



HEALTH BEAT 2006

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COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Q. How should I prepare for an emergency?



A. The public should begin to develop personal and family emergency plans. Please see page 4 for a detailed list of suggestions in preparing for any emergency event.

Q. What is the **DASH** eating plan?



A. The **DASH** eating plan (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) has been shown to prevent and reduce high blood pressure. It's rich in fruits and vegetables and low fat dairy products, moderate in total fat, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol. It's even more effective if you reduce your salt and sodium intake. This eating plan can help you lose weight if you are overweight, which also will help lower your blood pressure.

Q. Can you suggest ways to **DASH** down high blood pressure?

A. (1). Be spicy, instead of salty. In cooking and at the table, flavor foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends. (2). Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, rather than canned, smoked or processed types. (3). Eat moderate portions, and when snacking, eat fruit, vegetable sticks, unbuttered and unsalted popcorn, or bread sticks. (4). Choose convenience foods that are lower in sodium. Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings - these often have a lot of sodium. (5). Start your day with breakfast cereals that are lower in salt and sodium. (6). Cook rice, pasta and hot cereals without salt; cut back on instant or flavored rice, pasta, and cereal mixes, which usually have added salt. (7). Buy fresh, plain frozen, or canned with no salt added vegetables. (8). Drink water or club soda instead of soft drinks high in sugar. (9). When eating out, move the salt shaker away - limit condiments, such as catsup, pickles, and sauces with high salt-containing ingredients. (10). Cut back on processed and fast foods that are high in salt and sodium.

Q. What should I do if I find a bat in my house?



A. If there is any chance that the bat had contact with a person or pet, the bat should be captured and tested for rabies; if the bat cannot be captured, call the Health Department for advice on what to do next. If you are certain that there was contact with a person or pet (for example you saw the bat come into the house and never lost sight of it), close the room and closet doors, open the windows and watch the bat until it leaves.



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HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

To show how strong you are, you might flex your arm muscle. But, a better sign of overall health is the strength of your heart — the body's hardest working muscle.

Keeping your heart healthy is critical. This organ works nonstop to deliver nutrients and oxygen to your entire body. Unfortunately, many New Yorkers make poor lifestyle choices which weaken the heart muscle and increase its workload, leading to disability and even death.

The same health behaviors that lead to heart problems also lead to strokes. According to a statewide Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, the health of many New Yorkers is threatened by these silent killers. More New Yorkers die of cardiovascular diseases than from the next 10 leading causes of death combined.

Risk factors for cardiovascular diseases include overweight, physical inactivity, tobacco use, high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol and diabetes.

Heart disease, or coronary heart disease, develops when blood flow is restricted through the arteries that supply the heart muscle. A stroke occurs when circulation to part of the brain is interrupted and brain function is impaired. To prevent heart trouble and stroke, you should set a goal of keeping your arteries clear of substances that block nutritious blood from getting through them.

Engage in physical activity most days of the week. It will make your heart beat faster and work more effectively. Also, eat fewer high-fat or high cholesterol foods, eat at least five servings of vegetables and fruit, and avoid tobacco smoke. A smoker's risk of a heart attack is more than twice that of a nonsmoker.

The BRFSS was conducted by the New York State Department of Health as part of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) annual national assessment of health topics. The results were based on random-dialing methods and include data from 1997 to 2003.

The BRFSS showed that the number of



New Yorkers with a history of cardiovascular diseases remained steady between 1997 and 2003. Among those who had a heart attack or stroke, 36 percent received rehabilitation services after leaving the hospital. Before 2003, women were much less likely than men to receive outpatient rehabilitation following a heart attack or stroke – 26 percent versus 51 percent. In 2003, almost the same number of men and women said they received outpatient rehabilitation – 36.6 percent of women and 35.4 percent of men.

The survey also reported that people with known risk factors can lower their risk by getting periodic screenings and having regular checkups with health professionals. Even if you have cardiovascular disease, you can lessen the chance of having symptoms or a heart attack or stroke by making healthful eating choices and increasing your physical activity.

Most New Yorkers surveyed are eating more fruits and vegetables and fewer high-fat or high cholesterol foods and increasing their physical activity. In 2003, 43 percent of the BRFSS respondents said they were doing all three. A significantly greater proportion of women than men said they engaged in at least one of these healthier behaviors, but men and women were equally likely to report increased physical activity.

For more information, call the Cattaraugus County Health Department at 716-373-8050 or 1-800-251-2584.

