

FALL/WINTER PARISH HEALTH

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ST. AGATHA PARISH NURSE PROGRAM

Play It Safe

CDC Launches New Youth

Sports Tool Kit to Help

Coaches, Athletes, and Parents "Play it Safe"

An estimated 135,000 (65 percent) of sports- and recreation-related traumatic brain injuries (TBI) treated in U.S. emergency departments occur each year in young people ages 5 to 18, according to a study published today in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). Approximately 8 percent, or more than 10,000, of

these young people were hospitalized, the study said.

Traumatic brain injuries, including concussions, are caused by a blow or bump to the head that disrupts the way the brain normally works.

CDC researchers examined data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP) from 2001 to 2005 and looked at both the overall number of traumatic brain injury-related emergency department visits and the activities with the greatest percentage of emergency department visits for that activity related to TBIs.

Researchers say the emergency department visits represent only



a small portion of all sports- and recreation-related TBIs; it is estimated that as many as 3.8 million of these injuries occur in the United States each year. Most may be considered mild; how-

The Flu-What You Can Do & Caring for People at Home

The Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that the flu season is underway in Massachusetts. For the 2007-08 season to date, DPH has received 38 reports of positive influenza

laboratory tests from providers across the state. Of those able to be typed, 28 have been confirmed as influenza type A and six as influenza type B. Last year at this time,

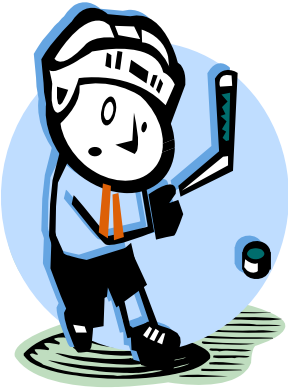
there were 63 reports of influenza. National Influenza Vaccination Week begins today, November 26. This week serves to remind people that it is not too late to get vacci (continued on page 2)



*To Share,
To Serve,
To Care,
To Listen,
To Respond*

Special points of interest:

- Great internet resources for health and safety information on following pages.
- Give someone you love a pedometer for Christmas
- Healthy snack ideas for kids
- Winter/Holiday Safety



Free toolkit is available from CDC "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports"

Play It Safe (continued from p.1)

ever, even relatively mild brain injuries can result in health consequences such as impaired thinking, memory problems, and emotional or behavioral changes.

"These injuries are very serious and should never be ignored," said CDC director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury, or can take days or weeks to be no-

ticed. Learn the signs and if you believe that you see any, see a health care provider right away." Concussions and other brain injuries can occur in any sport. To help coaches, parents, and athletes learn the signs, symptoms, and action steps to take when a concussion is suspected, CDC has created and is making available a new tool kit: "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports."

The tool kit is free and includes essential and easy-to-use information about recognizing and responding to a suspected concussion. The "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports" tool kit can be ordered and downloaded free-of-charge online at: www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports. For more information about concussions, traumatic brain injury, or injury in general, visit the

For information on where to get your flu vaccine, log on to Massachusetts Flu Clinic website at <http://flu.masspro.org>

Flu Season is Here (continued from p.1)

nated and encourages providers and other immunization partners to expand opportunities for vaccination. Flu season does not usually peak until February in Massachusetts, so flu shots can be helpful in preventing illness if they are received between October and January.

FLU CARE AT HOME

MDPH is pleased to announce a comprehensive educational campaign to help Massachusetts residents be better prepared for the flu. The *Flu Care at Home* campaign includes:

An educational booklet for the public that will be distributed broadly

across the Commonwealth. This booklet can also be downloaded from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website.

[Http://www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph)

These materials will be available by the end of November.

Winter/Holiday Safety



This is the time of year to check and replace batteries in your smoke and carbon dioxide

The winter holidays are a time for celebration, and that means more cooking, home decorating, entertaining and an increased risk of fire due to heating equipment.

- December is the peak time of the year for home candle fires.

- Three in ten reported home fires started in the kitchen.
- Nearly half (44%) of all home heating fires occurred in December, January and February.

Source: National Fire Protection Association.

