City of Englewood Department of Health

Englewood Health Watch

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Health Observances

- December —World AIDS Day, Safe Toys & Gifts Month
- January— Cervical Health Month, Natl Glaucoma Awareness Month, Natl Radon Action Month
- February— American Heart Month, Natl Children's Dental Health Month

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World AIDS Day

December 1st, World AIDS Day, gives people worldwide the opportunity to unite in the fight against Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Individuals, organizations, and communities around the globe focus attention on preventing the spread of this disease. This year, the Englewood Health Department will participate by holding an assembly for the students of Dwight Morrow High School on Thurs., December 18th.The Hyacinth AIDS Foundation will provide a presentation on the basics of HIV/AIDS. Ms. Tangy Major, gospel artist, guidance counselor and motivational public speaker, will share her personal story.

What is HIV vs. AIDS? HIV is a viral infection transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse, sharing of needles, blood, and breast milk. HIV destroys many of the human's cells, and makes it impossible for the body to fight off infections and harmful diseases and can lead to AIDS. AIDS is the late/final stage of HIV infection. Once the AIDS stage is reached, the immune system is badly damaged, the body is immune-compromised and is open to opportunistic infections.

Caption

How can we prevent the spread of HIV? By practicing safe sex -- use a condom; get HIV tested and ask your partner about his/her test result; avoid sharing needles; abstinence. The immune system cannot clear itself of the HIV virus. Therefore, HIV is a life long illness that can cause death.

Sources: New Jersey Division of HIV/AIDS Services Epidemiologic Services Unit
Claudette Murdock, Public Health Nurse

December is Safe Toys & Gifts Month

For many cultures, December is a time for gift-giving, but safety and age appropriateness of gifts isn't always the first thought in the purchaser's mind. That's mostly because we trust that the retailer is providing items that are certified as safe and also because sometimes we're not completely clued into the needs of the gift recipients. Knowing what to look out for can make a big difference in preventing possible injuries from well-intentioned gifts. Expanded descriptions here http://bit.ly/1rNJ0sD

January is Radon awareness month

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends ALL homes be tested for radon gas.

Breathing radon in your home can cause lung cancer
Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil and water that can build up to dangerous levels inside any home -- new or old, well sealed or drafty, with or without a basement. The gas is odorless and invisible, and the only way to know if your home has a radon problem is to test for it.

Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among people who do not smoke, and the second leading cause of lung cancer for people who do.

Radon has been found in every state
Homes with high levels of radon have been found in every state. In fact, radon levels can vary greatly from home to home -- even levels in homes next door can be very different. Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), a measurement of radioactivity. In the U.S., the average indoor radon level is about 1.3 pCi/L, and the average outdoor level is about 0.4 pCi/L. The U.S. Surgeon General and EPA recommend fixing homes with radon levels at or above 4pCi/L.

You should test for radon
A simple test will tell you if your home has a high radon level. Testing is easy, and if your house has a problem, it can be fixed. It's as easy as opening a package, and putting the test kit in the right place. After sending the test kit back to the address in the package, the company will send your test results in about 2 weeks. Many local home improvement or hardware stores sell test kits, and they can be ordered online too. For more information about radon testing, call 1-800-767-7236.
Priscilla Lewis, Health Inspector

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

At this time of year, people become creative to keep warm, using their gas range or oven for heating, or using a portable gas camp stove indoors. While these might seem like good ideas, an odorless, colorless gas called Carbon Monoxide (CO) can build up inside your home without you knowing it. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 20,000 people visit the emergency room due to CO poisoning each year. To prevent this, the CDC recommends

Have all gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced every year.

Install a battery-operated CO detector and replace the battery when you change the clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911.

Seek prompt medical attention if you are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseous.

Safe Toys & Gifts (cont'd)

Buy age appropriate toys.
Be aware of what's not considered safe this season.
Read the warnings and safety precautions accompanying the toy.
Read the instructions accompanying any toy.
Avoid getting anything that has excess string or cords, such as slingshots.
Buy for durability.
Inspect all gifts as children open them.
Take allergies and food or chemical sensitivities into account when purchasing gifts for any age group.
Take time to explain how to use the toy or gift to a child or to anyone who needs instruction.
Ask all gift recipients to be conscious of where they've place their gifts after opening them if it's a family event, such as Christmas.

