



September 2021

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

MEDDAC Bavaria Preventive Medicine Newsletter



**SEPTEMBER IS
NATIONAL
CHILDHOOD
OBESITY
AWARENESS
MONTH**

About 1 in 5 (19%) children in the United States has obesity. **National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month** provides a chance for all of us to learn more about this serious health condition. While there is no simple solution, there are many ways communities can support children with their journey to good health.

Childhood Obesity Is a Major Public Health Problem

Children with obesity are at higher risk for having other chronic health conditions and diseases, such as asthma, sleep apnea, bone & joint problems, and type 2 diabetes. They also have more risk factors for heart disease like high blood pressure and high cholesterol. They can be bullied and teased more than their normal weight peers and are also more likely to suffer from social isolation, depression, and lower self-esteem. Children with obesity are more likely to have obesity as adults, which can lead to lifelong physical and mental health problems. Adult obesity is associated with a higher risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and many types of cancers.

Childhood Obesity Is Influenced by Many Factors

Many factors can have an impact on childhood obesity, including eating and physical activity behaviors, genetics, metabolism, family and home environment, and community and social factors. For some children and families, obesity may be influenced by the following: Too much time spent being inactive, lack of sleep; lack of places to go in the community to get physical activity, easy access to inexpensive - high calorie foods and sugary beverages, lack of access to affordable - healthier foods;

Parents and Caregivers Can Help Prevent Obesity and Support Healthy Growth

Be aware of your child's growth. Learn how obesity is measured in children and talk to your Provider at your local MEDDACB clinic. Provide nutritious, lower-calorie foods such as fruits and vegetables in place of foods high in added sugars and solid fats and try serving more fruit and vegetables at meals and as snacks. Make sure drinking water is always available as a no-calorie alternative to sugary drinks and limit juice intake. Help children get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Regular physical activity can have immediate health benefits like better sleep, better academic achievement, and reduced feelings of anxiety and stress. Make sure your child has healthy sleep habits. Sleep helps improve attention and reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, and even obesity later in life. Get your child to bed at the same time each day, including the weekends; remove electronic devices from the bedroom; and keep their bedroom dark and cool. Your child needs at least 8 hours of sleep. Be a role model! Eat healthy meals and snacks, and get the right amount of physical activity every day.

Source: www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood

What is happening in September:

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month
Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month
National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month
National Cholesterol Education Month
National Suicide Prevention Week (September 05-11)
World Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Day (September 09)
World Rabies Day (September 28)



What is rabies? Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of mammals. It invariably causes swelling of the brain and death after a relatively short illness.

How is rabies transmitted? The rabies virus is found in the nervous tissue of infected mammals. As the virus works its way to the brain, it begins to be secreted in the saliva of the animal. People and mammals get rabies when infectious saliva is introduced into the body, usually through a bite from an infected animal. Rabies transmissions from other types of exposures are extremely rare. These types of exposures include saliva or nervous tissue entering an open wound or saliva or nervous tissue coming into contact with a mucous membrane such as the eyes, nose or mouth.

What are the symptoms of rabies in people? After an average of 30 - 50 days (as short as 14 days or longer than a year) from exposure to a rabid animal, a person develops an illness that may include fever, sore throat, stiff muscles, headache, tiredness, restlessness, nausea, and itching or tingling at the site of the bite. As the disease progresses, a person may become agitated, with periods of calm. Fear of water caused by severe throat spasms when trying to drink may occur. Paralysis then starts in the legs and moves towards the head. Most people die from cardiac arrest or respiratory failure within a short period after onset of illness.

What are symptoms of rabies in animals? The animal may have a change in personality or behavior. For example, wild animals may lose their fear of humans or pets may become aggressive or withdraw. Often the animal does not eat, may fear water, and have an unsteady gait. Paralysis may start in the rear quarters and progress to the front of the body.

