

# Let's Talk About Health

Jefferson County Department of Health • Volume 5, Number 7 • July 2004

## HEALTH SCREENINGS THE BASICS

**SCREENING TESTS**, such as blood pressure checks, can find diseases early when they are easier to treat. Some people need certain screening tests earlier, or more often, than others.

Talk to your doctor about which of the tests listed below are right for you, when you should have them, and how often.

### **Cholesterol Checks**

Have your cholesterol checked at least every five years, starting at age 35. If you smoke, or if you have diabetes or heart disease, you need to get your cholesterol checked starting at age 20.

### **Blood Pressure**

Have your blood pressure checked at least every two years.

### **Colorectal Cancer Tests**

Begin regular screening for colorectal cancer starting at the age of 50.

### **Diabetes Tests**

Have a test to screen for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

### **Depression**

If you have felt "down," sad, or hope-

less for two weeks straight, talk to your doctor about screening for depression.

### **Sexually Transmitted Infections**

Screening for sexually transmitted infections such as HIV can help you and your partner stay healthy.

### **Prostate Cancer Screening**

This screening is important because it helps detect prostate cancer in its early stages when treatment is more effective.

### **Breast Cancer Screening**

Women should practice monthly breast self-exams and have regular mammograms after the age of 40.

### **WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?**

#### **Don't Smoke**

If you do smoke, get counseling to help you quit. Ask for support from your family, friends, and co-workers.

#### **Eat a Healthy Diet**

Eat a variety of foods, including fruits and vegetables, animal or vegetable protein, and grains. Limit the amount of saturated fat.

#### **Be Physically Active**

Walk, dance, ride a bike, rake leaves, or do any other physical activity you enjoy.

#### **Stay at a Healthy Weight**

Balance the number of calories you eat with the number you burn off during activities. Remember to watch portion sizes.

#### **Avoid Alcohol**

If you drink alcohol, have no more than 2 drinks a day. A standard drink is one 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.

#### **Immunizations**

Stay up-to-date with immunizations:

- Have a flu shot every year starting at age 50.
- Have a tetanus-diphtheria shot every 10 years.
- Have a pneumonia shot once at age 65 (you may need it earlier if you have certain health problems, such as lung disease).
- Talk to your doctor to see whether you need hepatitis B shots.

*Source: [www.abrq.gov](http://www.abrq.gov)*

### **Community Resource Representatives (CRRs)**

Northern Area .....	Virginia Bozeman .....	(205) 930-1485
South West Area .....	Clarice Davis .....	(205) 930-1376
Bessemer/Western Area .....	Linda Hannon .....	(205) 930-1486
Eastern Area .....	Sarah Tyree .....	(205) 930-1363
Southern Area .....	Henry McGowan .....	(205) 930-1323

### **July Health Observances**

National Therapeutic Recreation Week  
Eye Injury Prevention Month  
Hemochromatosis Screening Awareness Month  
International Group B Strep Awareness Month

*For information about health events in your community, to announce your community events, or for other community requests, please contact the CRR in your area.*

## COMMUNITY CORNER

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual  
"Function at the Junction"  
will be held Saturday,  
July 26, 2004,  
10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
For more information call  
788-3672

### Health Center Services

The Jefferson County Department of Health provides outpatient health care for Jefferson County's underinsured and un-insured residents. These centers are open from 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The centers offer services such as Adult Health, Child Health, Dental Health, Family Planning, Immunizations, Interpreters, Maternity Care, Nutrition, Pharmacy, and Social Services.

**BESSEMER HEALTH CENTER**  
2201 Arlington Avenue  
424-6001

**CENTRAL HEALTH CENTER**  
1400 6th Avenue South  
933-9110

**CHRIS MCNAIR HEALTH CENTER**  
1308 Tuscaloosa Avenue SW  
715-6121

**EASTERN HEALTH CENTER**  
5720 1st Avenue South  
591-5180

**MORRIS HEALTH CENTER**  
586 Morris Majestic Rd  
647-0572

**NORTHERN HEALTH CENTER**  
2817 North 30th Avenue  
323-4548

**WESTERN HEALTH CENTER**  
1700 Avenue E, Ensley  
788-3321

# KNOW ABOUT STROKE

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. after heart disease and cancer, and the leading cause of serious, long-term disability. About 600,000 new strokes are reported in the U.S. each year.

