

Please report notifiable diseases!

How to report:

- Online: <https://sendss.state.ga.us>
- Fax: (229) 259-5003
- Phone: (229) 333-5290
- Mail Form 3095 to:
South Health District
Confidential: Notifiable Disease
PO Box 5147
Valdosta, GA 31603

If you would like more information about electronic disease reporting using SendSS, please contact:

Denys Fluitt
Public Health Liaison
Phone: (229) 245-6436
Email: dfluitt@dhr.state.ga.us



The Public Health View

The Public Health View is published quarterly and distributed throughout District 8-1 to Community Health Partners and medical offices.

To subscribe, contact Denys Fluitt at dfluitt@dhr.state.ga.us. *The Public Health View* is available electronically or by mail.

Your comments, suggestions, and ideas for the Spring 2009 issue are welcome! To contribute, please contact:

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Valdosta, GA 31603
(229) 245-6436
dfluitt@dhr.state.ga.us

Please circulate this newsletter to other providers in your practice.

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The Public Health View

A publication of South Health District for the health care community
Winter 2009

Inside this issue:

- Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program
- Infectious Disease Focus: World AIDS Day 2008
- Lowndes County: Project Baby Luv
- Will you be PREGNANT this flu season?
- Stop Smoking. Start Dialing: Georgia Tobacco Quit Line
- Technological Advancements in Medicine: Telemedicine
- Diabetes Education: Sweet Dreams

South Health District Health Departments

Ben Hill:	229-426-5288
Berrien:	229-686-5411
Brooks:	229-263-7585
Cook:	229-896-3030
Echols:	229-559-5103
Irwin:	229-468-5003
Lanier:	229-482-3294
Lowndes:	229-333-5257
Hahira:	229-794-2665
Lake Park:	229-559-6470
Tift:	229-386-8373
Turner:	229-567-4357

District Resources

Adolescent Health:	229-253-0882
Babies Can't Wait:	229-245-6565
Children's Medical Services:	229-245-4310
Chronic Disease:	229-253-0882 x 105
Emergency Preparedness:	229-253-0882 x 100
Environmental Health:	229-333-5290
Epidemiology:	229-249-2796
Oral Health:	229-333-7590
Perinatal Programs:	229-259-2061
Public Health Liaison:	229-245-6436
Public Information Officer:	229-333-5370
SHAPP & WIC	Contact your local health dept.

Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program

The fundamental task of Georgia's Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program is to ensure that babies born to hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) positive women are given the opportunity to live their lives free of hepatitis B disease. Each year in the United States, over 22,000 pregnant women test positive for HBsAg. Infants born to HBsAg positive women are efficiently exposed to the virus through contact with large amounts of their mother's blood during delivery. Infants and children who are infected with the hepatitis B virus have a 90% chance of becoming chronic carriers and are more likely to die from end-stage liver disease (hepatocellular carcinoma or cirrhosis) as young adults. Immunizing babies born to HBsAg positive women with hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) and the hepatitis B vaccine series prevents this tragic outcome.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), ACOG and the AAP recommend that **all pregnant women be routinely tested for HBsAg at an early prenatal visit in each pregnancy.** The Georgia Immunization Program encourages all prenatal health providers to follow this recommendation.

To prevent perinatal transmission of hepatitis B, Health District personnel should follow HBsAg positive pregnant women during gestation and follow their babies until the infant receives post-vaccination testing. Immunizing infants born to HBsAg positive women with HBIG and hepatitis B vaccine, followed by vaccine at 1-2 months and six months of age, results in 85% to 95% efficacy in preventing perinatal hepatitis B transmission. Vaccination of sexual and household contacts of HBsAg positive pregnant women prevents transmission to susceptible individuals who are at high risk for the disease.

Hepatitis B and Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBsAg)-positive results in pregnant women are notifiable conditions and are considered diseases of public health significance to the Georgia Department of Health. As such, they are to be reported by the laboratory conducting the test and the physician who orders the test. Reporting should be made to the health department in the county in which the woman resides. This allows for the follow-up of the woman to the Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program Coordinator.



Eligibility requirements for enrollment into Georgia's Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program include:

- All pregnant women who test positive for HBsAg.
- All infants born to HBsAg positive women.
- All sexual and household contacts of HBsAg positive pregnant women.

For more information or to report any known cases, please contact Brenda Mims, Infectious Disease Coordinator at (229) 245-8711 Ext. 237 or bcmims@dhr.state.ga.us or Lynne Mercedes, Hepatitis Program Director at (404) 657-3171 or lymercedes@dhr.state.ga.us

Source: Immunization Program Manual, GA Immunization Program

Infectious Disease Focus:
World AIDS Day 2008

Monday, December 1

Valdosta State University
University Center
1500 N. Patterson Street



Activities Include:

- 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.: FREE HIV Testing
- Noon to 2 P.M.: Lunch and Learn
World AIDS Day Proclamation by
City of Valdosta Mayor John Fretti
- 6 P.M.: Guest Speaker: Dr. Linda Floyd
"HIV and Depression"
Leila Ellis Conference Room
601 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Ga
- 7 P.M. Candle light vigil

For more information contact, Anna Whitfield at (229) 245-8711
Ext. 224 or aewhitfield@dhr.state.ga.us.

Stop Smoking. Start Dialing

Studies show that telephone-based cessation programs like the Quit line produce significantly higher quit rates than programs that use self-help materials alone.