What should I do if I am bitten by an animal or exposed to the saliva of a possibly rabid animal? First, thoroughly wash the wound with soap and running water. Gather as much information about the animal as possible. Contact your physician as soon as possible and notify your local Veterinary clinic.

How long is the rabies virus infectious after it is outside of the rabid animal? The rabies virus is a very fragile virus. As soon as the saliva dries, the virus is no longer infectious. The virus is easily killed by soaps, detergents, bleach, and alcohol.

What will happen to the animal after a person has been bitten or otherwise exposed? If the animal is a healthy domestic dog it should be observed for 10 days. A licensed veterinarian must examine the animal at the beginning and end of the 10-day observation period.

Why 10 days? Studies have shown that dogs shed the rabies virus in their saliva for a short period of time (usually 4 - 5 days) before they develop symptoms. If the animal has not developed symptoms by the tenth day after the exposure then the animal would not have been shedding the virus at the time of the exposure.

What if the animal is not available for observation or testing? If you have been bitten or otherwise exposed to the saliva of an animal that is not available for observation or testing, contact your physician and local veterinary clinic. If it was a domestic pet try to locate the animal or the owner of the animal. If the animal cannot be located, speak with your physician, as you may need to start preventive treatment for rabies which will include the rabies vaccine.

How can I protect myself from rabies? **Vaccinate your domestic dog or cat (and be sure to keep the animal's vaccinations up-to-date)** / avoid contact with wild or stray animals, and domestic/wild hybrid animals / do not touch dead animals / keep wild animals out of homes, workplaces and other dwellings / report stray, sick, and injured animals to local animal control authorities or law enforcement officials.

Can a person get rabies shots before they are exposed? Pre-exposure rabies vaccines are recommended only for people at increased risk of coming into contact with rabies. Such people include rabies laboratory workers, veterinarians, animal control officers, and cave explorers. Some people may get pre-exposure shots when they travel to developing countries. Consult your health care provider or public health department for more information.

If I need rabies shots, what should I expect? If you never had rabies shots before, then you can expect to receive four doses of vaccine over a 14 day period and a dose of rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) on the same day as the first dose of vaccine. Rabies immunoglobulin provides immediate protection against rabies until your body has responded to the vaccine and makes its own antibodies to rabies. If you have been vaccinated previously with one of the currently licensed vaccines, you will still need two booster doses of rabies vaccine. The first dose should be given as soon as possible and the second dose three days later. Rabies immunoglobulin should NOT be given.

When is it too late to start rabies vaccinations after an exposure? Ideally, the vaccination series should begin as soon as possible after an exposure has occurred and a health care provider has determined rabies vaccination is warranted. Usually you can wait for test results from a healthy domestic animal to see if rabies shots are needed. Bites and exposures from wild animals should be treated as if the animal were rabid until rabies has been ruled out. There have been instances when a person did not start rabies shots for months after an exposure because the exposure was never suspected.

Once a person develops rabies symptoms it is too late to vaccinate against rabies! Rabies is nearly always fatal but also 100% preventable!

Sources: rabiesalliance.org; www.cdc.gov/rabies;



Blood Cholesterol can be confusing! So let's bust some Myths and learn some Facts about it.

Myth: All cholesterol is bad for you.

Fact: Some types of cholesterol are essential for good health. Your body needs cholesterol to perform important jobs, such as making hormones and building cells. Cholesterol travels through the blood on proteins called *lipoproteins*. Two types of lipoproteins carry cholesterol throughout the body:

- **LDL (low-density lipoprotein)**, sometimes called "bad" cholesterol, makes up most of your body's cholesterol.

High levels of LDL cholesterol raise your risk for heart disease and stroke.

- **HDL (high-density lipoprotein)**, or "good" cholesterol, carries cholesterol back to the liver. The liver then flushes it from the body.

High levels of HDL cholesterol can lower your risk for heart disease and stroke.

