8.00 per animal.

Animals must be on leashes or in carriers (bring vaccine record if available).

Influenza Vaccinations:

Albany County residents who are interested may call 447-4589 to schedule an appointment. Most insurance accepted.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases: *The Hidden Epidemic*

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), spread through sexual contact with an infected person, have been called a “hidden epidemic”. These infectious diseases might be more common than you think! One out of four people between the ages of 15 and 55 will be infected with at least one STD in their lifetime. Chlamydia and gonorrhea, both sexually transmitted infections, are the two most common reported infectious diseases in the United States. Did you know that almost half of all newly diagnosed STDs occur in people under 25 years of age? Yet despite their frequency, STDs remain “hidden” because many STDs have no symptoms and can go undiagnosed and untreated.

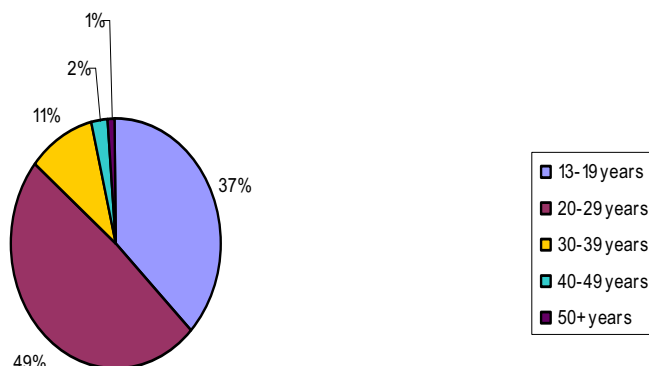
In Albany County the number of confirmed chlamydia cases has been steadily increasing over the past five years. In addition, this year there has been a large increase in gonorrhea infections, with 62% more cases to date than last year. As a result, the number of gonorrhea cases will likely more than double in just one year. Looking at last year’s data, 37% of all chlamydia and gonorrhea cases were in teens and 49% were in people 20-29 years of age.

Females were affected more than males accounting for 67% of all cases, while males accounted for only 33% of cases.

STDs, like chlamydia and gonorrhea, if left untreated can have serious effects on health, especially in women. Infections can spread to the reproductive organs and cause PID (pelvic inflammatory disease) with later complications such as chronic pelvic pain, difficulty getting pregnant and problems during pregnancy. In addition, people with chlamydia or gonorrhea infections are more likely to get HIV infection, if exposed.

The good news is simple tests are available to detect both chlamydia and gonorrhea and once diagnosed these infections are easily treated with antibiotics. Treating infections early can help prevent complications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, getting a screening test for chlamydia is recommended yearly for all sexually active women younger than 25 years of age and for older women with risk factors, such as having multiple sexual partners or a new partner. All sexually active women who are at increased risk should also be screened for gonorrhea.

2009 Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Cases by Age
Albany County



What can someone do to prevent the spread of STDs?

Decrease risk of exposure.

Using a condom correctly and consistently for every type of sexual activity is an important protective measure.

Abstaining from sexual contact or being in an exclusive long-term relationship with someone who is tested and known to be negative will reduce risk.

Talk about it!

Parents, talk with your kids about sex. Delaying sexual activity can limit the spread of STDs.

Talk with health care providers about STDs and ask about

testing and vaccinations.

Talking openly and honestly with sexual partners about testing and using protection.

Get tested and treated.

Sexually active individuals should be encouraged to get tested for STDs. Remember, many STDs have no symptoms.

Eligible individuals should get vaccinated against HPV and hepatitis B, which are both transmitted sexually.

If you are treated for an STD, make sure that all your partners are treated also.

How to get tested and treated:

Primary health care provider's can provide testing.

In addition, the Albany County Department of Health offers free, confidential STD testing, prevention education, treatment, and immunization services for all Albany County residents.

STD Clinic Schedule

Mon. 2:30 to 4:00pm

Tues. and Thurs. 8:30am to 10:00am.

175 Green St., Albany

No appointments are necessary. For more information call (518) 447-4589.

That's It, I QUIT!

On July 1, 2010, the New York State sales tax on cigarettes increased to \$4.35 per pack, the highest in the U.S. This makes the average price for a pack of cigarettes \$10.00. If you smoke a pack a day, that's \$70.00 a week leaving your pocket! If you quit smoking today, you would save as much as \$3,650 in one year, \$18,250 in five years, and \$36,500 in 10 years. What would you spend your savings on? A new car? A down payment on a house?