### WHAT IS STROKE?

A stroke, sometimes called a "brain attack," occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted. When stroke occurs, brain cells in the immediate area begin to die because they stop getting the oxygen and nutrients they need.

### TYPES OF STROKE

There are two major kinds of stroke:

#### Ischemic Stroke

This is caused by a blood clot that blocks a blood vessel in the brain. About 80% of all strokes are of this kind.

#### Hemorrhagic Stroke

This occurs when a blood vessel in the brain breaks and bleeds. About 20% of strokes are hemorrhagic.

### KNOW THE SIGNS

Because stroke injures the brain, you may not realize that you've had one. To a bystander, someone with stroke may just look unaware or confused.

The symptoms of stroke are distinct because they happen quickly. They are:

- Sudden weakness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body).
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

### RISK FACTORS

The best treatment for stroke is prevention. The most important treatable conditions linked to stroke are:

- Heart disease

People with heart problems have more than twice the risk of stroke as those whose hearts work normally.

- High blood pressure

Maintain a healthy weight and exercise to reduce high blood pressure.

- Cigarette smoking

The nicotine and carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke damage the cardiovascular system in many ways. The use of birth control combined with cigarette smoking greatly increases stroke risk.

- Diabetes

People with diabetes often have high cholesterol and are

overweight, increasing their risk even more. Treatment can decrease the risk of stroke.

### ACT IN TIME

Stroke is a medical emergency. Every second counts when someone is having a stroke. The longer blood flow is cut off to the brain, the greater the damage. Immediate treatment can save people's lives and enhance their chances of a successful recovery. If you believe someone is having a stroke, call 911 immediately.

### REMEMBER!

Although stroke is a disease of the brain, it can affect the entire body. The effects of a stroke range from mild to severe and can include paralysis. Patients may also experience pain or numbness.

Source: [www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)



**Know Stroke  
Know the Signs  
Act In Time**

# ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE (ETS)

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, causing more than 444,000 deaths each year and resulting in an annual cost of more than \$75 billion in direct medical cost.

Environmental tobacco smoke is also called “secondhand smoke” and is the combination of two forms of smoke from burning tobacco products, *side stream smoke* and *mainstream smoke*.

**SIDE STREAM SMOKE** is smoke that burns directly off the lighted ends of cigarettes, pipes, and cigars.

**MAINSTREAM SMOKE** is smoke drawn into a smoker's lungs and then breathed out into the air.

**More than 6.4 million children living today will die prematurely because of a decision they will make as adolescents - the decision to smoke.**

Some of the chemicals in ETS include substances that irritate the lining of the lungs and other tissues, cancer causing chemicals, substances that cause cell mutations, and substances that interfere with normal cell development. Tobacco smoke is known to contain at least 60 cancer causing chemicals and ETS causes 3,000 lung cancer deaths annually among adult nonsmokers.

When a nonsmoker inhales secondhand smoke, it's called passive smoking. Therefore, nonsmokers who are exposed to ETS absorb tobacco chemicals that are harmful to their health without ever taking a puff themselves.

**What can happen if you're exposed to ETS?**

- You can get cancer in your nasal cavity or cervix.
- If you're pregnant, your baby can be born at a low birthweight.
- You can have a spontaneous abortion (miscarriage.)
- Your children are more likely to get colds, allergies, asthma, and ear infections when exposed to ETS.
- Your children can get pneumonia and bronchitis.
- Babies of smokers are more likely to die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- ETS can increase your risk of heart disease.
- Eye, nose, and throat irritation are associated with ETS.
- Physical discomforts such as coughing, headaches, rapid heartbeat, and upset stomach may occur.

## Remember

- About 80% of adult smokers started smoking before the age of 18. Every day, nearly 4,000 young people under the age of 18 try their first cigarette.
- More than 6.4 million children living today will die prematurely because of a decision they make as adolescents: the decision to smoke cigarettes.

