**News and Updates**

**January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month**

Birth defects affect 1 in every 33 babies born in the United States and are a leading cause of infant mortality. Many birth defects happen very early in pregnancy, sometimes before a woman even knows she is pregnant. Some steps to reduce birth defects include (1) consuming 400 micrograms of folic acid daily, (2) managing chronic maternal illnesses, (3) reaching and maintaining a healthy weight and (4) avoiding alcohol, smoking, and illicit drugs. Not all birth defects can be prevented but with steps before and during pregnancy, a woman can increase her chance of having a healthy baby.

**Additional Information**
- VDH newborn screening, diagnosis, and treatment
- Steps for a Healthy Pregnancy

**Recent Clinicians’ Letters**

- Enhanced Surveillance During the Presidential Inauguration (Jan 7, 2013)

**Did You Know?**

**Cervical Cancer in Virginia**

- January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and recommendations for screening for cervical cancer were updated in March 2012.
- Infection with human papillomavirus (HPV) is the major cause of cervical cancer.
- Cervical cancer has a five-year relative survival rate of 92 percent if diagnosed in its earliest (local) stage when it is most curable. In Virginia, 46% of cervical cancer diagnosed was local stage.
- Nationwide, in patients with cervical cancer, 50% had never been screened and 10% had not been screened in the last 5 years.
- White women (48%) were more likely to have their cervical cancer diagnosed local stage than African-American women (38%).
- Eastern Shore, Portsmouth, and Norfolk had the highest incidence rates of cervical cancer among the 35 health districts.
- VDH contracts with cervical and breast cancer screening providers to reach women who are un-insured or under-insured through the program Every Woman’s Life, (1-866-EWL-4YOU). If your patient needs family planning services, your local health department may also provide cervical cancer screening along with other crucial health screenings.

For more information, please visit the VDH Prevention & Health Promotion Program, [here](#). Additional statistics on Cervical Cancer rates in Virginia is also [available](#).

**Influenza Surveillance**
Seasonal flu guidance for 2012-2013 is available on the VDH website. This week's flu report shows that we are continuing to see elevated flu activity across the state. Getting vaccinated continues to be the best - and easiest - way to stay healthy this flu season.

- Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report (VDH)
- Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report (CDC)

Virginia Monthly Morbidity Surveillance Report by District and Region
December 2012 update
View previous reports, Morbidity Surveillance Reports.

Guidelines and Best Practices
Web-based CEUs on Breast Feeding
Virginia WIC Program partnered with the University of Virginia’s (UVa) Office of Continuing Medical Education to offer a free web-based training in lactation management to healthcare professionals in Virginia. This course counts toward the required education that hospitals need in moving toward Baby-Friendly designation. To date, over 26,000 healthcare professionals have registered for the course. Effective January 23, 2013, go to the new website http://www.bfconsortium.org to register.

In addition to the lactation management course, VDH also provide a performance improvement initiative for physicians seeking Maintenance of Certification (MOC) credit. www.breastfeedingpi.org. The website allows physicians to collect, analyze, and document improved quality of care online. This project has shown statistically significant results in the rates of exclusive breastfeeding, an increase of 17 percent. Other significant changes included an increase in 24-hour rooming-in, and increase in breastfeeding assessment offered every 8-12 hours, an increase in early follow-up within 48 hours of discharge from the hospital, and a decrease in pacifier use both in the hospital and at 4 weeks post discharge. For further questions contact Virginia’s State Breastfeeding Coordinator, Lisa Akers at lisa.akers@vdh.virginia.gov or (804) 592-9932.

Diabetes and Tobacco: A Dangerous Combination Webinar
The Diabetes Prevention and Control Project at the Virginia Department of Health, is offering a free webinar entitled Diabetes and Tobacco: A Dangerous Combination on Wednesday, January 23, 2013, from 2:00pm-3:00pm. This webinar will discuss the effects of smoking and diabetes on the body, the benefits of quitting smoking, and an explanation of the Virginia tobacco Quitline. To register, please Click Here or follow this link: https://www.research.net/s/QY5Y5TX by Monday, January 21, 2013. Registrants will receive webinar access information via email. Participants must have computer and phone access to receive the full benefits of the event. If you are interested but unable to attend the webinar, please email Keisha Banks-Thornton at Keisha.Banks-Thornton@vdh.virginia.gov. You will receive the PowerPoint slides and a link to a recording of the conference call.

MMWR
MMWR publications are prepared by the CDC
January 11, 2013
- Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (TTP)–Like Illness Associated with Intravenous Opana ER Abuse — Tennessee, 2012
- Published Reports of Delayed Hemolytic Anemia After Treatment with Artesunate for Severe Malaria — Worldwide, 2010–2012
- Announcement: National Birth Defects Prevention Month and Folic Acid Awareness Week — January 2013

January 4, 2013
- Drowsy Driving — 19 States and the District of Columbia, 2009–2010
- Cervical Cancer Screening Among Women Aged 18–30 Years — United States, 2000–2010
- Cervical Cancer Screening Among Women by Hysterectomy Status and Among Women Aged ≥65 Years — United States, 2000–2010
- Notes from the Field: Serogroup C Invasive Meningococcal Disease Among Men Who Have Sex With Men — New York City, 2010–2012
- Announcement: Cervical Cancer Awareness Month — January 2013
“Did You Know” Articles by the CDC

These "Did You Know" topics were prepared by the CDC

January 11, 2013

- One in eight adult women and one in five high school girls in the United States binge drink. Women who binge drinks do so about three times a month, averaging six drinks per binge.
- Drinking too much alcohol results in about 23,000 deaths among women and girls each year and increases risks for cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy.
- The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends evidence-based strategies for preventing excessive alcohol use, including binge drinking.

January 4, 2013

- Taking folic acid before and during early pregnancy can help prevent many neural tube defects (major birth defects of a baby’s brain and spine).
- In the US, neural tube defects affect 3,000 pregnancies every year, with higher rates among Hispanic women.
- CDC has folic acid resources in English and Spanish for use during National Folic Acid Awareness Week in January and all through the year.

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