



# HEALTH BEAT 2007

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## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**Q.** Can you give more information regarding new immunizations that are being promoted?

**A.** There are new immunizations being offered to all age groups. Please turn to page 2 for the details of the new immunizations and how they can protect your life.

**Q.** What is the number one killer of women in New York?



**A.** Heart disease is the number one killer of women in New York State. The most common warning sign of a heart attack in women is discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. The first step to heart health is to know the numbers that matter most. For the numbers women should know, please turn to page 3.

**Q.** What are the signs of a stroke?

**A.** Think of the **F.A.S.T.** acronym. "Face": Is one side of the face drooping down? "Arm": Is one arm hanging down or unable to be lifted? "Speech": Is the speech slurred, confusing or is the person unable to speak? "Time": Call 911 immediately if someone has any of these symptoms. Knowing the signs of a stroke can save a life.

**Q.** What kind of milk is best for my family?

**A.** Children between the ages of 1 and 2 should drink whole milk because fats are necessary for their early growth and development. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that after age 2, children should gradually transition to low fat or fat free milk. All of the protein, Vitamin D and Calcium is the same in whole, reduced fat, low fat and fat free milk. The only thing changing in the milk is the fat.



If you change from Whole Milk to Fat Free Milk, at the end of 1 year you will consume 52, 530 fewer calories, 5840 fewer grams of fat and 21, 170 fewer grams of cholesterol!

Based on the RDA of 2-(8 oz.) servings per day.



**Q.** What is prescription drug abuse and how big of a problem is it?

**A.** Prescription drug abuse is the use of prescription medication in a manner that is not prescribed by a health care practitioner. This includes using someone else's prescription or using your own prescription in a way not directed by your doctor. Most people take prescription medication responsibly under a doctor's care. However, there has been a steady increase in the non-medical use of these medications, especially by teenagers. Prescription drug abuse knows no boundaries; it occurs in all social, economic, geographic, and ethnic groups.

**Q.** What about the over-the-counter medications that can be bought without a prescription?

**A.** Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are also abused. Some products used medically to treat allergies and colds contain drugs that can cause serious harm if abused for non-medical purposes. For a complete article regarding misuse of prescription and OTC drugs, please turn to page 4.

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## Rotavirus Vaccine



Rotavirus is a virus that causes severe diarrhea, mostly in babies and young children. It is often accompanied by vomiting and fever. Rotavirus is not the only cause of severe diarrhea, but it is one of the most serious. Each year in the United States rotavirus is responsible for 20-60 deaths. Your child can get rotavirus infection by being around other children who are already infected.

Rotavirus vaccine is the best way to protect children who are already infected. Rotavirus vaccine is an oral (swallowed) vaccine; it is not given by injection.

Children should get 3 doses of rotavirus vaccine. They are recommended at these ages:

- First dose – 2 months of age
- Second dose – 4 months of age
- Third dose – 6 months of age.

Children should have gotten all three doses by 32 weeks of age.



There are information sheets available regarding these new vaccines which will provide much more detail. They are available at the Health Department or on the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## HPV (Human Papillomavirus) Vaccine

Genital human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States. There are about 40 types of HPV. About 20 million people in the U.S. are infected, and about 6.2 million more get infected each year. HPV is important because it can cause cervical cancer in women. HPV vaccine can prevent most genital warts and most cases of cervical cancer.



HPV vaccine is recommended for girls 11-12 years of age. Doctors may give it to girls as young as 9 years. It is important for girls to get the vaccine before their first sexual contact – because they have not been exposed to HPV. For these girls, the vaccine can prevent almost 100% of disease caused by the 4 types of HPV targeted by the vaccine. However, if the girl or woman is already infected with a type of HPV, the vaccine will not prevent disease from that type. Others who should not get the vaccine are listed on the information sheet available at the Health Department.

The HPV vaccine is given as a 3-dose series:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Dose: Now
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Dose: 2 months after Dose 1
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Dose: 6 Months after Dose 1.



## Shingles Vaccine

Shingles is a painful skin rash, often with blisters. It is also called Herpes Zoster. A shingles rash usually appears on one side of the face or body and lasts from 2 to 4 weeks. For about 1 person in 5, severe pain can continue even after the rash clears up. This is called post-herpetic neuralgia.

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox. Only someone who has had a case of chickenpox or gotten chickenpox vaccine can get shingles. The virus stays in your body and can reappear many years later to cause shingles.

A vaccine for shingles was licensed in 2006. In clinical trials, the vaccine prevented shingles in about half of people 60 years of age or older. A single dose of shingles vaccine is indicated for adults 60 years of age and older.

