

Healthy Waldo County Newsletter



May 2010

 A Local Healthy Maine Partnership

Breath Easy - Clean Air Month

Taking a breath of fresh air we relax, clean air is an important requirement for health. Although monitoring air quality is often left to the “experts”, home air quality is something we can all help improve. By making your home and vehicles smoke-free you can help those you love “Breathe Easy” and take a breath of healthy fresh air.

Secondhand smoke from tobacco causes serious health effects. Consider these facts:

- Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, more than 60 of which are known to cause cancer.
- Secondhand smoke has been designated as a human cancer-causing agent by the U.S. EPA, the National Toxicology Program, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in America.

Breathing secondhand smoke increases the chances of getting lung cancer by 20-30%, and it damages the lining of blood vessels, changes which can cause a heart attack. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke, and no safe period of time for exposure: When you breathe secondhand smoke, it is as if you are smoking.

Secondhand Smoke is Harmful to Children

In Maine, 44,864 children under age 18 live in a home with a smoker.

Because a child’s body is still growing, chemicals in tobacco smoke are especially dangerous to them.

Children who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to develop ear infections, allergies, bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma. It can even lead to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Older children whose parents smoke get sick more often. They get more bronchitis and pneumonia, and experience more wheezing and coughing. It can trigger asthma attacks and increase instances of painful ear infections.

Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge



Even if your home is already smoke-free, go online and take the pledge; learn about how you can help others go smoke-free at home.

www.smokefreeforme.org

What to quit smoking call:

The Maine Tobacco Helpline * 1-800-207-1230

**Belfast Area Chamber of
Commerce Good Life Fest -
May 8**

**National Alcohol & Other Drug
Related Birth Defects Week -
May 9-15**

**National Women’s Health Week -
May 9 - 15**

School Nurses Day - 12

Bike to Work Week - 17 - 21

World No Tobacco Day - 31

**National High Blood Pressure
& Stroke Awareness Month**

**Melanoma/Skin Cancer
Detection & Prevention Month**

National UV Awareness Month

Lyme Disease Awareness Month



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National Alcohol and other Drug-Related Birth Defects Week Mother's Day marks the beginning (May 9th to the 15th)

Here are some clear reasons from the March of Dimes why women should carefully consider curtailing the use of even legal drugs like alcohol and tobacco, before, during and after pregnancy.

What are the hazards of drinking alcohol during pregnancy?

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs)**, with effects that range from mild to severe. These effects include mental retardation; learning, emotional and behavioral problems; and defects involving the heart, face and other organs. The most severe of these effects is fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), a combination of physical and mental birth defects. Each year in the United States, up to 40,000 babies are born with FASDs

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy increases the risk for **miscarriage** and **premature birth** (before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy). Studies also suggest that drinking during pregnancy may contribute to **stillbirth**.

Although many women are aware that heavy drinking during pregnancy can cause birth defects, many do not realize that moderate or even light drinking also may harm the fetus. In fact, no level of alcohol use during pregnancy has been proven safe.

Therefore, the March of Dimes recommends that pregnant women do not drink any alcohol, including beer, wine, wine coolers and liquor, throughout their pregnancy and while nursing. In addition, because women often do not know they are pregnant for a few months, women who may be pregnant or those who are attempting to become pregnant should not drink alcohol.

How can smoking cigarettes harm the newborn?

Smoking nearly doubles a woman's risk of having a **low-birthweight** baby. In 2004, 11.9 percent of babies born to smokers in the United States were of low birthweight (less than 5½ pounds), compared to 7.2 percent of babies of nonsmokers. Low birthweight can result from poor growth before birth, preterm delivery or a combination of both. Smoking has long been known to slow fetal growth. Smoking also increases the risk of **preterm delivery** (before 37 weeks of gestation). Premature and low-birthweight babies face an increased risk of serious health problems during the newborn period, chronic lifelong disabilities (such as **cerebral palsy**, mental retardation and learning problems), and even death.

The more a pregnant woman smokes, the greater her risk of having a low-birthweight baby. However, if a woman stops smoking even by the end of her second trimester of pregnancy, she is no more likely to have a low-birthweight baby than a woman who never smoked.

A recent study suggests that women who smoke anytime during the month before pregnancy to the end of the first trimester are more likely to have a baby with birth defects, particularly **congenital heart defects**. The risk of heart defects appears to increase with the number of cigarettes a woman smokes.

Reprinted from *March of Dimes* – www.marchofdimes.com. Information on the effect of illegal drugs on fetuses and newborns can be found at that website.

For Help with Substance Abuse

Maine Statewide Crisis Hotline: 1-888-568-1112

Office of Substance Abuse Information and Resource Center: 1-800-499-0027

The Women's Project is a statewide program for women affected by substance abuse. The program is free and confidential. The primary purpose of The Women's Project is to support women as they consider recovery for themselves or manage their lives in the face of another's addiction. The Women's Project staff can help arrange for transportation and child care, offer support and advocacy, help set goals and strategies, educate about women's health issues, and make referrals to treatment programs.

Client Service Center * 510 Cumberland Avenue * Portland, Maine 04101

*** 800-698-4959 * 207-553-5800 * FAX: 207-874-1155 * TTY: 207-874-1013**

For Help with Smoking Cessation *Maine Tobacco Helpline 1-800-207-1230*



Facts About Sun Exposure

Sunlight contains three types of ultraviolet rays: UVA, UVB, and UVC

UVA - causes skin aging & wrinkling & contribute to skin cancer, such as melanoma. UVA rays pass through the ozone layer, they make up the majority of our sun exposure. Tanning beds use UVA rays.

