

# Public Health Notes

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*NH DHHS Mission Statement: To join communities and families in providing opportunities for citizens to achieve health and independence.*

## Breastfeeding and Obesity

Nearly 5 out of 6 New Hampshire mothers start breastfeeding after delivery, but only 2 out of 6 continue until the baby is one year old. Child care is an important setting to support mothers to successfully continue breastfeeding.

**Preventing Obesity: Breastfeeding Support in Child Care**, a new fact sheet from the Obesity Prevention Program (OPP), Division of Public Health Services, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services:

- Explains why breast milk is important in obesity prevention and other aspects of infant health,
- Identifies policies that child care programs can adopt to provide more support to breastfeeding families, and
- Gathers the statistics behind the story and shows where New Hampshire stands in comparison to national breastfeeding recommendations.

The OPP is part of a consortium of organizations implementing the New Hampshire Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) plan. For more information about the OPP contact us at 603-271-4551 or visit the program website at [www.dhhs.nh.gov](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov). Click [here](#) to view the new fact sheet.

## Shingles Vaccine

Shingles is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. Nearly 1 in 3 people in the United States will develop shingles in their lifetime. Anyone who has recovered from chickenpox can get shingles, even children. However the risk of getting the disease, and its severity, increase as a person gets older, usually after 60 years of age. Some complications of shingles include ongoing and severe pain even after the rash has cleared up, eye

problems, and rarely pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness, brain inflammation (encephalitis), or death.

A vaccine for shingles has been available since 2006 and is recommended for use in people age 60 and older.

Shingles cannot be passed from one person to another. However, the virus that causes shingles can be spread from a person with active shingles to a person who has never had chickenpox. In such cases, the person exposed to the virus might develop chickenpox, but they would not develop shingles. The virus is spread through direct contact with fluid from the rash blisters, not through sneezing, coughing, or casual contact.

To find out if you should get the vaccine, speak with your healthcare provider. To learn more about shingles and the vaccine, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at [www.cdc.gov/shingles/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/shingles/index.html).



### Important Dates

July 28 is World Hepatitis Day

July is UV Safety Month

August 1-7 is World Breastfeeding Week

August is National Immunization Awareness Month



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## Pertussis

In 2010 there were 27,550 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in the United States and 24 in New Hampshire. Pertussis is a very contagious disease caused by a bacteria and can cause serious illness—especially in infants too young to be fully vaccinated. Pertussis vaccines are recommended for children, teens, and adults, including pregnant women.

The primary symptoms are cough and cold symptoms, e.g., runny or stuffy nose, congestion, sneezing, or mild fever. But after 1-2 weeks, severe coughing can begin. Unlike the common cold, pertussis can become a series of coughing fits that continue for weeks. Pertussis can cause violent and rapid coughing, over and over, until the air is gone from the lungs and you are forced to inhale with a loud “whooping” sound. In infants, the cough can be minimal or not even there, or it can be very severe. Infants may have a symptom known as apnea, which is a pause in the child’s breathing pattern. Pertussis is most severe in infants. More than half of infants under age 1 who get pertussis must be hospitalized. If your baby is having trouble breathing, take him to a hospital or doctor right away.

About 1 in 4 infants with pertussis get pneumonia, and about two-thirds will have slowed or stopped breathing. Pertussis can be deadly for 1 or 2 infants per 100 who are hospitalized. The disease can be treated with antibiotics, but early diagnosis is important.

Pertussis is spread by coughing—the droplets become airborne and other people breathe them in. There has been an increase in the number of cases of pertussis since the 1980s, especially among teens and babies younger than 6 months. In 2010, an increase in reported cases among 7-10 year olds was seen. This new trend reinforces the need for a routinely recommended booster dose of Tdap at age 11 or 12 years.

To learn more about pertussis, visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/pertussis](http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis) or call the DHHS Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496.

## Recreational Water Illnesses

Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs) is a term used to refer to infections and illnesses that people can get from swimming pools, water fountains, water parks,

spas or hot tubs, and oceans, rivers, and lakes. RWIs can be spread by swallowing, breathing, or coming into contact with contaminated water. RWIs can cause a wide variety of symptoms, depending on the specific illness, including gastrointestinal (GI), skin, ear, respiratory, eye, neurologic, and wound infections.

The most commonly reported recreational water illness is diarrhea. Diarrheal illnesses can be caused by germs such as Crypto, short for Cryptosporidium, Giardia, Shigella, norovirus, and E. coli O157:H7.

RWIs can be prevented. Steps swimmers should take include:

- Don’t swim when you have diarrhea—you can spread germs in the water and make other people sick
- Don’t swallow the pool water—avoid getting water in your mouth too
- Practice good hygiene by showering with soap and water before swimming and washing your hands after using the bathroom.

Steps for parents of young children include:

- Take your kids to the bathroom to check diapers often—waiting to hear “I have to go” may mean it’s too late
- Don’t change diapers at poolside
- Wash your child thoroughly before swimming to prevent fecal matter from ending up in the water.

For more information on recreational water illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming).