Three different species of lice prey on humans

Head, body, and pubic or crab lice are the species of lice that feed on human blood, and we humans are not the only animals inflicted with their scourge. However, people cannot become infested with lice from dogs, cats, or birds, and these animals cannot become infected with our species of lice.

Like bed bugs, head and pubic lice are a nuisance, not a potential disease transmitter like mosquitoes and ticks -- so the health department is not too concerned about these critters. Body lice does transmit the often fatal disease of epidemic typhus, but the last outbreak occurred in the U.S. in 1921.

Body lice actually live in the seams of our clothing, and washing our clothes often has virtually eliminated it. The book, *Rats, Lice, and History* by Hans Zinsser, states that body lice was so common in the Middle Ages, it was customary to select the mayor of Sweden in the following manner. "The persons eligible [for mayor] sat around a table, with their heads bowed forward allowing their beards to rest on the table. A louse was put in the middle of the table. The one into whose beard the louse first adventured was the mayor for the ensuing year."

Rabies Vaccination Vouchers at Twin Oaks

Properly vaccinating your pet against rabies just got easier! The Englewood Health Department has entered into an agreement with Twin Oaks Veterinary Hospital. Beginning in January, in addition to the Health Department's two rabies clinics, you can also vaccinate your pet at Twin Oaks Veterinary Hospital located at 328 Teaneck Road in Teaneck. Appointments are required and can be scheduled by calling (201) 530-5800 (residents only).

The importance of properly vaccinating your pet against rabies was seen in October when a sick raccoon tested positive for rabies. The Health Department reminds all pet owners that cats and dogs that are seven months or older must be vaccinated and licensed. You're not only protecting yourself and your pet, but also the whole community. For more information, please contact Matt Traudt, Public Health Investigator at (201) 871-6517.

Matt Traudt,
Public Health Investigator

U.S. HIV/AIDS Statistics at a glance

Since the AIDS epidemic began in 1981, 1.7 million Americans have been infected with HIV and 976 died of AIDS-related causes.

- 1.1 million Americans are living with HIV/AIDS.
- An estimated 18% of people living with HIV are undiagnosed.
- Every 9 1/2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is infected with HIV.
- Gay and bisexual men account for an estimated 61% of new HIV infections.
- 64% of all AIDS cases reported since the beginning of the epidemic are concentrated in 10 states or territories. While the District of Columbia has the highest case rate, California (12.6%), New York (11.9%), and Florida (10.9%) have the most cumulative AIDS cases.

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

We're on the Web!
www.cityofenglewood.org

This local health department offers a comprehensive array of public health prevention, promotion, and protection services and programs serving 27,147 residents (census data of 2010) in the City of Englewood, New Jersey. The Department operates under the mandated, legal framework of the Public Health Practice Standards of Performance for Local Boards of Health in New Jersey (N.J.A.C 8:52) and the New Jersey State Sanitary Code (N.J.A.C 8:26). Under the governing authority of the Englewood Board of Health, its mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in the City of Englewood through innovative policies, effective services, and strong community partnerships.

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Deborah L. Baldwin, CMR, Editor.

Heart Disease: Know your numbers AND warning signs

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women, killing approximately 1 million annually. You can have heart disease for years without pain or other obvious symptoms. In fact, many people do not know they have heart disease until they have a heart attack. It is important to *know your numbers* and your risk for having heart disease. Be sure to have an annual physical to determine numbers such as your weight, body mass index, blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and glucose.

Not only is it important to know your numbers, but you must also know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. These include:
Shortness of breath

Repeated episodes of chest discomfort - pain, uncomfortable pressure, or squeezing that lasts for several minutes at a time.

Discomfort in other parts of the upper body - in one or both arms (usually the left), the back, left shoulder, neck, jaw, or stomach.

Numbness or tingling in the arms, hand, or jaw

Dizziness or light-headedness

Sweating

Women are less likely to feel chest pain during a heart attack than men. In fact, studies suggest that women often experience other heart attack symptoms, including:

Back, neck, or jaw pain

Persistent heartburn or indigestion

Nausea or vomiting

Dizziness or lightheadedness

Fatigue

If you think that you or someone else is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 right away! The longer time without treatment, the greater the damage to the heart or risk of death.

For more information, please visit the American Heart Association's website at www.heart.org

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