



Appalachian Health Focus

Public Health: Protecting and improving your health throughout life.

**Disease Report
Oct.-Dec. 2005**

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Overview of Meningococcal Disease

| Diagnosis | Code | Cases |
|-------------------------|------|-------|
| AIDS | 950 | 0 |
| Camphylobacter | 50 | 6 |
| Chlamydia | 200 | 12 |
| E. coli | 53 | 0 |
| Enterococci | 58 | 0 |
| Ehrlichiosis | 571 | 0 |
| Gonorrhea | 300 | 2 |
| Hepatitis A, Acute | 60 | 0 |
| Hepatitis B, Carrier | 115 | 0 |
| HIV | 900 | 2 |
| HME | 572 | 0 |
| Legionellosis | 18 | 0 |
| Lyme Disease | 51 | 0 |
| Meningococcal Disease | 27 | 1 |
| Rocky Mtn Spotted Fever | 35 | 1 |
| Salmonellosis | 38 | 1 |
| Shigellosis | 39 | 0 |
| Syphilis-2nd | 720 | 0 |
| Syphilis-neur | 760 | 0 |
| Tuberculosis | *TB | 0 |
| Whooping Cough | 47 | 0 |

Meningococcal disease, caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*, can lead to meningitis or meningococcal septicemia. It affects 1,400 to 3,000 Americans each year, causing 150 to 300 deaths.

Adolescents and young adults account for nearly 30% of all meningitis cases in the U.S. Around 100-125 cases of meningitis occur on college campuses each year, with 5-15 student deaths as a result. Meningococcal disease is contagious, progressing very rapidly. The bacteria are spread person-to-person by respiratory droplets as well as through direct oral contact such as sharing items like cigarettes or drinking glasses, and by kissing.

Infection results in flu-like symptoms including high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea/vomiting, fatigue

and confusion. If not treated early, meningitis can lead to death or permanent disabilities. Due to crowded living situations, bar patronage, active/passive smoking, irregular sleep patterns and sharing of personal items, college students living in residence halls are more likely to acquire meningococcal disease than the general college population.

On 2-10-05, the ACIP or Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended that all incoming college freshmen living in dormitories be vaccinated against meningococcal disease. The ACIP also recommended vaccination for all adolescents at high school entry and during pre-adolescent health care visits (11-12 years old).

Remember: Meningitis is reportable within 24 hours to the local health department. Contact your local health department for more information on availability of Meningococcal Vaccine.
http://www.acha.org/projects_programs/meningitis/disease_info.cfm



COMING SOON!

The Appalachian District Health Department website is under construction and will be operational very shortly. In the meantime, here is a sneak peek of some of the communicable disease links that will be seen on the website:

The NC General Communicable Disease Control Branch:

<http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/gcdc.html>

CDC Strategic National Stockpile Website:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/stockpile/index.asp#material>

National Immunization Program:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/acip-list.htm>

Alleghany County Health Department

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Sparta, NC 28675
(336) 372-5641
(336) 372- 8813 Business
(336) 372-7793 (Fax)

Ashe County Health Department

P.O. Box 208
Jefferson, NC 28640
(336) 246-9449
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Watauga County Health Department

126 Poplar Grove Connector
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Spotlight on Chlamydia

Since the inception of the "Appalachian Health Focus," there have been numerous cases of Chlamydia reported in each quarterly issue. While Chlamydia is known as a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis*, it is important also to remember the damage that can be caused by infection. To complicate matters, the symptoms of Chlamydia are usually mild or absent and serious complications that cause irreversible damage, including infertility, can occur "silently" before a woman ever recognizes a problem.

Symptoms in Women with Chlamydia:

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Burning sensation when urinating
- Lower abdominal pain
- Low back pain
- Nausea
- Fever
- Pain during intercourse
- Bleeding between menstrual periods

Symptoms in Men with Chlamydia:

- discharge from the penis
- burning sensation when urinating
- itching around the opening of the penis
- pain, swelling in testicles (both uncommon)

Chlamydia infection is both reportable and treatable. To help prevent the serious consequences of Chlamydia, screening at least annually for Chlamydia is recommended for all sexually active women age 25 years and younger. An annual screening test also is recommended for older women with risk factors for Chlamydia (a new sex partner or multiple sex partners). All pregnant women should have a screening test for Chlamydia. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/STDFact-Chlamydia.htm>

Incidentally... North Carolina Quitline is operational!

While most think of smoking as being related to chronic disease, there is a growing body of literature reviewing the relationship between smoking and infections. The damage to lungs caused by smoking can exacerbate acute respiratory infections and bronchitis. Studies suggest that patients who smoke are also at higher risk of developing postoperative chest infection after upper abdominal surgery.

For these reasons and others, the Appalachian District Health Department adopted 100% Tobacco-Free Campus policy for health department buildings and grounds. In an effort to assist persons who desire to quit, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund and the NC Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch have established a toll-free quit line. Quitting specialists can aid callers with information about smoking cessation and helpful medications. Please feel free to distribute the number for the NC Quitline to your patients:

NC Quitline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)

Fun Fact: The Poetry of Plague

You may have heard that the nursery rhyme, "Ring Around the Rosy" is about **plague** (the rosy red rings are the buboes; "Ashes, ashes, We all fall down" is a reference to the raging fever and the fact that most people died from plague).

What you may not know is that the story of the "Pied Piper of Hamelin" is also about **plague**. According to this old tale, the German town of Hamelin was overrun by plague-infested rats, which the piper led to their death in the river. The town council refused to pay him, so he secretly piped all the children away in the middle of the night and took them to Transylvania. To this day, there is an unexplained population of Germanic people in Transylvania, in the midst of all the Slovaks. <http://biology.clc.uc.edu/courses/bio106/bact-dis.htm>

Did You Know?!

Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine is given **FREE** at the health department to anyone over the age of 7.

In 2000, 41 cases of tetanus were reported in the United States. However, every year tetanus kills 300,000 newborns and 30,000 birth mothers who were not properly vaccinated worldwide. Please refer your adult patients to the health department for up-dated vaccination.

Communicable Disease Nurse in Your Area

Alleghany County

Eva Wooten, RN,
336-372-5641

The communicable disease nurse in your area will be more than happy to assist you.

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