HEALTH E NEWS

COMAL COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Promoting & Protecting Your Health

Fall 2014

Tuberculosis (TB) Skin Test

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and is spread from person to person through the air via speaking, coughing, or sneezing. Depending on the environment, TB germs can stay in the air for several hours. The bacteria usually attacks the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain. If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal.

There are two types of TB infections: *latent TB* and *TB disease*. Those with latent TB infection have TB germs in their bodies, but the bacteria is *not active* in their body. Although those infected cannot spread the disease to others, they may develop the disease in the future. People with *active* TB disease have the bacteria actively multiplying in their body. These people are capable of spreading the TB disease to others. There are treatments for both latent and active cases of TB.

When having a TB skin test (tuberculin skin test) , the results will tell you if you have ever had TB germs in your body. The TB skin test is a two-step process: *administering the test serum* and *reading the results*. First, a small amount of tuberculin is placed under your skin on the inside of the lower part of the arm. In 48-72 hours you return to have your medical provider to check the spot on your arm. He or she will look at the test spot and measure any bump that appears. They will let you know if your test is negative or positive.

Because the test is conducted over 2-3 days, there are only certain days most medical providers will administer the test. It's recommended you call ahead to check which days are available for testing. If your test spot itches, don't scratch it. Instead of scratching, put an ice cube or cold cloth on it. Take care NOT to scratch or rub the area.

For more information about TB and/or TB testing, call Comal County Public Health at (830) 221-1150.

Who Should Get the Flu Shot? YOU!

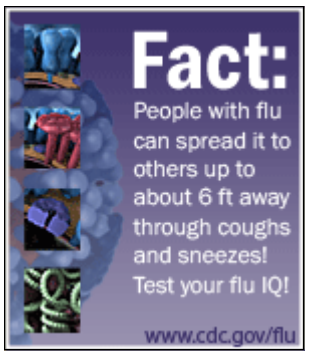
Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. Over a period of 31 seasons between 1976 and 2007, estimates of flu-associated deaths in the United States ranged from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people. During a regular flu season, about 90 percent of deaths occur in people 65 years and older. The "seasonal flu season" in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May. www.cdc.gov

Hepatitis A Can Be Prevented

Hepatitis A is a liver disease that is caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). The HAV is spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth that has been contaminated with the stool of a person who is infected by the HAV. This type of spread is referred to as the "fecal-oral" route. Infected people can spread HAV by not washing their hands adequately after using the toilet. Most hepatitis A infections in the United States result from international travel, contact with a household member, sex partner, or illegal drug use.

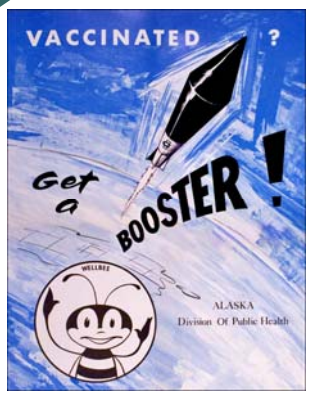
To prevent HAV infection, wash your hands well after using the toilet, do not allow anyone who has HAV to serve food to you or your family, consult your medical provider if you are living with someone who has the HAV to help prevent your own infection, and get a HAV vaccine. The HAV vaccine is a two dose series of shots that are given 6 months apart. If you have any questions about the HAV vaccine, please talk with your medical provider or call us here at Comal County Public Health.

Info. from www.immunize.org & www.dshs.state.tx.us/adcu



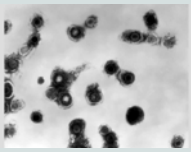
Edwin Klebs (1834-1914)

Edwin Klebs , a Swiss-German pathologist, identified and described the bacterium that causes diphtheria. It was known for a time as the Klebs-Loeffler bacterium.



Classic from 1964

http://phil.cdc.gov/phil/home.asp



1953

Chickenpox: Varicella Virus Isolated

Thomas Weller, MD, was the first to isolate the varicella virus. He did so from cases of chickenpox and shingles.

The next year, Weller won the Nobel Prize for his group work with John Enders, Ph.D and Frederick Robbins, MD involving the growth of polio virus in cell cultures.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness

What is SNS?

In the event of a public health emergency such as terrorist attack, flu outbreak, natural disaster, etc, plans are in place to coordinate federal, state, and local response. Critical medical supplies are stored in various locations around the U.S. and are referred to as The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). SNS is designed to supplement and resupply state and local public health agencies during emergencies. The SNS is stored at locations that are able to be accessed anywhere and at anytime in the U.S. within 12 hours of the Federal decision to deploy.

