Surgeon General’s Family Health History Initiative

Health care professionals have known for a long time that common diseases—heart disease, cancer, and diabetes—and rare diseases—like hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell anemia—can run in families. If one generation of a family has high blood pressure, it is not unusual for the next generation to have similarly high blood pressure. Tracing the illnesses suffered by your parents, grandparents, and other blood relatives can help your doctor predict the disorders to which you may be at risk and take action to keep you and your family healthy.

To help focus attention on the importance of family history, the Surgeon General, in cooperation with other agencies with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has launched a national public health campaign, called the Surgeon General’s Family History Initiative, to encourage all American families to learn more about their family health history.

Source: http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/

My Family Health Portrait Tool

Americans know that family history is important to health. A recent survey found that 96 percent of Americans believe that knowing their family history is important. Yet, the same survey found that only one-third of Americans have ever tried to gather and write down their family’s health history.

Because family health history is such a powerful screening tool, the Surgeon General has created a new computerized tool to help make it fun and easy for anyone to create a sophisticated portrait of their family’s health.

The revised version of the “My Family Health Portrait” tool is a Web-enabled program that runs on any computer that is connected to the Web and running an up-to-date versions of any major Internet browser. The new version of the tool offers numerous advantages over previous version, which had to be downloaded to the user’s computer.

The Web-based tool helps users organize family history information and then print it out for presentation to their family doctor. In addition, the tool helps users save their family history information to their own computer and even share family history information with other family members. Access the My Family Health Portrait Web tool at https://familyhistory.hhs.gov/.

Source: http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/

National Family History Day

Each year since 2004, the Surgeon General has declared Thanksgiving to be National Family History Day. Over the holiday or at other times when families gather, the Surgeon General encourages Americans to talk about, and to write down, the health problems that seem to run in their family. Learning about their family’s health history may help ensure a longer, healthier future together. For information on other activities of the Office of the Surgeon General, please visit www.surgeongeneral.gov.
Children’s Vaccines Health Center
Immunizations and Vaccines: The Power of Preparation

Immunizations, or vaccines as they're also known, safely and effectively use a small amount of a weakened virus or bacteria to prevent infection by that very virus or bacteria.

When you get an immunization, you're injected with a weakened form of (or a fragment of) a disease. This triggers your body's immune response, causing it to produce antibodies to that particular ailment.

If you're ever again exposed to the actual disease-causing organism, your immune system is prepared to fight the infection with the antibodies it's formed. A vaccine may not completely prevent the onset of a disease, but it will reduce its severity.

Immunizations: Why Should I Get Them?

The goal of public health is to prevent disease. It's much easier and more cost-effective to prevent a disease rather than treat it.

Immunizations protect us from serious diseases and also prevent the spread of those diseases to others. Over the years immunizations have thwarted epidemics of once common infectious diseases such as measles, mumps, and tetanus. And because of immunizations we've seen the near eradication of others, such as polio and smallpox.

Some vaccines need to be given only once; others require updates or "boosters" to maintain successful immunization and continued protection against disease.

Which Immunizations Do My Children Need?

Because proof of immunization is often a prerequisite for enrollment in school or day care, it's important to keep your children up to date on their vaccines. The recommended immunizations for children 0-6 years of age include:

- Hepatitis B
- Rotavirus
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis
- Haemophilus influenzae type b
- Pneumococcal
- Inactivated poliovirus
- Influenza
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Varicella
- Hepatitis A
- Meningococcal (for certain high-risk groups)

The 2009-2010 passports are out and will be distributed to the Wellness Ambassadors on September 15, 2009. Keep an eye out for them.

Wellness Works! Passport Program

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Wellness Newsletter    September 2009

What is early disease detection?
Early disease detection is the use of:

- Screening tests to find health problems before symptoms appear.
- Diagnostic tests, medical exams, and self-exams to find a disease or other health problem early in its course.

What tests should you have?
The tests you need depend on your age, health, gender, and your risk factors. Risk factors might include family history, such as having a close relative with cancer, and lifestyle issues, such as smoking. Cholesterol screening, for example, is recommended for people who have a family history of early coronary artery disease.

Who develops recommendations for early disease detection?
Expert panels of health professionals develop recommendations and publish them as guidelines for all health professionals to use. For example, the U. S. Preventive Services Task Force and the American College of Physicians both have guidelines for cholesterol screening, and the American Academy of Pediatrics has guidelines on early childhood screening for many different conditions. Sometimes different panels make different recommendations. In these situations, talk with your doctor to decide which guidelines best meet your health needs.

When should you be tested?
If you are at risk for a disease, you and your doctor will decide whether you should be tested for it. Discuss the testing, the disease, the risks and benefits of the testing, and what action you are willing to take if you have the condition. For example, if your doctor believes you are at risk for osteoporosis, factors to consider before testing include your age, whether others in your family have had osteoporosis, whether you are a postmenopausal woman, and your willingness to take medicine or make lifestyle changes if you test positive for this condition. In some cases, testing is done as part of a routine checkup.

Source: www.webmd.com
Do you feel sick?
You may have the flu if you have fever or chills AND a cough or sore throat. You may also have a runny nose, body aches, a headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

If you think you have the flu, tell your supervisor and stay home, except to get medical care.

Flu Shots
FREE FOR LCPS EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES
LCPS BADGE REQUIRED
$18.00 for family members over 4 years old; cash or check only
Pregnant women, in any trimester, will not be required to provide a doctor’s note to receive vaccination.

This is NOT the H1N1 vaccine.

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<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
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| Monday, October 19, 2009 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - Valley Service Center, Hamilton  
                        | 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Blue Ridge Middle, Purcellville |
| Tuesday, October 20, 2009 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - Central Garage, Leesburg  
                        | 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Administration Building, Ashburn |
| Wednesday, October 21, 2009 | 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Heritage High, Leesburg  
                        | 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Smart's Mill Middle, Leesburg |
| Thursday, October 22, 2009 | 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Briar Woods High, Ashburn  
                        | 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Mercer Middle, Aldie |
| Friday, October 23, 2009 | 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Dominion High, Ashburn  
                        | 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Sterling Middle, Sterling |
| Tuesday, October 27, 2009 | 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Potomac Falls HS, Potomac Falls  
                        | 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM - River Bend Middle, Sterling |
| Thursday, October 29, 2009 | 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Stone Bridge High, Ashburn  
                        | 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM - Administration Building, Ashburn |
| Saturday, November 7, 2009 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - Harmony IS, Hamilton  |
| Saturday, November 14, 2009 | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM - Admin. Building, Ashburn |

PLEASE VISIT THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS WEB PAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FLU PREVENTION AND FOR ANY LAST MINUTE CHANGES OR CANCELLATIONS