Log on to their website

[Http://www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) for Holiday Safety Tips and Audio clips relating to Christmas Tree and candle safety.tips



Pedometers Make Great Christmas Gifts

A new review shows that use of a pedometer is associated with significant increase in physical activity and significant decrease in body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure (BP). **Dr. Dena Bravata** (Stanford University, CA) and colleagues report their findings in the November 21, 2007 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Of note, Dr. Bravata told

Heartwire, they found that a daily goal with the pedometer was imperative for people to increase their physical activity. And a by-product of this increased activity were clinically relevant reductions in weight and blood pressure.

She said average weight loss was around three pounds. "Let's not discount that, let's put that into the context of very well studied diet and ex-

ercise programs. A lot of well-designed interventions don't result in much bigger reductions in weight. I think that the BP reduction and weight loss seen with pedometers is remarkable, given that these are small gizmos designed to increase physical activity, not reduce weight," she noted.

From Heartwire—a professional service of WebMD



Check with your Doctor before beginning any new exercise program.

Children's Snacks Don't Ban Them-Plan Them

Snacking is a major pastime for many American children — so much so that nearly one-fourth of kids' daily energy intake comes from nibbling between meals. Kid's tummies are small so they often get hungry between meals.

Much of this nibbling is on prepackaged snack foods, which are high in

calories and low in nutrients. The popularity of these fattening treats may be one of the factors responsible for the country's childhood-obesity epidemic.

But snacking itself isn't necessarily bad. The content of your child's snacks is what's most important. Providing healthy snack choices now will help your

children learn to make healthy food choices in the future.

Snack-time tips:

It's not always easy to persuade your children to eat healthy snacks. Try experimenting with the following techniques to promote snack-time health:

Have your kids help with making some healthy homemade snacks and they just might be more willing to try them.

Health Website Designed Especially for Seniors

The National Institute on Aging and The National Library of Medicine have joined together to create Senior Health. They have produced a website especially for adults 60 years of age and older who are looking for health information online. The website's senior-

friendly features include large print, short, easy to read segments of information and simple navigation. Some of the topics that can be easily researched include: Alzheimer's, arthritis, balance problems, cataracts, depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, macular

degeneration prostate cancer, shingles and more.

Their website can be found at: <http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov>



ST. AGATHA PARISH NURSE PROGRAM

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Parish Nurse Office Hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 AM-11:30 AM
(Office is closed when St. Agatha School is closed)

Blood Pressure Clinics are held on the last Saturday of the month, following the 4:30 Mass

No December Clinic
January 26, 2008
February 23, 2008
March 29, 2008
April 26, 2008
May 31, 2008

No clinics are held during the summer months.



Snacks-Don't Ban Them-Plan Them

- **Offer similar choices.** For example, don't say: "Do you want ice cream or do you want pretzels?" Instead, offer comparable choices, such as regular or frozen yogurt, celery or carrots, graham crackers or soda crackers, apples or oranges.
- **Provide variety.** Select snacks from a variety of food groups. If you serve the same snacks repeatedly, your children might get bored and ask for unhealthy snacks instead.

Be creative. Dress up fruits and vegetables for maximum appeal. Prepare celery with peanut butter, for example, or carrots with low-fat dip. Offer crackers with

several varieties of cheeses. Cut vegetables in different ways to make them visually interesting.

Here's a snack recipe to try from **Ina Garten's Barefoot Contessa Family Style Cook Book.**

Fruit Juice Shapes

"Kids love finger foods when they're cut into fun shapes. These juices are good for them and taste delicious. It's as easy to make as Jell-O!"

Ingredients:

4 cups pure grape juice, pure white grape juice, cranberry juice cocktail, or other clear juice.

4 envelopes unflavored gelatin

In a large bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over 1 cup of the juice and allow to stand for a few minutes. Meanwhile, heat the remaining 3 cups of juice until boiling and pour it over the juice and gelatin mixture. Stir until the gelatin is dissolved. Pour into a 9x9 inch pan and chill until firm, about 3 hours or overnight. Dip the pan briefly into hot water to loosen, cut into squares or shapes and serve.

Enjoy!