When your body has too much LDL cholesterol, it can build up in the walls of your blood vessels. This buildup is called *plaque*. As your blood vessels build up plaque over time, the insides of the vessels narrow. This narrowing can restrict and eventually block blood flow to and from your heart and other organs. When blood flow to the heart is blocked, it can cause angina (chest pain) or a heart attack.

Myth: I would be able to feel it if I had high cholesterol.

Fact: High cholesterol usually has no signs or symptoms. You may not know you have unhealthy cholesterol levels until it is too late - when you have a heart attack or stroke. That's why it's so important to get your cholesterol levels checked at least every 5 years.

Myth: Eating foods with a lot of cholesterol will not make my cholesterol levels go up.

Fact: It can be complicated. We know that foods with a lot of cholesterol usually also have a lot of saturated fat. Saturated fats can make your cholesterol numbers higher, so it's best to choose foods that are lower in saturated fats. Foods made from animals, including red meat, butter, and cheese, have a lot of saturated fats. Instead, aim to eat foods with plenty of fiber, such as oatmeal and beans, and healthy unsaturated fats, such as avocados, olive oil, and nuts. Talk with your health care provider about ways to manage your cholesterol.

Myth: I can't do anything to change my cholesterol levels.

Fact: You can do many things to improve your cholesterol levels and keep them in a healthy range!

- **Get tested at least every 5 years** (unless told otherwise by your provider).

- **Make healthy food choices.** Limit foods high in saturated fats. Choose foods naturally high in fiber and unsaturated fats.

- **Be active every day.** The *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* recommends that adults get 150 to 300 minutes of moderate physical activity each week.

- **Don't smoke or use tobacco products.** Smoking damages your blood vessels, speeds up the hardening of the arteries, and greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease.

- **Talk to your health care provider** about ways to manage your cholesterol; if any medicines are given to you to manage your cholesterol, take them as they are prescribed.

- **Know your family history.** If your parents or other immediate family members have high cholesterol, you probably should be tested more often.

Myth: I don't need statins or other medicines for my cholesterol. I can manage my cholesterol with diet and exercise.

Fact: Although many people can achieve good cholesterol levels by making healthy food choices and getting enough physical activity, some people may also need medicines called statins to lower their cholesterol levels. People who may need statins or other medicines to manage cholesterol levels include the following:

- **People with familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) or people with very high levels of "bad" cholesterol.** FH is a genetic condition that causes very high LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels beginning at a young age. If left untreated, cholesterol levels will continue to get worse. This greatly raises the risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke at a young age.

- **People with cardiovascular disease (CVD).** People with CVD may already have narrowed arteries because of too much plaque. Medicines that lower cholesterol may help reduce the risk for heart attack or stroke.

- **People with diabetes.** Type 2 diabetes lowers HDL or "good" cholesterol levels and raises "bad" cholesterol levels. This combination raises your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Just a thought (a Preventive Medicine Column)

National Suicide Prevention Week occurs each year in September. Suicide is a troubling topic that most of us would rather not deal with, but it is a reality - and it is more common than we would like to think. Sometimes it feels like society expects you to always be happy or on top of things and that showing your sadness is a sign of weakness. But the truth is: Everyone has good and bad days. No one can be perfectly happy all the time, we are only human after all.

Remember you are not alone and you are not bothering others: Everyone in life has problems. That doesn't mean you are adding to another person's own problems if you share how you are feeling. You are not a burden. Reach out! The journey of life is filled with ups and downs, which is what shapes us into the people we are.

When you're having a bad day or a good day, remember that people do care about you, you are here for a reason, and the world would not be the same without you.

Next Issue: October 2021: © MEDDACB Preventive Medicine

For all current and updated COVID-19 limitations visit:
www.7atc.army.mil and the [U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Facebook](#)

take your BEST SHOT!

Protect yourself
and your loved ones.
**Get vaccinated
against COVID-19.**



Check the Facebook of your local health clinic for more information on vaccination events!

Get vaccinated.



Wear a mask.



Stay 6 feet from others,
and avoid crowds.



Wash
hands often.