

# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## NEWS & VIEWS



Vol. 5 No. 2  
SPRING 2002

A Publication of the Community Health Nursing Program, Genesee County Health Department



### Celebrate the Month of May with Better Sleep

**Good sleep is the key to a healthy lifestyle.** We are aware of proper diet and regular exercise being important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle, but many people underestimate the importance of sleep. Like proper nutrition and exercise, sleep is essential to our health. Adults need between seven and eight hours of sleep a night

(individual needs may range from five to ten hours.)

Sleep is vital to maintaining good health and well being. A good night's sleep re-energizes our body, helps us prepare for the day ahead and assists with increasing our productivity. Restful sleep improves our ability to absorb and perform everyday skills.

When we don't get enough sleep, daily life can become more stressful and less productive.

Depriving ourselves of sleep night after night can cause us to accumulate a sleep debt. Be aware of lifestyle clues to determine whether you need to catch up on sleep. For example, Is there a chance that you might doze off to sleep in your car while you're sitting at a traffic light, watching television, or sitting and reading? Getting the proper amount of sleep will reduce your sleep debt.

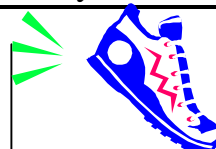
#### **TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**

- Make sure your bedroom is quiet and relaxing.
- Make sure the room is at a comfortable temperature. The ideal bedroom temperature is 60-65 degrees Fahrenheit (16 – 18 degrees Celsius).
- A dark room is most conducive for sleep – day or night.
- Keep the sudden loud noises to a minimum. Low sounds, such as the whirl of a fan or air conditioner, are soothing because they help

block out distracting noises.

- Give yourself "permission" to go to bed. Put away your to do list, make sleep a "priority".
- Unwind early in the evening. Try to deal with distractions or worries several hours before bedtime.
- Develop a sleep ritual. Doing the same things each night just before bed signals your body to settle down for the night.
- Keep regular sleep hours. Try and go to bed around the same time each night and wake up close to the same time each morning – even on weekends.
- Sleep on a comfortable, supportive mattress and foundation.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise can help relieve daily tension and stress – but don't exercise too close to bedtime or you may have trouble falling asleep.
- Cut down on stimulants. Consuming stimulants such as caffeine, in the evening can make it more difficult to fall asleep.
- Don't smoke. Smokers take longer to fall asleep and wake up more often during the night.
- Reduce alcohol intake. Drinking alcohol shortly before bedtime interrupts and fragments sleep.
- If you feel chronically sleep deprived or that you may have a serious sleep problem, consult your physician or a sleep specialist.

*Information from Council on Better Sleep*



### Walking Club Celebration

Another walking club success! Walkers of the Fall 2001 Walking Club were honored at a special celebration. Walkers completed ten weeks, where they walked three times each week.

Walkers felt this program sponsored by the Genesee County Health Department is a great community program. One walker stated, "Being part of a walking club has helped me. I used to be out of breath just walking to the mailbox. Now I can walk 45 minutes without being breathless."

Sweatshirt Drawing Winners:

- Merle Lobban of St. John's Walking Club
- Sue Harrison of Rosehaven Walking Club
- Nerissa Childress of Bicentennial Park Walking Club
- Angelia Harris of Brownell Walking Club

Grand Prize (Fitness Basket) Winner:

- Mary Taylor of St. John's Walking Club

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## Healthy teeth and gums now and forever

Teaching children good oral hygiene habits they can carry through to their adult years is an investment in their health. Many foods produce an acid that attacks tooth enamel. Without good oral hygiene, these acids cause tooth decay and gum disease. If a child's gum continues to go untreated, tooth loss occurs. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends making regular visits to the dentist. The ADA also suggests brushing twice a day and cleaning in between teeth once a day.



Assist your children in developing a routine so that oral care may become a part of their regular daily activities. Oral cleaning should begin in infancy. Parents should wipe the gums and teeth of infants with a clean cloth every day. Most dentists recommend not using toothpaste before the age of two. Make sure your children are using proper techniques. Be sure that the tooth brush fits the size and shape of your child's mouth so that all areas can be reached. Gently move the brush back and forth in short strokes at a 45-degree angle. Pay special attention to the inner surface of the teeth as well as the outer and chewing surfaces. Brushing the tongue can help freshen breath and remove bacteria. Practice good oral hygiene regularly, and your children are more likely to follow in your footsteps.



