

Public Health News

C O O P E R C O U N T Y P U B L I C H E A L T H C E N T E R

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Good hand-washing takes a little time and effort, but it is a simple and effective way to prevent the spread of disease.
- Ensure early detection of Breast Cancer by having annual mammograms and clinical breast exams.

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H A N D - W A S H I N G - T H E K E Y T O S T A Y I N G H E A L T H Y D U R I N G C O L D & F L U S E A S O N

Keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading germs (bacteria and viruses) to others. This can be done simply by washing your hands thoroughly and often. Unfortunately, many of us do not wash properly.

Germs can accumulate on your hands during the day from a number of sources, including surfaces such as telephones, water fountains, door knobs, desks, and products that you pick up in stores, etc. These germs can include those that cause the common cold, flu, and gastrointestinal disorders. If you don't wash them off, you can easily infect yourself by touching your eyes, nose, or mouth (mucus membranes).

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends washing your hands with warm water and soap for at least 30 seconds — that is the time it takes to sing the ABC song. Wash briskly enough to create friction. Many bacterial cells have pili (small hair-like projections) that help bacteria to adhere to surfaces. Using soap and friction loosen the bacteria and viruses so they

can be washed away. Wash all surfaces of the hands, in between your fingers and include the wrists. Pay special attention to the cuticle area and under your fingernails. You should wash your hands:

- After using the bathroom
- Before and after preparing food — especially raw meat, poultry, or fish
- Before eating
- After changing diapers or toileting a toddler
- Before and after tending to someone who is ill
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses
- Before and after treating a cut

When soap and water are not available, anti-bacterial hand sanitizers can be used if they contain at least 60% alcohol. When using hand sanitizers, rub about ½ teaspoon all over

your hands until they are dry. The use of anti-bacterial sanitizers should not take the place of soap and water.

Good hand washing takes a little time and effort, but it is a simple and effective way to prevent the spread of disease.

If your group or organization is interested in a presentation on the importance of hand-washing, contact Kim Wiemholt RN at 882-2626.

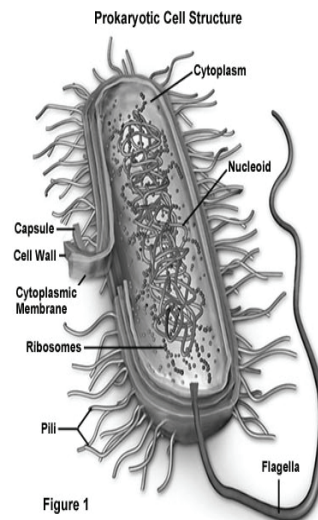


Figure 1

Pili (hair-like projections) help bacteria adhere to surfaces. Effective hand-washing can help to loosen their hold!

DIABETES – THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTROLLING YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS



Complications from diabetes may include blindness, kidney damage and lower limb amputations.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), diabetes is “a group of

diseases characterized by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both.”

Complications from uncontrolled blood glucose levels can include: blindness, kidney damage, and lower limb amputations. It is important for people living with diabetes to work with their health care providers to control not only their blood glucose levels, but their blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

Good glucose control may decrease your risk of developing eye, kidney, and nerve disease (micro-vascular disease) by 40%. Good blood pressure control can reduce these complications by approximately 33% to 50%. According to the CDC, for every 10 mm of mercury reduction in systolic blood pressure, there is a 12% reduction in complications from diabetes. And, reducing cholesterol levels can decrease your risk of cardiovascular complications by 20% to 50%.

DECREASING YOUR RISK OF LOWER LIMB AMPUTATIONS

Nerve damage, circulation problems, and infections caused by uncontrolled diabetes can lead to serious foot problems for the diabetic patient. However, the CDC estimates that over half of diabetes-related amputations can be prevented with regular exams and patient education. Loss of sensation in your feet,

caused by nerve damage, may cause foot problems to go unnoticed. It is, therefore, important to check your feet daily for any scratches, cracks, cuts, and blisters. If you have a sore on your foot, contact your health care provider. Sores can get worse quickly. Your health care provider should check your feet during your routine diabetes screen-

ing—4 times a year. If you have nerve damage your feet may tingle, burn or hurt. You may not be able to feel touch, heat, or cold. There may even be changes in the color or temperature of your feet. Some people lose hair on their toes, feet, and lower legs. The skin on your feet may be dry and cracked. Toenails may turn thick and yellow. Fungus

Can grow between your toes. Blisters, sores, ulcers, infected corns, and ingrown toenails need to be seen by your health care provider or foot doctor right away. Sometimes nerve damage can deform or misshape your feet, causing pressure points that can turn into blisters, sores, or ulcers. And, poor circulation can make these injuries slow to heal.