Approximately 17% of people in Albany County smoke, slightly below the overall New York State rate of 18%. More than 25,500 New Yorkers die each year as a result of

smoking, and nearly 21,000 children under the age of 18 become new smokers each year. Increasing the tax on tobacco products is a means of reducing the number of people who smoke. The high cost of cigarettes may prevent more youth from starting to smoke as well as motivate more adults to quit smoking. Smokers who quit are at a lower risk of developing smoking-related heart disease and suffering from strokes, cancer and emphysema. If you smoke, now is the time to quit. Talk to your doctor or call the New York State Smokers' Quit-



line 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) for help and a FREE Nicotine Replacement Therapy starter kit if you qualify.

The Albany County Department of Health is committed to the health of our residents. If you would like more information about smoking cessation, call us at (518) 447-4580 or visit www.nysmokefree.com.

Quick Tips on Quitting:

- ♦ Set a quit date and mark it on your calendar. Get rid of ashtrays, lighters and cigarettes.
- ♦ Make a list of reasons why you want to quit.
- ♦ Make a list of family and friends who will support you.
- ♦ Avoid triggers, including alcohol, caffeine and other smokers.

Years Smoke Free	1 year	5 years	10 years
Money Saved	\$3,650	\$18,250	\$36,500



Get Ready for Flu Season

It is that time of year again – time to get ready for the annual flu season, which typically runs from October to May.

Influenza (flu) is a viral infection, easily spread from person to person, that usually comes on suddenly and can cause some or all of these symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, fatigue, and in some cases vomiting or diarrhea. Illness can vary from mild to severe and some people will develop complications such as pneumonia, which may be life-threatening. People at increased risk for serious complications if they get the flu include young children, pregnant women, people 65 and older, and people with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, or heart disease.

The best way to protect yourself from the flu is to get the seasonal flu vaccine, which is available now.

The 2010-2011 flu vaccine will protect against three different flu viruses expected to be most common, including the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last year. Everyone age 6 months and older is now recommended to get the flu vaccine. Most children aged 6 months through 8 years will need to get two doses of vaccine, one month apart, to be fully protected. Children younger than 6 months are too young to get vaccinated. The best way to protect them is for the members of their household to be vaccinated.

In addition to getting vaccinated, it is important to take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the bend of your elbow. Dispose of tissues in the trash. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

be-
cause

germs can spread this way. If you are sick stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications.

People who are at increased risk of complications from the flu may benefit from antiviral medications, which decrease the severity and duration of the flu, and should call their primary physician at the first sign of

67% of Albany County residents polled received the seasonal flu vaccine last year and 79% of those 65 years of age and older were vaccinated.



To get the flu shot you can call your doctor, local pharmacy, or the Albany County Department of Health at (518) 447-4505.

To request a free Flu Stay at Home Toolkit with information on how to care for someone with the flu, call (518) 447-4505 or email

BeReady@albanycounty.com

Did You Know?

- Breastfed infants have lower rates of obesity and diabetes in their lifetime.
- Falling is the leading cause of injury and death for persons 65 and older in Albany County.
- You can burn about 7 calories by taking the stairs instead of the elevator.



For more information, visit:
www.nyhealth.gov/prevention/injury_prevention



Distributed by:

Albany County Department of Health
175 Green Street
Albany, New York 12202

Phone: (518) 447-4580

Fax: (518) 447-4698

E-mail: ACDOHnewsletter@albanycounty.com

Visit us online at:

www.albanycounty.com/health

Mission Statement

"The Mission of the Department of Health is to prevent diseases, epidemics, and injuries; to protect against hazards that affect health and safety; and to promote the healthy development of children and the wellness of all Albany County residents."



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Available Resources

- 1) Are you ready for an ice storm or power outage? Emergencies like these can happen in the Capital Region and you can take simple steps to be prepared. Take the first step by requesting a free Family Preparedness Planning Kit from the Albany County Department of Health. Call (518) 447-2057 or email BeReady@albanycounty.com.



- 2) Tick removal kits are available for free to Albany County residents. These kits include a tick identification card, a magnifier, an alcohol wipe, and a pair of fine point tweezers. To request a kit, go to www.albanycounty.com/health. One request per household please.

**Services Available at Albany County Health Department**

(518) 447-4580

Adult Care Services

Home delivered meals and other home visiting programs for adults

Clinical Services

Immunizations, Tuberculosis, STD and Children's Dental Clinics

Communicable Disease Program

Information and education for health care providers and county residents

Environmental Health Services

Regulation of public food service, pools/beaches. Children's camps, hotel/motels, tattoo/piercing, private/public water and septic, rabies, lead and tobacco

Health Education and Wellness

Information and education for individuals, businesses, schools, and community groups

Maternal and Child Health Programs

Home visiting for pregnant women, parenting families, and children

Public Health Preparedness

Emergency planning, Pandemic Flu and bioterrorism awareness

HIV/AIDS/STD Education**HIV Testing and Counseling**

Michael G. Breslin, Albany County Executive
James B. Crucetti, MD, MPH, Commissioner of Health