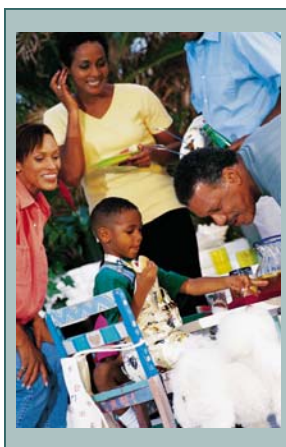


THE TUSCOLA TRACKER

Tuscola County Health Department

October, November, December 2009



Unnatural Causes . . . Is Inequality Making Us Sick?

What's happening to our health? The United States spends more than twice per person on health care than the average rich country, yet our life expectancy ranks 29th. Costa Ricans live longer. Infant mortality? Thirty nations do better than we do, including Portugal, Slovenia, and South Korea.

Furthermore, research has revealed a gradient to health. At each step down the socio-economic ladder—from the rich to the middle class to the poor—people tend to be sicker and die sooner. Poor Americans die on average five and a half years sooner than the middle class. But middle class Americans die almost three years sooner than the rich. And at every step on the socio-economic ladder, African Americans fare worse than their white counterparts. In many cases, so do other people of color. But why?

Former US Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher and colleagues calculated that in 2002, 83,570 African Americans died who would not have if black and white mortality rates were equal. That's the equivalent of a Boeing 767 loaded with black passengers being shot out of the sky and killing everyone on board every single day of the year.

UNNATURAL CAUSES: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? Is the award-winning documentary series broadcast by PBS that sounds the alarm about our huge and alarming socio-economic and racial inequities in health—and searches for their causes. And those causes are not what we might expect.

UNNATURAL CAUSES crisscrosses the country, investigating startling new findings that suggest there is much more to our health than bad habits, health care or unlucky genes. While we spend billions on drugs, dietary supplements and new medical technologies, the series circles in on a slow killer hidden in plain view: the social circumstances in which we are born, live and work can actually get under our skin and affect our risk for disease as surely as germs and viruses.

Among the clues:

- It's not top executives who are dropping dead from heart attacks, but their subordinates.
- Experiments with humans and baboons reveal that chronic stress is linked to one's rank in the hierarchy, and can actually change our physiology and heighten our risk for all the chronic diseases—even some cancers.
- The Pima Indians of southern Arizona suffer one of the highest diabetes rates in the world—six times higher than their Pima brethren across the border in Mexico.
- Recent Latino immigrants, though typically poorer, enjoy better health than the average American, yet their health advantage fades the longer they are here.

As a society, we have a choice: address the conditions that lead us down the path to disease now, or pay to repair our bodies later.

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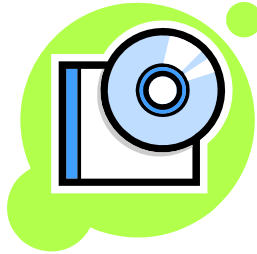
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UNNATURAL CAUSES—Cont.

UNNATURAL CAUSES has already generated widespread praise and use. More than 12,000 community dialogues, policy forums, trainings, and town-hall meetings have already been convened around the series to help reframe the nation's debate over health and how best to tackle our alarming health inequities.

Screenings are supported by toolkits, discussion on policy guides, interactivities, lesson plans, and other resources all available for free download from the series' companion web site at www.unnaturalcauses.org.

Tuscola County Health Department does own a DVD of the *UNNATURAL CAUSES* documentary; if you are interested in viewing the DVD, please contact Kristi Villalobos at 989-673-8114, ext. 147.



Source: www.unnaturalcauses.org

RABIES PROTOCOL —(See Inserts)

Please find the enclosed updated document, *Human Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Protocol*. The document has been updated from the previous versions in the following ways:

- * Reflect the new ACIP Guidelines for human rabies PEP, reducing the recommended series of vaccines for healthy patients from five doses administered over 28 days to four doses administered over 14 days.
- * Emphasis on testing/observation of biting animals prior to initiating PEP. The Michigan Dept. of Community Health's Bureau of Laboratories has the capacity to provide animal rabies testing even on weekends and holidays.

If you would like additional copies of the PEP flow-chart, please contact the MDCH Communicable Disease Division at 517-335-8165. In addition, electronic versions of these documents are available on the Emerging Diseases website at <http://www.michigan.gov/rabies>.

Communicable Disease Reports

Disease	July, August, September 2008	July, August, September 2009
Campylobacter	3	6
Cryptosporidiosis	1	
Listeriosis	1	
Salmonellosis		1
Pneumonia, Invasive	1	
E. Coli		1
Bacterial Meningitis	1	
Influenza	4	
Varicella	2	1
Pertussis	1	1
Hepatitis B, Chronic	2	
Hepatitis C, Acute		1
Hepatitis C, Chronic	2	2

RABIES INVESTIGATIONS	July-Aug-	July-Aug-
Reports received and investigated	1	1
Tested positive for rabies	0	0

School Reports

There were no illnesses reported during the summer months

Bronchitis	Flu-like illness
Hand, Foot, & Mouth	Head Lice
Impetigo	Mono
MRSA	Pink Eye
Pneumonia	Scabies
Shingles	Strep
Varicella	

Please note: Diagnosis is not always made by a health care professional.