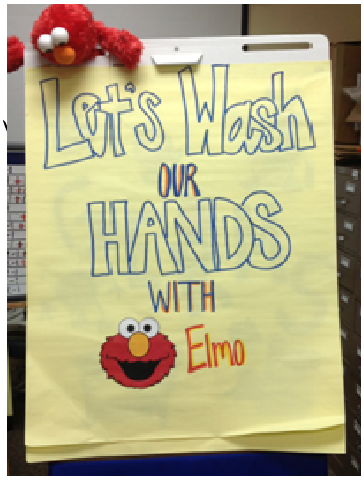
Examples of the medical supplies stored at SNS locations are: antibiotics, chemical antidotes, antitoxins, life-support medications, and medi-surgical items.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) manage SNS and works in conjunction with state and local governments to carryout response plans.

What are PODS?

In the event of a public health emergency there may be a need to open centers to distribute life-saving medications and/or vaccines. The dispensing/vaccination centers are commonly referred to as Point of Dispensing (POD). The public would be informed of where to go to receive these medications, if needed.

Many agencies work together to activate the community response and to assemble any necessary PODs in an emergency situation. Local emergency plans involve: public health, county and state emergency management officials, health care professionals, law enforcement, fire fighters, and paramedics.



Comal County Public Health visits day cares and libraries to teach children about hand washing.

Your Health Department Offers...

- Blood Pressure Monitoring
- Response to vaccinations (titers)
- HIV/AIDS information
- Screening for TB exposure
- Referrals for medical/social needs
- Confidential STD counseling
- Adult Flu clinics
- Health Fair participation
- Community Education
- PHEP Volunteer Opportunities
- Vision & hearing screening for 4 year olds
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield Provider for immunizations.
- Immunizations for local businesses
- Pregnancy testing

Call for an Appointment

Monday-Friday

(830) 221-1150

8am-12 & 1-5pm

International Travel and ImmTrac

Vacations...Church Mission Trips...Work Travel

With many destinations requiring immunizations, ImmTrac is a great resource for world travelers. Using your shot records, a complete immunization history can be compiled into ImmTrac avoiding the search for documents and/or calling your medical providers. Instead of assembling your shot records, you will be able to plan for your trip!

Would you like to register? Call our ImmTrac Specialists.

We'll also "load-up" your ImmTrac record for you. Call today!

830-221-1150.

Comal County ImmTrac Specialists

Comal County Public Health have two ImmTrac Outreach Specialists on staff to assist you!

Annie Brown brownan@co.comal.tx.us

Saundra Davis Daviss@co.comal.tx.us

Or you can call them at 830-221-1150.

ImmTrac
Texas Immunization Registry

www.immtracforeveryone.com

What is ImmTrac?

ImmTrac is the Texas immunization registry, a free service of the Texas Department of State Health Services. It is a safe way to electronically keep your immunization records in one place. Only authorized ImmTrac users like doctors, nurses, and schools are allowed to access your immunization history.

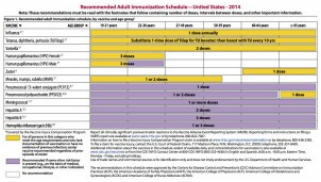
How are Immunization Schedules Recommended, and by Whom?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sets the U.S. Child and Adult immunization schedule based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). ACIP is a group of 15 medical and public health experts. They hold meetings three times a year to discuss recent clinical trials, outbreaks of any vaccine preventable diseases, vaccine shortages, and to consult with professional organizations in the field (for example: American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Family Physicians).

Many factors are taken into account during ACIP's vaccine recommendation process: The safety and effectiveness of the vaccine, the severity of the disease, the number of children who get the disease if there is no vaccine, and how well a vaccine works for children of different ages. ACIP forwards their recommendations to the CDC Director for approval. New immunization schedules are released on an annual basis, usually in January or early February.

Resource: 2013. *The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices* (ACIP): CDC

For more information go to: www.cdc.gov/vaccines



Public Health: Stay in the Loop

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) prepares a publications series entitled *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR*).* According to the CDC, The MMWR is often called "the voice of CDC," the *MMWR* series is the agency's primary vehicle for scientific publication of timely, reliable, authoritative, accurate, objective, and useful public health information and recommendations."

"*MMWR* readership predominantly consists of physicians, nurses, public health practitioners, epidemiologists and other scientists, researchers, educators, and laboratorians."

The publication is FREE in electronic format.

You can receive an electronic copy each week by registering on the CDC website: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwrsubscribe.html

MMWR
Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) has been published weekly since 1952!

Did You Know?

Regular childhood vaccinations prevent 20 million cases of disease, avert 42,000 deaths, and save nearly $76 billion.

www.cdc.gov

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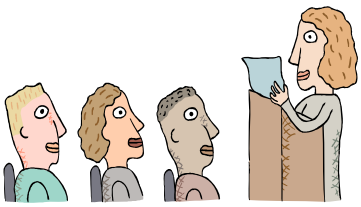
www.co.comal.tx.us/health



We do Presentations!

We have professionals on staff ready to give presentations to your business or community group.

Adult and Child immunizations, emergency preparedness, ImmTrac, communicable disease, effective hand-washing, information about and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and more!

Give us a call! Ask for Aimee or Gwen 830-221-1150