## How to protect your children

Secondhand smoke is especially harmful to children because their small bodies and lungs haven't finished developing. Because of this, children should be guarded from ETS.

- Establish a “no smoking” rule in your home. Be polite, but firm, in making sure guests and family members obey.

Place signs around your home to remind people not to light up. Such signs are polite, effective, and easily noticed.

- Don't allow smoking in the car.

## QUESTIONS

1. Every year, approximately \_\_\_\_\_ nonsmoking adults die from lung cancer as a result of ETS

a)1,000 b)3,000 c)5,000

2. Nonsmokers who inhale secondhand smoke are called \_\_\_\_\_ smokers

a)Passive b)Voluntary c)Unwilling

Answers: 1) b 2) a

- Try to quit and help family members to quit too. The results will affect the health of your whole family.
- Remind baby sitters and other people who work in your home that it's not okay to smoke-even when you are out.
- Take your children to smoke-free daycare centers and preschool.
- Choose smoke-free restaurants.
- Choose family activities where your children won't be exposed to smoke.

Source: [www.nci.nih.gov](http://www.nci.nih.gov)

## Ozone Alert?

### Here's What to Do!

It's ozone season again, and that means that we need to take special steps to protect our health. Follow these easy steps to ensure that your air is the safest and cleanest it can be.

- Turn up your thermostat to save energy.
- Catch a ride! Carpool or vanpool to work, school, or when going out.
- Ride public transportation! (Buses are free on ozone alert days.)
- Bike or walk when you can (it's good for you AND the environment!)
- Wait to put gas in your car or wait to mow your lawn until after the alert is lifted.
- Make a list and go out on errands as little as possible. Limit yourself to one trip!

Source: *Alabama Partners for Clean Air*



JEFFERSON COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Protecting Your Health

### Health Promotion and Communications

P.O. Box 2648  
Birmingham, AL 35202  
Phone (205) 930-1480  
Fax (205) 930-1487

We are on the web at:  
[www.jcdh.org](http://www.jcdh.org)

If you would like your name added to the "Let's Talk About Health" mailing list, please call 930-1338.

# Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus (IDDM)

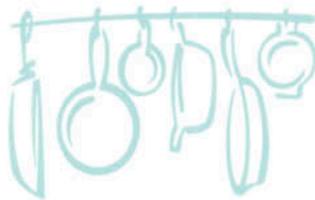
IDDM is the most common form of diabetes seen in children. For children with this type of diabetes, the goals are to maintain normal growth, development, and lifestyle while keeping blood glucose controlled. The target glucose level is a range of about 80 to 180mg/dl.

Remember that the three key factors affecting blood glucose control in diabetes are: nutrition, physical activity, and insulin.

### COOKING AND NUTRITION TIPS

When a child is diagnosed with diabetes, one of your first concerns may be about his/her diet. Feeding a child with diabetes doesn't mean that you need to prepare two sets of meals for your family. Follow these tips to encourage good nutrition:

- Promote water as a beverage of choice. This makes it easier to control blood glucose levels because it limits high-carbohydrate beverages.
- Anticipate that your teen's body chemistry may cause more changes in blood glucose levels and check blood glucose levels frequently.
- Increase your child's fiber intake by choosing high-fiber foods such as whole grain bread, cereals, and beans



instead of low-fiber equivalents like white bread, sugary cereals, and potato chips.

- Increase fruit and vegetable intake by keeping cut-up veggies in a plastic container in the refrigerator and adding extra vegetables to stews.
- Moderate sweets consumption by planning dessert only once or twice a week and encouraging half-sized portions.
- If weight loss is important, look to reduce fats by using low-fat dairy products and salad dressings, and less butter or margarine.
- Reduce saturated fats by using meat as a side dish rather than the main course. Serve seafood and skinless poultry as alternatives.
- Read labels which can help you identify carbohydrates, fats and other nutrients in foods and proper serving sizes. Remember that fat-free and sugar-free foods aren't necessarily calorie free.

Watch for these key terms on labels:

- "Free" has the least amount of nutrient.
- "Very low" and "Low" have a little more of a nutrient.
- "Reduced" means the food has 25% less of that nutrient than the standard version of the food.

Source: [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)