Cough, Cold, and Flu - FAST FACTS

What's bugging you this fall? You're coughing and sneezing, and your head feels like it weighs a ton. Do you have a cold or the flu? Knowing what ails you can help you decide what treatments to use.

The Common Cold: Many Causes

Together, Americans suffer 1 billion colds every year. You might be the latest victim if you have a stuffy, runny nose and sneezing, a sore throat, a hacking cough.

Cold symptoms can be caused by one of more than 200 different viruses—that's part of why there is no cure. However, many treatments are available. An antihistamine can help a runny nose, while a decongestant can help clear a stuffy one. For your cough, ask your pharmacist to help you choose an over-the-counter antitussive medication. Be sure to ask your doctor before giving any cold medications to children.

The Flu: One Virus, Many Symptoms

Signs of the flu include fatigue and weakness, fever, aches and pains, headache, and cough.

Beat the flu with lots of rest, plenty of fluids, and pain relievers to soothe body aches. See your doctor if you are age 65 or older, have a chronic medical condition, or are pregnant. Antiviral drugs can prevent pneumonia and other flu complications. Getting a flu shot in October or November can help you stop the flu before it starts. Anyone older than age 6 months should get vaccinated, but it's especially recommended for those who are ages 50 and older, younger than age 19, pregnant, or living with a chronic disease or in a nursing home.

Did You Know?

Antihistamines can relieve your coughing, sneezing, and runny nose, but they'll also make you sleepy. Newer nondrowsy antihistamines may not help your cough. Ask your pharmacist for help choosing the right medication for you.

Q: I think I have the flu. Should I ask my doctor for antibiotics?

A: If you have a stuffy nose, cough, or sore throat, antibiotics probably won't help. They kill bacteria and fungi, not cold or flu viruses. Over time, taking unnecessary antibiotics can be dangerous because it may create bacteria so strong that the drugs no longer work. These superbugs can cause very serious infections that are hard to treat.

Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics for an infection such as strep throat, bacterial pneumonia, or an ear infection. Here is the right way to take antibiotics:

Use them exactly as directed.

Take all the medication prescribed, even if you feel better.

Don't skip doses or save drugs for later.

If you have the flu, ask your doctor if antiviral medications may help relieve your symptoms.

Q: Is using sanitizer just as good as washing my hands?

A: Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be a convenient alternative to soap and water. Research has found that these products may be even more effective than traditional handwashing for killing infection-causing germs. Just make sure to choose a brand that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Keep in mind that hand sanitizers are not intended to remove soil, blood, or other contaminants from the skin. If your hands are visibly dirty, clean them with soap and water.

Always supervise your children when they are using hand sanitizers and store these products out of children's reach. If your child swallows hand sanitizer, call your local poison control center.

Pointers:

If you're sick drink plenty of water or soup to help loosen mucus and prevent dehydration.

Take aspirin or acetaminophen to relieve pain and fever, but don't give aspirin to children or teenagers.

See your doctor if your cough gets worse over time or lasts for more than 2 weeks.

Experts now recommend that anyone older than age 6 months get an annual flu shot.

Source: www.goodneighborpharmacy.com



Pneumonia Vaccine

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends a single dose of pneumonia vaccine (PPSV23) for all people 65 years and older, and for persons 2 to 64 years of age with certain high-risk conditions: chronic cardiovascular disease, chronic pulmonary disease, diabetes mellitus, alcoholism, chronic liver disease including cirrhosis, cerebrospinal fluid leaks, functional or anatomic asplenia including sickle cell disease and splenectomy, and immunocompromising conditions. Also, all adults age 19 through 64 years of age who smoke cigarettes or have asthma should receive the pneumonia vaccine.

All people who have existing indications for the pneumonia vaccine should continue to be vaccinated according to current ACIP recommendations during the outbreak of novel influenza A (H1N1).

HEALTH DEPARTMENT INFORMATION



The Tuscola County Health Department conducts immunization clinics on Monday afternoons, Tuesdays, and Thursdays by appointment. We also offer evening appointments the first and second Tuesday of each month.

We serve all ages, infant through adult. You may schedule an appointment by calling 989-673-8114, ext. 110 or 102.

Immunization Update:
During July, August, and September 2009, 739 children received 1430 vaccinations at the health department.

**Visit our
Website**

www.tchd.us

for the latest information on our programs, hours, clinic schedules, etc.

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The Tuscola Tracker is a quarterly newsletter providing local health department reports and information about communicable diseases and community health issues. Our resources include publications by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), such as the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) and other sources. If you'd like more information, or have questions regarding the above topics or other public health issues, please contact Ann Hepfer at 989-673-8114, ext. 117.