## May is Older Americans Month



May is the month for celebrating older Americans. Good health and proper exercise are important factors in helping our seniors maintain youthful lifestyles. No known substance can extend life, but the chance of staying healthy and living a long time can be improved. Here are ten tips for healthy aging:

1. Eat a balanced diet, including five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
2. Exercise regularly (check with a doctor before starting an exercise program).
3. Get regular health check-ups.
4. Don't smoke (it's never too late to quit).
5. Practice safety habits at home to prevent falls and fractures. Always wear your seatbelt in a car.
6. Stay in contact with family and friends. Stay active through work, play, and community.
7. Avoid overexposure to the sun and cold.
8. If you drink, moderation is the key. When you drink, let someone else drive.
9. Keep personal and financial

records in order to simplify budgeting and investing. Plan long-term housing and money needs.

10. Keep a positive attitude towards life. Do things that make you happy.

Information on older Americans taken from National Institute on Aging Information Center

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in conjunction with Hurley Senior services, Genesee County Health Department and Spanish Speaking Association will sponsor "A Senior Health Fair", Saturday June 1<sup>st</sup>, at Hurley Fitness Center, 4500 S. Saginaw St. (the corner of Saginaw & Hemphill Rd. - Great Lakes Tech Center). Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. Health and fitness booths, along with fun activities, will run from 10:00a.m. – 2:00p.m. A light healthy snack and refreshments will be served. Free to the public. Ample parking. Partners participating: VAAA; Alzheimers Assoc; Hurley Fitness Center; W.F.N.T. Radio Station; Life Steps; & Hurley Diabetes Resource Center.

## Preventing Childhood Poisoning

Your home can be a dangerous place when it comes to accidental poisoning, especially for children. One tablet of some medicines can kill a child.

Childhood poisonings caused by accidental overdoses of iron-containing supplements are the biggest concern of poison control experts. Iron containing supplements are the leading cause of pediatric poisoning deaths in children under 6 in the United States. Iron is present in many common supplements, including prenatal vitamins and pediatric multivitamin products. Since pediatric multivitamins are often marketed to

look like candy or cartoon characters, they don't seem like medicine. These should be kept well out of the reach of children in a locked cabinet.

And remember, child resistant caps are child-resistant, not child-proof. The legal definition is that it takes greater than 5 minutes for 80% of five-year-olds to get it open. Kids are inventive, and can often figure it out if given enough time.



### **Poison Proofing your Home**

Poison-proofing your home is the key to preventing childhood

*Continued on Page 3*

poisonings. In the case of medicines:

- Always close the container as soon as you've finished using it. Properly secure the child-resistant packaging, and put it away immediately in a place where children can't reach it
- Keep pills in their original container
- Keep all medicines out of reach and out of sight of children
- Never keep medicines on a countertop or bedside table
- Follow medicine label directions carefully to avoid accidental overdoses
- Any cabinet containing a potentially poisonous item should be locked
- Put away any alcohol-laced products, such as some mouthwashes, aftershaves or colognes

Garages and utility rooms should also be checked for potential poisons. Antifreeze, windshield washing fluid and other products should be stored out of children's reach in a locked cabinet. Childproof safety latches can be purchased at your local hardware store. For other substances, buy the least hazardous products that will serve your purposes. When buying art supplies, for example, look for products that are safe for children. For hazardous products such as gasoline, kerosene and paint thinners, buy only as much as you need and safely get rid of what you don't use. Never transfer these substances to other containers. People often use cups, soft-drink bottles, or milk cartons to store leftover paint thinner or turpentine. This is a bad idea because children associate cups and bottles with food and drink.

How can you tell if your child has ingested something poisonous? Most poisons, with the exception of lead, work fairly quickly. A key is when the child was otherwise well and/or in a matter of hours develops unusual symptoms. For example, they can't follow you with their eyes, they're sleepy before it's their naptime, and their eyes go around in circles. Other signs of poison ingestion can be burns

around the lips or mouth, stains of the substance around the child's mouth, or the smell of a child's breath. Suspect a possible poisoning if you find an opened or spilled bottle of pills.

If you suspect poisoning, remain calm. For medicines, call the poison control center or your physician. For household chemical ingestion, follow first-aid instructions on the label, and then call the poison control center or your doctor. When you call, tell them your child's age, height and weight, existing health conditions, as much as you know about the substance involved, the exposure route (swallowed? inhaled? splashed in the eye?) and if your child has vomited. If you know what substance the child has ingested, take the remaining solution or bottle with you to the phone when you call. Follow the instructions of the poison control center precisely.



**Poison Control Center**  
**1-800-POISON-1**  
 or  
**1-800-764-7661**

March 17-23 is National Poison Prevention Week.  
 How safe is your home for children?