A person should not get shingles vaccine who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to gelatin, the antibiotic neomycin, or any other components of shingles vaccine or who has a weakened immune system.



## THE NUMBERS WOMEN SHOULD KNOW FOR HEART HEALTH

FACTOR	GOAL
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL (“Bad”) Cholesterol	LDL Cholesterol goals vary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who are at low risk for heart disease: <b>Less than 169 mg/dL</b></li> <li>• People at intermediate risk for heart disease: <b>Less than 130 mg/dL</b></li> <li>• People at high risk for heart disease including those who have heart disease or diabetes: <b>Less than 100 mg/dL</b> (Some high risk patients will have a goal of less than 70 mg/dL)</li> </ul>
HDL (“Good”) Cholesterol	50 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL
Blood Pressure	Less than 120/80 mmHg
Fasting Glucose	Less than 100 mg/dL
Body Mass Index (BMI)	Less than 25 Kg/m
Waist circumference	Less than 35 inches
Exercise	Minimum of 30 minutes most days, if not all days of the week.

### Keep Your Numbers in Check:

**Get Physical** - No time to exercise? That’s OK. Don’t think **exercise** — think **action**. Standing is better than sitting; walking is better than standing. Increase your physical activity to at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week, even if you do it 10 minutes at a time.



### Keep Your Numbers in Check: Make Good Food Choices

Healthy food habits can help you reduce three risk factors for heart attack and stroke—high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and excess body weight.

**Set the Stage for Success by:** Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, cereal and grain products, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, legumes, nuts, fish, poultry and lean meats.



## Prescriptions Used as Dangerous New Party Drugs

Prescriptions and over-the-counter (OTC) medications are fast becoming the new “party” drugs for many teenagers. The new trend among youth is known as “pharming” – that is, kids’ using prescription and OTC drugs for recreational use. Parents, grandparents, relatives and friends must put this on their radar screens – one in five teens have used powerful narcotic pain relievers for non-medical reasons.

Many parents are not aware that their own medicine cabinets are potential sources of these drugs for teenage abuse. Young people also purchase these drugs online.

We’re not talking about kids mistakenly taking the wrong dose of legal medicines or taking a stronger than necessary medicine for an ailment. WE are talking about drug abuse – kids using prescription and OTC drugs on purpose in order to get high. This practice is life threatening and a kid can die doing it for the first time.

### Did You Know?

Half of teens do not see a great risk in abusing prescription (Rx) or over the counter (OTC) drugs. Teens believe that abuse of Rx and OTC medicines is safer than street drugs. Such drugs are easily accessible via medicine cabinets and the Internet.



### TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR TEEN



### Set an Example

Use drugs as the doctor intended. Don’t medicate today’s headache or sore muscles with a prescription drug medication your doctor gave you after last year’s surgery. Use OTC medicines according to packaged instructions or your doctor’s recommendations.

### Connect With Kids - (If You are a parent, grandparent, relative or friend, You have the power to influence!)

Stay involved with kids’ lives as they go through middle school and into high school. Use part of your daily conversation to talk honestly about prescription and OTC drug abuse. Know the facts – clear up wrong information, but don’t make it all a lecture. Listen to children’s questions and topics about their drug topics of concern.

### Stop the Myth

Getting high with prescription and OTC medication is *not* safer than getting high with illicit street drugs.

### Help Your Child Make Good Decisions

Children are more likely to be offered drugs by a friend than a stranger, and exposure to drugs can begin as early as age 12. Give children the ammunition to make clear to his or her acquaintances that the consequences from abusing these drugs are too severe to risk it. Remind children that a real friend won’t care if he or she makes the right choice and decides not to abuse these medications.

### Take Action

- ◆ Inventory your medicine cabinets, kitchen cabinets, bureau tops or anywhere you may store medicines.
- ◆ If necessary, monitor the pill quantities and medicine levels in your prescription and OTC drug containers.
- ◆ Put drugs away out of sight. If you currently need medication, put it in a place where you can get them easily but where your child is unlikely to look.
- ◆ If drugs in your house are left over from a previous condition, dispose of them as soon as possible in a safe and effective way.
- ◆ You do have the power to influence your child’s decision about whether or not to use prescription and OTC drugs for recreation. Research says that fear of upsetting parents is the number one reason why kids do not use drugs.

For more information, go to: Partnership for a Drug-Free America at [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services at [www.samhsa.org](http://www.samhsa.org)  
National Institute on Drug Abuse at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

