

PRINCETON HEALTH MATTERS

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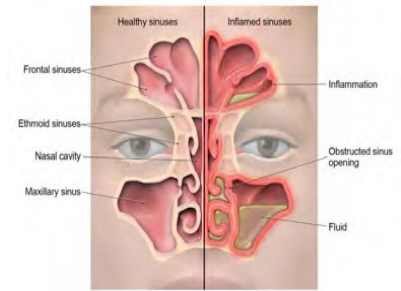


Stuffed Up? How to Relieve Winter Congestion

Nasal congestion, stuffiness, or obstruction to nasal breathing is one of the oldest and most common human complaints in the winter. For some. It may only be a nuisance; for others, nasal congestion can be a source of considerable discomfort. According to the American Academy of Otolaryngology– Head and Neck Surgery, there are four main causes of nasal obstruction: infection, structural abnormalities, allergic and nonallergic (vasomotor) rhinitis. Patients often have a combination of these factors which vary from person to person.

More than 100 viruses can cause colds, the world's most common illness, so few people escape being exposed to at least one of them. In the United States, most people average about three colds every year.

Once it enters the body through the nose or throat, the cold virus begins to multiply, causing any of a number of symptoms; sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, aches and pains, mild fever, nasal congestion, and coughing. A cold usually lasts a week or two.



The best way to treat a cold is to take a mild pain reliever, avoid unnecessary activity, get as much bed rest as possible, and drink plenty of fluids, especially fruit juices. Over-the-counter cough and cold remedies may relieve some of the symptoms, but they will not prevent, cure or even shorten ways to lessen your chances of coming down with the illness. Keep up your natural resistance through good nutrition and getting enough sleep and exercise. Turn your thermostat down and keep the humidity up in your home. Dry air dries out the mucous membranes in your nose and throat and causes them to crack, creating a place where cold viruses can enter your body. Avoid direct contact with those who have colds and wash your hands frequently.

A contagious respiratory infection, like influenza is not a serious health threat for most people. However, for the elderly or those with chronic health problems, it can result in serious complications, such as pneumonia.

Flu vaccines, while not always effective in preventing the illness, do reduce the severity of the symptoms and protect against complications that could develop. If you plan to get a flu shot next year, do so early since it takes about two weeks to develop full immunity.

Public health term of the month-

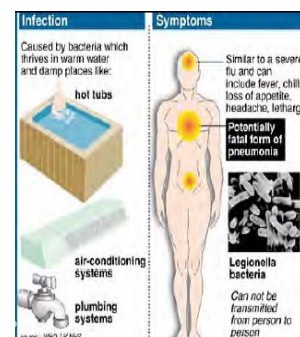
Empowerment: A process through which people gain greater control over decisions and actions affecting their health. Empowerment may be a social, cultural, psychological or political process through which individuals and social groups are able to express their needs, present their concerns, devise strategies for involvement in decision-making, and achieve political, social and cultural action to meet those needs.

The Princeton Health Department's primary goal when it comes to health education is to empower individuals toward making informed health decisions. Informed health decisions are made when individuals are knowledgeable of various health conditions as well as the methods of how to prevent chronic disease. This goal is directly in line with the Healthy People 2020 mission of increasing public awareness and understanding of the determinants of health, disease, and disability and the opportunities for progress.



Protecting the Air We Breathe from Legionnaires' Disease

CDC scientists discovered Legionnaires' disease in 1976, during one of the largest respiratory disease investigations in U.S. history. CDC's disease detectives were called upon when people became sick with pneumonia, a serious lung infection, while attending an American Legion convention at a hotel in Philadelphia. Findings from the investigation suggested that a germ was being spread by the hotel's air conditioning system. Six months later, CDC scientists identified that germ. It was a previously unknown bacteria, which they named Legionella.



Legionnaires' disease is on the rise

Legionnaires' disease is caused by breathing in small water droplets that are contaminated with Legionella germs. In 2015, about 5,000 people were diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease and in recent years there have been at least 20 reported outbreaks. Most people who get sick need hospital care and make a full recovery; however, about 1 in 10 people will die from the infection.

Between 2000 and 2014, the number of people with Legionnaires' disease grew by nearly four times. This increase is likely due to a number of factors, including:

- A greater number of people who are at risk for Legionnaires' disease because of an underlying illness or medications that weaken the immune system

- An aging U.S. population, with adults over the age of 50 being at a higher risk of getting the disease

- An outdated plumbing infrastructure, which allows for Legionella to grow in the pipes

Outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease are preventable

CDC investigations of Legionnaires' disease outbreaks show that the most common places for getting the disease are hotels, long-term care facilities, and hospitals. The most likely sources for spreading water droplets contaminated with Legionella germs are showers and faucets, cooling towers that are part of large, centralized air conditioning systems, hot tubs, and decorative fountains and water features.

Four different types of problems have been associated with Legionnaires' disease outbreaks. In nearly half of these outbreaks, more than one of these problems was identified:

- Process failures, such as not having a Legionella water management program

- Human errors, such as a hot tub filter not being cleaned or replaced as recommended by the manufacturer

- Equipment breakdowns, such as a disinfection system that was not working

- Changes in water quality that were due to reasons external to the building itself, such as nearby construction

Building owners and managers need to take steps to reduce the risk of Legionnaires' disease through effective water management. It is important for everyone to work together to lower this risk by reducing the growth of Legionella in buildings and limiting places where people can be exposed. Implementing effective water management programs in buildings could go a long way toward reducing the risk of Legionnaires' disease.