WEBSITES TO HELP YOU STAY HEALTHY

Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/p_active.htm

NIH Senior Health offers more tips about activity

www.nihseniorhealth.gov/exercise/toc.html

Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/index.html

Aim for a Healthy Weight website

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm



PREVENT TICK AND MOSQUITO BITES



Spring is here, the sun is warm and it is time to go outside and enjoy the beautiful weather. It is also protect yourself from mosquito and tick bites that may spread disease. The Cattaraugus County Health Department recommends that you “fight the bite” to protect against Lyme disease and West Nile Virus while enjoying the outdoors.

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria transmitted through the bite of an infected deer tick. Ticks are active from mid-May to November. Infected deer ticks are found throughout New York State.

Lyme disease can have serious complications if not identified and treated early. The most noticeable early sign of Lyme disease is a rash resembling a bull’s eye, or solid patch, which usually, but not always, develops between 3 and 30 days after the tick bite. In some cases, no rash appears, while in other cases, there are multiple rashes.

Other symptoms of early Lyme disease include fever, fatigue, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches and joint pain. If you notice these signs or symptoms, consult a health care provider immediately.

West Nile Virus is caused by the bite of an infected mosquito. The virus can cause serious illness, and in some cases, death. The chances of a person becoming ill with West Nile Virus are small. Most people who are infected with the virus will not have any type of illness.

It is estimated that 20 percent of those who become infected will develop West Nile fever. Mild symptoms include fever, headache and body aches, and occasionally a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms of severe infection (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis) include high fever, muscle weakness, stupor and disorientation.

There are simple precautions that you can take to reduce your chances of being bitten by mosquitoes or ticks. Wearing light colored clothing, long sleeves and pants that are loose fitting can help prevent mosquito bites. It also helps keep ticks off your skin and makes it easier to see ticks on yourself or your children. You may want to consider using an insect repellent, but carefully read and follow all label directions. Do not allow children to apply repellent to themselves.

Check the label of the repellent to see what it is designed to repel and for how long. Ticks may be more difficult to repel than mosquitoes.

There are many kinds of repellents on the market, such as products containing DEET, permethrin, picaridin and a variety of botanical oils. If you decide to use a repellent, pick one that is right for your situation.

Do not attempt to remove ticks by using petroleum jelly, kerosene, lit cigarettes or other home remedies. If you find a tick attached to your body, remove it by taking the following steps:

- Using tweezers, grasp the tick near the mouthparts, as close to the skin as possible.
- Be careful not to squeeze, crush or puncture the body of the tick.
- Pull the tick in a steady, upward motion away from the skin.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite site with soap, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.

Contact your health care provider if you have any concerns about incomplete tick removal. Record the date and location of the tick bite. If a rash appears or you experience flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider.

There are also steps that you can take around your home to reduce the number of ticks and mosquitoes. Remove the breeding areas for mosquitoes by emptying standing water in buckets, flower pots, children’s wading pools and other containers. Install or repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

The best way to reduce the number of ticks is by controlling brush and leaf litter which are preferred tick habitats. To protect children, keep play areas and playground equipment away from shrubs, bushes and other vegetation.

For more information on how to reduce your risk for Lyme disease and West Nile Virus, call the Health Department or visit the New York State Department of Health web site at www.nyhealth.gov.



BE AWARE – PREPARE

The Cattaraugus County Health Department has joined forces with the Allegany Department of Health, Allegany and Cattaraugus County Chapters of the American Red Cross, Offices of Emergency Services and hospitals from Allegany and Cattaraugus counties to educate the public to be prepared for any emergency event that could require families to remain in their homes for an extended period of time.

The committee recommends the public begin to develop personal and family emergency plans. After reviewing emergency preparedness resources, the group recommends the public use the following suggestions when beginning to prepare for an emergency:



Water:

Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation).

Store water in plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. If possible, the water for drinking should be purchased/bottled water.

Food:

Ready to eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, fish and chicken

Juices

Ready to eat whole grain cereals

High energy foods such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix



First Aid Kit:

Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, gauze pads, tape, scissors, tweezers, antiseptic or antibacterial ointment, thermometer, disposable gloves, non-prescription drugs (i.e., aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid), alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Miscellaneous Supplies:

At least one change of clothing and footwear per person and one blanket or sleeping bag per person

Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, candles and plenty of extra batteries

Personal hygiene products such as toothbrush, toothpaste, toilet paper, deodorant, soap and feminine hygiene products

Bleach

Matches in a waterproof container and a lighter

Non-electric can opener, utility knife

Special Items:

For baby – formula, diapers, ointment, baby powder, bottles, powdered milk, medications

For adults – prescription medication – (each person should develop a medication list including medication name, dose and time taken), extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and saline solution

For pets – food and necessary water.

For more information on personal and family emergency preparedness planning, please visit the American Red Cross website at www.redcross.org.