

Health Bulletin

Health tips and news for the community



Spring
2012

Genital human papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD). HPV is passed through skin-to-skin contact (most commonly, during vaginal and anal sex).

- Most people with HPV do not have symptoms or health problems from it. Sometimes, HPV clears from the body naturally, but some people who get HPV will go on to develop cancer or other health problems.
- Some types of HPV can lead to cancer over time. These HPV types can cause cancers of the cervix, vulva, vagina, penis, anus, or head and neck (tongue, tonsils and throat).
- Other types of HPV can cause genital warts in males and females.

Inside this Health Bulletin:

- *HPV and the HPV Vaccine*
- *Rabies and animal bites*
- *Asthma management*



The types of HPV that can cause genital warts are not the same as the types that can cause cancer.

HPV Vaccine

The HPV vaccines, Cervarix[®] and Gardasil[®], prevent serious health problems, such as cervical cancer and anal cancer. The HPV vaccines are available to protect females and males against some of the most common types of HPV and the health problems that the virus can cause.

The Gardasil[®] HPV vaccine is licensed, safe, and effective for both males and females ages 9 through 26. All girls who are 11 or 12 years old should get 3 shots of the HPV vaccine to protect against cervical cancer. Gardasil[®] also protects against most genital warts, as well as some cancers of the vulva, vagina, and anus. Boys and young men may choose to get this vaccine to prevent genital warts and anal cancer.

The two vaccines are licensed as safe and effective. Both vaccines were tested in thousands of people around the world. These studies showed no serious safety concerns.

The HPV vaccine is available at Health Center 1 and given at the time of STD examination.

For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/#recs>

Stay in Touch with the Health Bulletin

You can find the Health Bulletin in many languages at <http://www.phila.gov/Health/DiseaseControl/healthBulletin.html>.
For more information about the Health Bulletin, contact Marialisa Ramirez at 215-685-6496 or HealthBulletin@phila.gov.



Rabies is a deadly but preventable disease that is spread by the bite of infected animals such as bats, foxes, raccoons, skunks, dogs, cats, and ferrets. Early symptoms of rabies infection in humans are similar the flu and include weakness, fever, or headache. Symptoms increase as the infection spreads to the brain. These symptoms can include confusion, agitation, hallucinations, delirium & insomnia.

Who is at risk of getting rabies?

Anyone– especially people who work with animals, work in a lab that tests for rabies, or are going to a country where rabies is common. People at high risk can get vaccinated beforehand.

How do I prevent getting rabies?

- Make sure that your pets are up-to-date on the rabies vaccine.
- Watch your pets while outside so they will not come in contact with any wild animals.
- Do not pet or keep stray or wild animals.
- If a stray animal bites you, contact the SPCA at 267-385-3800 so they can come out to trap the animal.
- To prevent exposures to bats, make sure that you cover cracks & gaps in your home so that bats cannot come in. If a bat comes into your home call your local animal control workers to have it removed.



What should I do if I have been scratched or bitten by an animal?

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Collect as much information about the animal as possible.
- Get medical help and call the Division of Disease Control (DDC) at 215-685-6748.

Did you know that a **disaster** could severely affect a person with **asthma**? Do you know how to **protect your health** during a disaster?

What is asthma?

Asthma is a lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. Asthma triggers may include smoke, dust and mold.

How can a disaster affect my health if I have asthma?

A disaster or emergency can stir up asthma triggers into the air that can make it hard for you to breathe.

What can I do during a disaster to protect my health?

These tips can help prevent some asthma symptoms during an emergency:

- Know your asthma triggers (smoke, dust, pets, mold)
- Avoid areas, outdoors or indoors, where there are a lot of asthma triggers.
- Wear a dust mask, or use a t-shirt or handkerchief to cover your mouth and nose.
- Keep taking your medications.
- If you stop taking your medications, it can cause swelling in your airway, leading to coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and asthma attacks.
- Do not use your rescue inhaler too often because it can lose its strength.



Are there tips I should remember if I have asthma?

Along with the emergency kit and emergency plan remember the following important tips:

In your emergency kit, include all medications that help treat your asthma:

- Nebulizer
- Cough drops
- Rescue medications
- Controller medications

You can find an emergency kit supply list and how to make an emergency plan at <http://www.phila.gov/Health>