Trained professionals make a difference. You will get help from the Quit Line counselors who have special training and expertise in:

- Cessation from all forms of tobacco-cigarettes, pipes, cigars and spit
- Information and decision support about physician prescribed pharmacological support
- Skill-building and problem solving
- Relapse prevention

A few smokers achieve abstinence in an initial quit attempt. More than 70 percent of the 50 million U.S. smokers have tried to quit and 46 percent of smokers try to quit each year. Tobacco dependence is an addiction where you may face periods of relapse and remission.

More than 11,000 people die in Georgia every year from tobacco-related illnesses. In spite of these chilling statistics, 23 percent of Georgia adults smoke. An estimated 30,000 Georgia children begin smoking every year and another 10,000 begin to use spit tobacco.

For more information on the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line call 1-877-270-STOP.

Lowndes County:

Project Baby Luv



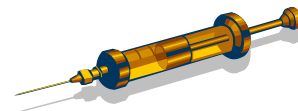
The Lowndes County Board of Health has been awarded a March of Dimes grant for three years (2008 to 2010). The grant aims to improve birth outcomes for pregnant African American women with high-risk conditions for poor pregnancy outcomes. Through this grant, project Baby LUV (Lowndes Unique Victories) has been created.

Lowndes County had the highest rate of infant mortality when compared to other Georgia counties of comparable size during 2003 and 2004. While rates decreased somewhat in 2005, the death rate among both African American and Caucasian infants, less than one year of age, still remains higher than the Georgia state average. The focus of the project is to reduce the rate of infant mortality by 20% and the rate of low birth weight by 10% by 2010.

Project Baby LUV will increase risk reduction education and services for the community, and will link the affected women to private providers early within their pregnancy. The project will also link women and infants to local programs, such as WIC and Children First, and community resources.

For more information on infant mortality or Baby LUV contact the Lowndes County Health Department at (229) 333-5257.

Will You Be PREGNANT this flu season?



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu shots for all women who will be pregnant during influenza season. In North America, peak flu season is usually November to March. Because the flu shot is made from killed (inactivated) influenza virus, it is considered safe during any stage of pregnancy. However, pregnant women should not use the nasal-spray flu vaccine, which is made with live, weakened influenza virus.



Pregnancy can affect your immune system and also put extra stress on your heart and lungs. As a result, you may be at increased risk of not only getting the flu but of developing serious complications of the flu, including pneumonia. In addition, pregnant women with the flu are far more likely to require hospitalization for flu complications than are women with the flu who aren't pregnant.

South Health District is administering flu shots. Please contact your County Health Department for more information.
For more information call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) or visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

Technological Advancements in Medicine: Augusta Physician Sees Valdosta Children through Telemedicine

Children's Medical Services is now equipped for their patients to be seen by physicians that are located in Valdosta via telemedicine. Telemedicine is a health care delivery method that applies high-speed telecommunications systems, computer technology, and specialized medical cameras to examine, diagnose, treat and educate patients at a distance.



CMS began offering this service in February and is in frequent contact with Margaret Guill, M.D., a pediatric pulmonologist, at the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) in Augusta. Before February, Dr. Guill traveled to Valdosta every other month to see between 70 and 80 children over two days. With the availability of telemedicine, she is now able to see more children from her office in Augusta.

The statewide Georgia Telemedicine Program began in 2005 through a grant from WellPoint Inc. The Georgia Telemedicine Program builds upon the successes of WellPoint's unique Open Access Telemedicine Network model implemented in California to create a comprehensive web of access points throughout Georgia. Their key objectives are to improve access to care throughout Georgia, improve the timeliness of diagnosis and treatment for the patients, improve rural health care delivery, and support rural health care and rural facilities in Georgia.

Telemedicine events can be conducted in two ways – live video and "store and forward". Live video is used when the primary care provider, the patient and the specialist meet at the same time using video and telephone equipment. "Store and forward" is used to send an image to the specialist for review.

Children's Medical Services hopes to add additional telemedicine centers around the district so that South Georgia children will have more opportunities to see specialists. Patients can potentially see more than 20 specialists, such as cardiologists, dermatologists, endocrinologists, neurologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists and others.

For more information contact Children's Medical Services at (229)245-4310 or visit them online at www.southhealthdistrict.com/children.

Sweet Dreams: Diabetes Education

In 2005, the occurrence of diabetes in Irwin County was 19.6%. While diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases in the United States, the prevalence across the U.S. is only 7% and in Georgia, 12.8%. Irwin County has a much higher rate of diabetes compared to the state and nation.

Due to these statistics, the Irwin County Board of Health was able to obtain a HRSA grant to address the problem. The grant project, named "Sweet Dreams", began in 2006 and focuses on fighting this chronic disease by providing diabetes education and management classes. The goals of the program are to:

1. Reduce the number of hospitalizations resulting from diabetes in Irwin County.
2. Increase healthy lifestyle behaviors among middle school children in the Irwin County.
3. Reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes in Irwin County.

By the end of Fiscal Year '08, the program will have provided Irwin County Middle School with \$10,000 to purchase physical activity and nutrition equipment, and educational materials for the student's use, to encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Grant proposals are currently underway to fund these programs for Berrien and Cook counties.



For more information on Sweet Dreams or Diabetes education, contact Bridget Walters at (229) 468-5003 or bmwalters@dhr.state.ga.us.