UVB - causes sunburns, cataracts, and immune system damage. They also contribute to skin cancer, such as melanoma. Most of the UVB rays are absorbed by the ozone layer, but enough pass thorough to cause serious damage.

UVC - rays are the most dangerous, Fortunately theses rays are blocked by the ozone layer and don't reach earth.

Melanoma/Skin Cancer Awareness Month

We all need some sun exposure; it's our primary source of vitamin D, which helps us absorb calcium for stronger, healthier bones. But it doesn't take much time in the sun for most people to get the vitamin D they need, and unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays can cause skin damage, eye damage, immune system suppression, and cancer. Even people in their twenties can develop skin cancer.

Most kids rack up between 50% - 80% of their lifetime sun exposure before age 18, so it is important that parents teach children how to enjoy the sun safely.



Did you know that more than 90% of skin cancers, including melanoma, are a result of sun exposure. Unprotected sun exposure is even more dangerous for people who have many moles or freckles, very fair skin and hair, or a family history of skin cancer. The best treatment for sunburn is **PREVENTION**. Mild sunburn results in skin irritation and redness and can be treated at home. Severe sunburn requires medical attention.

*Slip on a shirt * Slap on a brimmed hat & sunglasses * Slop on sunscreen*

A sunburn can sneak up on kids, especially after a long day outside. Often they seem fine during the day but then gradually develop an "afterburn" later in the evening that can be painful, hot and even make them feel sick. When kids get sunburned, they usually experience pain and a sensation of heat - this can become more severe several hours after sun exposure. Some also develop chills. Because the skin has dried their skin, it can become itchy and tight. Burned skin begins to peel about a week later underneath the sunburn. Encourage your child not to scratch or peel off loose skin, because the skin under the burn is vulnerable to infections.

If you or your child does get a sunburn, try these tips:

- Keep child in shade until skin is healed
- Place child in cool (not Cold) shower or bath - or apply cool compresses - several times a day
- Offer child extra fluids for the next 2-3 days
- Apply aloe vera gel to any sunburned areas. It's excellent for relieving pain and helping skin heal faster
- Avoid petroleum based moisturizing products, because they prevent excess heat from escaping. Also avoid first-aid products with benzocaine, which may cause skin irritation or allergy.
- If sunburn is severe and blisters develop, call your doctor



Important Tips to Be Sun Safe

- Remember that the sun is strongest between 10:00AM and 4:00 PM.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and UV protective sunglasses
- Remember that UV rays bounce off of sand, snow, concrete, and water – intensifying sun exposure
- Do not use tanning beds or sun lamps - they use UVA rays- Natural Healthy Skin is Beautiful!
- **Keep very young children (6 months or less) out of the sun**
- Provide complete sunscreen coverage for your skin (including neck, ears, and lips)
- UV protective clothing is better than sun screen
- Dark colored clothing protects skin better from UV light
- Sunscreen should be applied **liberally and evenly** over all exposed areas
- Use sunscreen SPF 30 or higher - Check expiration dates, do not use old sun screen
- Use lip balm with SPF 15 or higher
- Apply sunscreen before going outdoors and reapply often - it wears off
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming, perspiring, and toweling off
- **Stay in the shade whenever possible**

May 2010



Healthy
Waldo County

www.healthywaldocounty.org

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ABCDEs of Melanoma Detection

Consult your dermatologist immediately if any of your moles or pigmented spots exhibit:



Asymmetry - One half is unlike the other half



Border - An irregular, scalloped, or poorly defined border



Color - Is varied from one area to another; has shades of tan, brown, or black; is sometimes white, red or blue.



Diameter - Melanomas usually are greater than 6mm (the size of a pencil eraser) when diagnosed, but they can be smaller.



Evolving - A mole or skin lesion that looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape, or color.



**BE FIT
BE SUN SAFE!**

- Good sun protection habits will keep skin healthy while involved in an active, outdoor lifestyle.
- When possible, wear clothing to cover the skin; hats too
- Use an SPF 30 broad spectrum sunscreen
- Try to schedule activity before 11am or after 4pm
- Seek shade when possible

For further information, visit www.dermatology.ca

**DERMATOLOGISTS
SKINexperts**
Canadian Dermatology Association
Association canadienne de dermatologie



From the American Academy of Dermatology www.add.org

Let's Go Waldo 5210 - National Bike Month

Do you know what the **1** stands for? Get at least an hour of exercise each day. Biking is great exercise and it provides transportation. Now is the time to get your bike out, tuned up and road ready. Mainers are celebrating "Walk and Bike to School Week" and it coincides with Maine's "Commute Another Way Week".

Have an interest in starting a middle school biking club? Or getting involved with biking events? Contact **The Bicycle Coalition of Maine** at 207-623-4511 or info@BikeMaine.org Check out their website www.bikemaine.org



Bowl for Kids' Sake to Help Support Waldo County Kids!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Midcoast Maine needs your help! If you like to bowl **and** would like to support youth in Waldo County who benefit from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Midcoast Maine's Youth Mentoring Programs, please call today to sign up and participate in their **Bowl for Kids' Sake** fundraiser. Events are planned for various dates in May starting on the 4th, call **Cathy Hardy today at 593-0380** and she will email you all the forms and information you will need to form your team, solicit pledges, and choose your bowling date, place and time. Let's Go Waldo!