



ALLEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

---January/February 2009---

At a glance facts:

Year to Date Statistics (As of December 31, 2008)

- **Immunizations given: 16,263**
- **Child Health Clinic visits: 420 (closed May 2008)**
- **Family Planning Program visits: 6,035**
- **HIV Tests given: 1,288**
- **Tuberculosis Tests given: 1,349**
- **Reportable Communicable Diseases: 1,571 total**
 - 1 cases of Class A1 diseases**
Diseases of major public health concern needing immediate response, e.g. human rabies, meningococcal disease
 - 59 cases of Class A2 diseases**
Diseases of public health concern needing timely response, e.g. E.coli 0157:H7, West Nile Virus, TB
 - 841 cases of Class A3 diseases**
Diseases of significant public health concern, e.g. STD's, Foodborne illnesses
 - 604 cases of Class B diseases**
Diseases tracked for trending purposes, e.g. influenza (flu), chicken pox
 - 66 cases of Class C diseases**
Diseases of concern when seen in multiples, e.g. scabies and staph infections
- **Number of births filed: 2,760**
- **Number of deaths filed: 1,396**
- **WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program monthly average caseload: 3,997**
- **Environmental Division Field Inspections: 9,142**

Shingles vaccine available

A vaccine for shingles, called Zostavax, first became available to the public in 2006 and is one of several vaccines for adults available through the Health Department. At least 1 million people a year in the United States get shingles.

What is shingles and how do you get it?

Chickenpox and shingles are caused by the same virus known as the varicella zoster virus. After an individual has had the chickenpox the virus remains inactive in the body's nerves permanently. Shingles occurs when the virus is reactivated.

Shingles is a painful, itchy rash with blisters on one side of the face or body. Other symptoms of shingles can include fever, headache, chills, and upset stomach. In rare cases shingles can lead to pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness, brain inflammation, and even death. One in five people who do develop shingles also develop a condition known as post-herpetic neuralgia – with sharp, throbbing pain that can last for months or even years. The vaccine can also lessen the severity of post-herpetic neuralgia in those individuals who do develop shingles.

Who is eligible for the vaccine?

A single dose of shingles vaccine is indicated for adults 60 years of age and older.

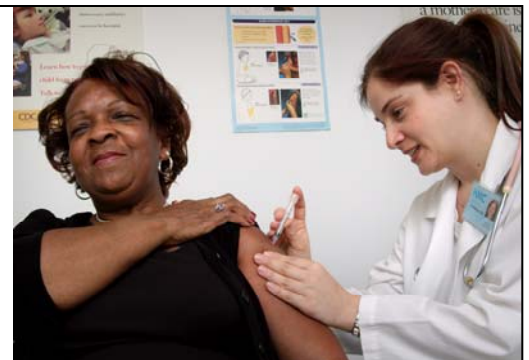
How can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine is available by appointment at the Health Department for anyone age 60 and older. People who want the vaccine must bring a written order from their physician to their appointment. If you have questions about shingles and the Zostavax vaccine, please contact the Nursing Division at 419-228-4457.

Protect Yourself

Vaccines aren't just for kids. Far too many adults become ill, are disabled, and die each year from diseases that could easily have been prevented by vaccines. Everyone from babies to senior citizens can benefit from immunizations.

Photo: James Gathany, Public Health Images Library, CDC



WIC Helps Screen Children for their Immunizations



Photo: James Gathany, Public Health Images Library, CDC

Allen County WIC is one of 16 special projects in the State which has an Immunization Action Program (IAP)/WIC coordinator who works with the WIC clientele to make sure children are up-to-date on their immunizations. Allen County WIC is fortunate to have a nurse who reviews shot records, discusses immunizations and reminds parents of the importance of keeping their children healthy by getting their shots on time. The IAP/WIC collaboration has been highly successful with 88% of WIC parents/guardians now bringing in immunization records for screening and referral for their children. The State immunization screening rate is 46%.

How does screening help?

Our ultimate goal is to have at least 90% of 2 year old children immunized on time. We are currently at 77% immunized on time through our health department clinics. Along with screening children, we can reach more children through a federally funded program called The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Through this program, we receive vaccine at no cost to immunize eligible children. Children are eligible for VFC vaccine if they have no health insurance, are enrolled in Medicaid, or are an American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Do we still have to worry about childhood diseases?

Vaccine preventable diseases continue to be a major cause of illness in children today. For example, in 2008 in Allen County, there were 11 cases of chickenpox, one case of pertussis (whooping cough), and one case of Haemophilus influenzae reported to our office.

Health Department Provides Public Health Training for Local Students

A very important educational effort by your local public health department is educating our college students. Students from all levels of education call us for assistance with data or to find community resources to complete their educational projects.

Throughout the course of a year, nearly 20-24 college students turn to us for actual observation time to gain the clinical experience needed for their college coursework. The Allen County Health Department maintains educational contracts with:

- The Ohio State University,
- Ohio Northern University,
- University of Toledo, and
- Wright State University.

Most students are scheduled to observe in all areas of Public Health, so many of our employees interact with these students as they begin to understand the core functions of public health, and the essential services we provide.

Students are consistently impressed with all that goes on within a public health department, especially the level of detail going into the services we provide. Our employees welcome these students on a regular basis, and enjoy providing an opportunity to help local students apply the knowledge they learn in the classroom.



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