



April-June 2011

Shelby Health Department

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www.shelbyohio.org

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- John Harbeck, RS
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- Ajay Chawla, MD
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- Laura Burrer, RN
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SPRINGTIME CONCERNS By James Smith, RS

Now that spring has arrived, I would like to discuss some important health issues in this quarters bulletin. I hope that you will find them both educational and beneficial in protecting yourselves and your families including your four-legged friends. Rabies, a viral zoonotic disease, can be spread to humans through the bites or scratches of an infected wild or domesticated animal. Without the appropriate medical attention, including wound care and immunizations, rabies can lead to death. More than 55,000 people worldwide die from this disease every year. If a person is bitten by an animal, they should seek immediate medical attention, capture the animal only if it can be done

safely, and try to get the name and address of the animals' owner. If the biting animal is dead, wear gloves or use a shovel to move it (do not touch with bare hands), put the animal's body in a heavy duty plastic bag, and place in a cold environment away from people and other animals. The area should be cleaned with one part bleach and ten parts water. If the bite occurs within Shelby City limits, call our health department at 419-342-5226. You can protect yourself and your family from rabies by avoiding contact with wildlife and animals you do not know. It is important to vaccinate your dogs, cats, and ferrets for rabies and make sure they are up to date. Last

year we had a total of 14 animal bites. There was one bat submitted for rabies testing and came back negative. In 2011, our goal is to significantly decrease the number of reported bites.



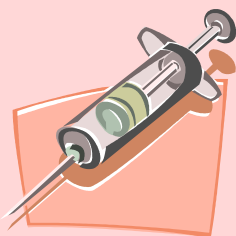
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning— thinking, remembering, and reasoning— to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia among older people. Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills and eventually even the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. In most people with Alzheimer's, symptoms first appear after age 60. Estimates vary, but experts suggest that as many as 5.1 million Americans may have Alzheimer's.

Although we still don't know what starts the Alzheimer's disease process, but it is clear that it develops because of a complex series of events that take place in the brain over a long period of time. As Alzheimer's disease progresses, memory loss continues and resulting problems can include getting lost, trouble handling money and paying bills, repeating questions, taking longer to complete normal daily tasks, poor judgment, and small mood and personality changes. People with severe Alzheimer's cannot communicate and are completely dependent on others for their care.

Alzheimer's disease is a complex disease, and no single "magic bullet" is likely to prevent or cure it. Medications are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat Alzheimer's, however, these drugs don't change the underlying disease process and may help only for a few months to a few years. Having an early diagnosis and starting treatment in the early stages of the disease can help preserve function for months to years.

HEPATITIS C IN SHELBY



Shelby Home and Public Health Clinic Hours:

The 1st and 3rd Tuesday 9-11 AM

The 2nd & 4th Thursday 1-3 PM

The 1st Tuesday 3-5 PM

Please call if you have any questions regarding these vaccines, clinic times or qualifications.

Hepatitis C Cases in Shelby

What is hepatitis C? Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the most common chronic bloodborne infection in the United States. There are approximately 3.2 million persons that are currently infected with this virus. In Shelby alone there were 7 cases reported in 2008, 5 cases reported in 2009, and 18 cases reported in 2010. It is important to note that the 18 cases were people who were tested. According to the recent Institute of Medicine report on hepatitis and liver cancer, it is estimated that 75% of HCV positive persons do not know they are infected. Thus, this is likely an underestimate of the number of cases in the community.

What are the signs and symptoms of acute HCV infection? Person may present with fever, fatigue, dark urine, clay-colored stool, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, and jaundice. Approximately 20-30% will experience these symptoms. A small percentage (15-25%) of persons will clear the virus from their bodies without treatment, but 75-85% of those infected will become chronically infected. Persons with chronic hepatitis C may go on to develop cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Who is at risk? Current or former injection drug users are the most at risk. Others at risk are recipients of clotting factor concentrates made before 1987; recipients of blood transfusions or solid organ transplants before July 1992; chronic hemodialysis patients; persons with known exposures to HCV, such as health care workers after needle sticks involving HCV positive blood; and children born to HCV positive mothers.

Who should be tested? HCV testing is recommended for anyone who is at increased risk for HCV infections, including persons who have ever injected illegal drugs, even once many years ago; recipients of clotting factor concentrates before 1987; recipients of blood transfusions or solid organ transplants before 1992; health care workers who may have been exposed to the HCV infection via a needle stick; all persons with HIV; patients with signs or symptoms of liver disease; and children born to HCV positive mothers. For children born to HCV positive mothers, testing should be avoided before the child is 18 months of age in order to avoid detecting maternal antibodies.

What is the management and treatment for HCV? HCV positive persons should be evaluated by their physician for evidence of chronic liver disease and to determine if treatment is appropriate. The physician may also recommend hepatitis A and B vaccination. HCV treatment consists of combination therapy with pegylate interferon and ribavirin. Two protease inhibitors are expected to be approved this year as a supplement to current therapy. All persons with chronic hepatitis C should avoid drinking alcohol.

What precautionary measures should persons with HCV take to prevent the spread of this infection?

Persons with HCV should inform their partners of their diagnosis, practice safe sex, cover sores and cuts on the skin, avoid sharing personal items such as toothbrushes or razors, and abstain from donating blood, organs, or tissue. HCV **cannot** be spread by sneezing, hugging, holding hands, coughing, sharing eating utensils or drinking glasses or through food or water. If you think you may have any risk factors for or symptoms of hepatitis C, please contact your physician for testing or free testing is available at the Mansfield Ontario Richland County Health Department, provided patients fill out a screening questionnaire and have a HIV test. The MORCHD phone number is 419-774-4700. For questions, feel free to call Shelby Home and Public Health at 419-342-6366 or go to <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/hastpac/avrllhep/avhmain.aspx>.