Health Officer's Message:

It's not too late to get your flu shot this winter

It's not too late to vaccinate -- Get your flu vaccine today. After November when you see signs that advertise: "Get Your Flu Vaccine Here" you might think, "Isn't it too late for that? As long as flu viruses are spreading, it's not too late to get a vaccine to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Flu season typically peaks between December and February but significant activity can occur as late as May. So we encourage people who have not yet been vaccinated this season to get vaccinated now.

For millions of people every season, the flu can mean a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, fatigue, and miserable days spent in bed. However, you may not realize that more than 200,000 people are hospitalized in the United States from flu complications each year. The flu can also be deadly. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976-2006, estimates of yearly flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people during the most severe season.

There is a vaccine that can prevent flu. While how well the vaccine works can vary, the benefits from vaccination are well documented. Studies show that flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctor visits, missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths. This is why the CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades.

Some people are at high risk for serious flu-related complications, like pneumonia, that can lead to hospitalization and even death. This includes young children, pregnant women, people 65 and older and people with certain medical conditions, like asthma, diabetes or heart disease. For those at high risk for complications, getting the flu vaccine is especially important. It's also important to get the vaccine if you care for anyone at high risk, including babies younger than 6 months because they are too young to get the vaccine.

Children 6 months through 8 years of age who are getting vaccinated for the first time may need two doses of flu vaccine to be fully protected. If a child has not received his/her first dose, get them vaccinated now. For children who are 6 months through 8 years of age and who have been vaccinated with one dose, parents should check with the child's doctor to see if a second dose is needed.

Flu vaccines are offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, pharmacies and college health centers. They also are offered by many employers, and are even available in some schools. So next time you see a sign that says, "Get Your Flu Vaccine Here," stop in and get one and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Use the HealthMap Vaccine Finder at <http://vaccine.healthmap.org> to find the nearest location where you and your family can get vaccinated. As long as the flu is spreading, you can still benefit from a flu vaccine.

Most health insurance plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines. Check with your insurance provider for details of coverage. If you do not currently have health insurance, visit www.healthcare.gov to learn more about affordable health coverage options.

For more information about influenza or the flu vaccine, talk to your doctor or other health care professional, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu> or call CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).

Update on Princeton's Health Department

Accreditation Process

After the successful submission of over 1,500+ documents during the documentation phase of accreditation, the Princeton Health Department received feedback through a completeness review by the public health accreditation board (PHAB). The completeness review included the reexamination of 44 measures within accreditation. This completeness review allows the site visitors to review documentation that is 100% complete which increases their attention to the content of the documentation rather than any formatting or procedural issues.

Further, in December three PHAB site visitors have been assigned to visit Princeton for an official accreditation audit (date pending). The visitors will be coming in from New York, Connecticut and Ohio.

Standby for more news in the spring 2016 edition of Princeton Health Matters for news on the upcoming site visit!



PHD: Did You Know?

- 1) The Princeton Health department consists of the following divisions: Administration, Environmental Health, Public Health Nursing, Health Education, Vital Statistics, and Animal Control.
- 2) In November, 2016 the Princeton Health Department completed the upload of over 1500 pages of documents for Public Health and Accreditation and hopes to be the first Municipality in Mercer County to become accredited.
- 3) As old man winter arrives, the Princeton Health Department is taking steps to prepare extreme winter emergencies. Contact us for resources to help families prepare for all types of disasters.



Be Prepared to Stay safe and Healthy in Winter

Winter storms and cold temperatures can be hazardous. Stay safe and healthy by planning ahead. Prepare your home and cars. Prepare for power outages and outdoor activity. Check on older adults.

Many people prefer to remain indoors in the winter, but staying inside is no guarantee of safety. Take these steps to keep your home safe and warm during the winter months:

- 1) Winterize your home
 - Install weather stripping, insulation, and storm windows
 - Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls
 - Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks
- 2) Check your heating system
 - Have your heating system serviced professionally
 - Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys
- 3) Install and check batteries for Smoke and Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors



Health Department Announcements and Upcoming Events



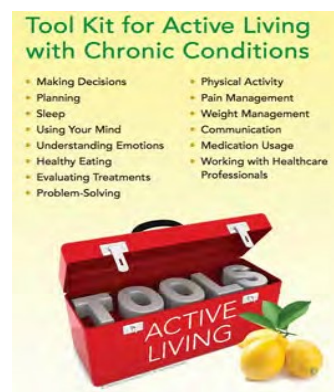
April 2nd-8th is National Public Health Week. Championed by the American Public Health Association, the first full week of April is a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving our nation. 2017 marks the 22nd anniversary of APHA coordinating National Public Health Week, and the accomplishments of the public health community over the last two decades are significant, such as a 25-year improvement in the average lifespan for Americans and a 70 percent reduction in HIV/AIDS-related deaths. Princeton Health Department is an active member of the APHA and will be participating in NPHW through a series of community health screenings and educational events.

Princeton WIC clinic operates on the 3rd Friday of every month and is located in the Community Room of the Princeton Municipal Building (Witherspoon Hall), 400 Witherspoon Street. WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods to pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to the age of five. For appointments and to see if you are eligible, please call (609) 498-7755.



Princeton Health Department and Princeton Police Department will be hosting a free rabies vaccination clinic beginning on February 25, 2017 (9 a.m.—12 p.m.). Please check our website for up to date information on our rabies clinics, www.princetonnj.gov/health

Princeton Health Department will be providing a special Chronic Disease Self-Management workshop to Princeton Community members in 2017. Attendees will learn about self-management tools to help reduce pain, manage symptoms, eat healthy, increase physical activity, medication management and more. For more information, hosting this workshop at your agency or questions about registration, please call the Health Department at (609) 497-7608.



Public Health Matters... In Princeton

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