Information from FDA Consumer

## Put Your Breasts to the Test



### BREAST CANCER QUIZ

#### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. **One out of every \_\_\_ women will develop breast cancer.**  
 a. 12 b. 20 c. 8 d. 4
2. **Warning signs of breast cancer include which of the following:**  
 a. changes in the shape or texture of breast tissue  
 b. discharge from the nipples (especially bloody)  
 c. unusually painful or tender breasts  
 d. discoloration of breasts  
 e. all of the above
3. **Early detection of breast cancer can increase a woman's survival rate to:**  
 a. 54% b. 100% c. 73% d. 92%
4. **The best time of the month for a woman of childbearing age to do a breast self-exam would be:**  
 a. during menstruation  
 b. any time, as long as you check monthly  
 c. one week after menstruation  
 d. one week before menstruation
5. **Having large breasts increases a woman's chances of developing breast cancer.**  
 TRUE FALSE
6. **Each hour, 5 women die of breast cancer.**  
 TRUE FALSE
7. **A family history of breast cancer increases a woman's risk.**  
 TRUE FALSE
8. **After age 40, every woman should have an annual mammogram.**  
 TRUE FALSE
9. **Most lumps found in the breast are malignant (cancerous).**  
 TRUE FALSE
10. **Breast exams, mammograms, and even pap smears are available at low to no cost to women that qualify for a variety of programs offered in their area.**  
 TRUE FALSE

Despite how many questions were answered correctly, there is so much more to learn about preventing and detecting breast cancer. For more information visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or call 1-800-ACS-2345. To find out if you qualify for many women's health services offered by the Genesee County Health Department's Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program, please call 257-3840.

Answers on Page 4

## Attention Parents Your Child is Counting on You!

Children deserve to live and grow without the dangers of preventable diseases. As parents, it is your responsibility to ensure the health and safety of your little ones by keeping up with necessary immunizations. Each child needs an updated personal record card of their immunization status which should be brought to all of your child's medical appointments during the first 12 years. By doing this, you are protecting your child from diseases that could cause severe illness, even death, and taking part in a community effort to increase the immunization rates in Genesee County.

Everyone, regardless of age, should keep up with immunizations. If you or a loved one would like more information regarding immunizations, please contact the Genesee County Health Department at (810) 257-3612. By having your children immunized and encouraging others to do the same, you could play an important part in keeping our community free of preventable disease. Our youth are depending on you to take action!

### Make Sure Your Child is Protected from "The Big 10"

Hepatitis B	Diphtheria
Hib Disease	Tetanus
Pertussis	Polio
Measles	Mumps
Rubella	Chickenpox

## OPPORTUNITIES



**Senior Health Screening** (free) available to age 60 and older. Call Mary Bluteau at (810) 257-3106 for more details.



## Drop us a Note!

If you have questions on any of the articles in our newsletter feel free to drop us a note. We will be glad to respond to your letters. You may call us at 785-9711. Fax us at 785-9675 or mail to: "Letters to the Editor", Community Health News and Views, 115 E. Pierson Rd., Flint, MI 48505.

## Trivia Question

**What is America's #3 killer and a leading cause of severe, long-term disability?**



Answer: Stroke

For more information call 1-888-4STROKE, American Stroke Association

## Answers to Breast Cancer Quiz:

1. C
2. E
3. D
4. D
5. False
6. True
7. True
8. True
9. False
10. True



## Genesee County Health Department Community Health Nurses

Sherry Wood (Southwest Flint)	785-4811
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Debbie Williams (Southeast Flint)	785-4825
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Carol Donnelly (Burton/Grand Blanc)	785-4812
Lamantha Richardson (Mt. Morris/Beecher)	785-4813

**Robert Pestronk**  
(Health Officer)

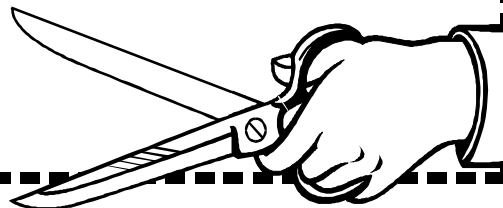
**Gary Johnson, MD**  
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(Division Director)

**Toni McCrum**  
(Program Supervisor)

**Dianna LaBonte**  
(Program Coordinator)

**Tujuana Cockrell**  
(Secretary)



### MOVING???

Call 785-9711 with your new address

**Genesee County Health Department  
Community Health Nursing Program**  
115 E. Pierson Rd.  
Flint, Michigan 48505

Postage paid in bulk