STEPS TO PROPER FOOT CARE

- **Check your feet each day**—make sure to check between your toes and the bottom of your feet.
- **Wash your feet daily**—dry with care, especially between your toes. Rub lotion or cream on the tops and bottoms of your feet, but not between your toes. Don't soak your feet. Soaking can dry out your skin and lead to infection.
- **Trim your toenails carefully**— after you've washed and dried your feet. The nails will be softer and safer to cut. Trim the nails to follow the natural curve of your toes. Don't cut into the corners. Use an emery board to smooth the edges. If you can't see well, or if your nails are thick or yellowed, get them trimmed by a foot doctor or another health care provider.
- **Treat corns and calluses gently**— ask your health care provider how to gently rub them with a pumice stone. Don't use razor blades, corn plasters, or liquid corn or callus removers— they can damage your skin.
- **Protect your feet from heat and cold.** Hot water or hot surfaces are a danger to your feet. Test bath water with your elbow before bathing.
- **Be Physically active**— physical activity helps increase circulation.

For more information on diabetic foot care, visit www.cdc.gov/diabetes.

SCREENING FOR BREAST CANCER



Screening Saves lives.

The American Cancer Society's (ACS) urges women to screen for breast cancer. Their goal is to find cancer before symptoms arise. The size of a breast cancer when it is found, along with whether or not it has spread, are the factors physicians use to predict successful treatment outcomes for the

patient. Physicians feel that early detection tests, such as mammograms and clinical breast exams, save many thousand of lives each year.

By following the American Cancer Society guidelines, a woman improves her chances that breast cancer can be found at an early stage and treated successfully.

The American Breast Cancer Foundation provides financial assistance to uninsured and underinsured women and men of all ages for breast cancer testing through their *Key to Life Breast Cancer Screening Assistance Program*. This includes annual screenings for women over 40, as well as support services for breast cancer patients. Financial assistance grants are available to eligible women and

men to assist with the following diagnostic tests and services:

- Clinical Breast Exams
- Screening and Diagnostic Mammograms
- Ultrasounds
- Surgical Consultations
- Emergency Biopsies

To contact the *Key to Life Breast Cancer Screening Assistance Program*, call toll free: 877-Key-2-Life (877-539-2543).

ACS SCREENING GUIDELINES FOR BREAST CANCER

The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for early detection of breast cancer:

- **Mammogram:** Women age 40 and older should have a mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health.
- **Clinical breast exam:** Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) as part of a regular exam by a health expert, preferably every 3 years. After age 40, women should have a breast exam by a health expert every year. It might

be a good idea to have the CBE shortly before the mammogram. You can use the exam to learn what your own breasts feel like.

- **Breast self-exam (BSE)** BSE is an option for women starting in their 20s. Women should be told about the benefits and limitations of BSE. Women should report any changes in how their breast look or feel to their health professional right away.

If you decide to do BSE, you should have your doctor or nurse check your method to

make sure you are doing it right. If you do BSE on a regular basis, you get to know how your breasts normally look and feel. Then you can more easily notice changes.

The most important thing is to see your doctor right away if you notice any of these changes: a **lump** or **swelling**, **skin irritation** or **dimpling**, **nipple pain** or the **nipple turning inward**, **redness** or **scaliness of the nipple** or **breast skin**, or a **discharge other than breast milk**. But remember that most of the time these breast changes are not cancer.



A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast. It can be used for screening or for women who find a lump, skin change or nipple discharge.

For the complete text, visit the American Cancer Society web page at:

<http://www.cancer.org>

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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Public Health Makes Life Better

Cooper County Public Health Center would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Thank you for your support this past year. It has been a busy and successful year, and we look forward to serving you in 2008.

Happy
Holidays!!!



**MYPYRAMID TIPS FOR HEALTHY HOLIDAY
COOKING**

- De-Saturate by using oil instead of lard, butter, shortening, or other fats that are solid at room temperature.
- Trim all the visible fat from meat and poultry before cooking.
- Skin poultry before cooking
- Broil, grill, roast, poach, or boil meat, poultry, or fish instead of frying.
- Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.
- Chill meat and poultry broth until fat becomes solid. Skim off fat before using the broth.
- Skip or limit the breading on meat, poultry or fish. Breading adds fat and calories. It will also cause the food to soak up more fat during frying.
- Choose and prepare foods without high fat sauces or gravies.
- For gravies or sauces – first skim the fat off pan drippings. For cream or white sauce, use fat-free skim milk and soft tub or liquid margarine.
- For dressing or stuffing – Add low-sodium broth or pan drippings with the fat skimmed off. Use herbs and spices and a whole grain bread for added flavor.
- For biscuits – Use vegetable oil instead of lard or butter and fat-free skim milk or 1% buttermilk instead of regular milk.
- For greens – Use skin-free smoked turkey, liquid smoke, fat-free bacon bits, or low-fat bacon instead of fatty meats.
- For sweet potato pie – Mash sweet potato with orange juice concentrate, nutmeg, vanilla, cinnamon, and only one egg. Leave out the butter.
- For cakes, cookies, quick breads and pancakes – use egg whites or egg substitute instead of whole eggs. Two egg whites can be substituted in many recipes for one whole egg. Use applesauce instead of some of the fat.

Visit www.mypyramid.gov for more tips.