

# Your Health Your Life

A Women's Health  
Newsletter from the  
Atlantic County  
Division of Public Health

April–June, 2006

## The Eye's Have It... so keep them healthy!

Eye makeup is used to enhance our appearance, but the improper use of these products can lead to serious eye infections, irritations, corneal injuries, damage to contact lenses and allergies.

Prevent Blindness America, founded in 1908, is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization. In celebration of Women's Eye Health & Safety Month, they offer these suggestions for using eye makeup safely:

- Wash hands before applying. Some bacteria can transfer from your hands to your eyes.
- Cosmetics should be kept away from extreme heat and cold that can break down the preservatives, allowing bacteria to grow. Don't carry mascara in your purse or leave makeup in your car.
- Do not share your makeup with others or use someone else's makeup.
- Never apply makeup while driving or riding in a moving vehicle.
- Always remove makeup every night. Never sleep with eye makeup on.



## National Health Observances

### April:

Women's Eye Health & Safety Month  
National Public Health Week - 3rd - 9th  
World Health Day - 30th

### May:

Lyme Disease Awareness Month  
Nat'l. Osteoporosis Awareness & Prevention Month  
National Women's Health Week - 14th - 20th

### June:

Home Safety Month  
National Headache Awareness Week - 4th - 10th

## The Flu: What Women Need to Know: A Three Part Series. . .

While you may think flu season is over, in 24 of the past 29 years, flu has peaked between January and May. These days the mere word "flu" can be frightening. The media is filled with stories about the flu, from the importance of getting a flu vaccine and outbreaks of avian flu abroad, to discussions about a flu pandemic.

Relax and get the facts. Your main concern should be the garden-variety type of flu viruses, which infect up to one in five people a year, sending more than 200,000 people to the hospital with flu-related complications.

The flu is not just a bad cold. Both the flu and colds can be caused by viruses. But, once you know the differences between these illnesses, you won't confuse the two. While certain symptoms are similar—including runny or stuffy nose, sore throat and cough—the flu usually also brings one or more of these symptoms with it as well: a high fever, an intense headache, strong aches and pains, overall weakness and a serious dry cough.

Unlike a cold that creeps up on you, the flu strikes quickly. With a cold you can usually carry on your normal daily activities. If you have the flu, you're usually too sick and weak to go to work or even to leave your bed. Even after the severe, but short phase passes, you may still feel tired for weeks.

Finally, while the only way to avoid a cold is to stay away from people with colds and to wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water, there are vaccines available for preventing the flu. If you do get a cold you can help prevent spreading it to others by: covering your coughs and sneezes; staying home when you are sick; and washing your hands often.

For more information contact the Atlantic County Division of Public Health at 609-645-5935 and don't forget to check the next two quarterly newsletters for more on women and the flu.



National Public Health Week

April 3-9, 2006



Atlantic County Division of Public Health: Working for Healthy People and Healthy Communities  
Atlantic County Executive, Dennis Levinson Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Joseph F. Silipena, Chairman

## It's Tick Time...Do you know how to protect yourself?



The State of New Jersey continues to have one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the country. The majority of these cases were caused by tick bites acquired around the home. Children may be at a higher risk because of the amount of time

they spend playing outdoors and the failure to recognize a tick bite. To help reduce the risk of tick exposure, remind your family of these “tick safety tips.”

- ◆ Before going out: put on light-colored clothing and tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks.
- ◆ Wear closed shoes.
- ◆ Apply a tick repellent, making sure to follow product directions.
- ◆ While Outside: stay in the center of trails; avoid low bushes and leafy brush; periodically check clothing and skin for ticks and remove them.
- ◆ Upon Return: check clothing, skin and hair for ticks. Also check pets. If a tick is found, carefully remove it with tweezers.



### Follow these steps for the proper removal of ticks:

1. Grasp tick as close to skin as possible, using tweezers.
2. Pull gently with a steady, backward pressure—be patient!
3. Wash area with soap, water and topical antiseptic.

Remember...incorrect removal of an attached tick can increase your risk of disease.



For more information call the Atlantic County Division of Public Health at 609-645-5935.

## National Women's Health Week...Take time to care for you!

National Women's Health Week is a national effort to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. The focus is on the importance of using simple preventive and positive health behaviors in everyday life. It encourages awareness about key health issues among all women, including women with disabilities, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinas, and American Indian/Alaska Native women, since research has shown there are significant health disparities among these groups.



When women take even the simplest steps to improve their health, the results can be significant. But women need to be able to choose the most effective steps for their individual lifestyles and circumstances. They need to be informed and take responsible actions to improve their own health. For example, heart disease is the number one killer among women, but cancer ranks first among Asian/Pacific Islander women.

When it comes to lung cancer, however, white women have the highest mortality rate, while African American women have the highest mortality rate from heart disease. Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women, but it occurs at a higher rate among African American and Latina women. Women with disabilities often require additional technology when seeking health care services; the lack of these features coupled with the lack of cultural competency among providers often prevents them from seeking and achieving proper health care. These differences show the importance of taking appropriate health actions based on individual backgrounds and risk factors.

**While speaking about prevention, remember, the Atlantic County Division of Public Health offers preventive screenings in our Women's Health Clinic. Call 609-645-5933 for more information.**

### Wellness Tip of the Quarter: Unwind...

It's important for your body to relax. There are many ways to relax the mind and body. Just for starters, try one of these: meditation, deep breathing, and reading can all provide ways for you to take it easy. Better yet, take a pleasant walk and you'll shed pounds along with stress.

