



# NJ Communi- CABLE

Spring 2018 Quarterly Newsletter

## Communicable Disease Service Mission Statement

Our mission is to prevent communicable disease among all citizens of New Jersey, and to promote the knowledge and use of healthy lifestyles to maximize the health and well-being of New Jerseyans.

We will accomplish our mission through our leadership, collaborative partnerships, and advocacy for communicable disease surveillance, research, education, treatment, prevention and control.

Phil Murphy, Governor  
Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor  
Shereef Elnahal, M.D., M.B.A.  
Commissioner

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SERVICE

Christina Tan, MD, MPH  
State Epidemiologist/  
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Editor, Research Scientist

## May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

Lyme disease, the most commonly reported vector-borne disease in New Jersey and nationwide, is caused by bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Lyme disease is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected *Ixodes scapularis* ticks, which are also known as blacklegged or deer ticks. These ticks are widely distributed in the northeastern and upper midwestern parts of the United States. In 2016, New Jersey reported 4,350 cases of confirmed or probable Lyme disease.



The signs and symptoms of Lyme disease can vary. Typically, the early stage of Lyme disease is marked by one or more of these signs and symptoms: fatigue, chills/fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, swollen lymph nodes and erythema migrans (bull's eye rash). Symptoms typically appear within 3-30 days after infection. However, some indications of Lyme disease may not appear until weeks or months after a tick bite. Symptoms of late Lyme disease include arthritis (particularly in the knees), numbness, pain, nerve paralysis, meningitis and rarely,

heart rhythm irregularities. Some symptoms—memory or concentration problems, fatigue, headache and sleep difficulties—can persist even after treatment.

Lyme disease and most other tick-borne diseases are diagnosed through blood tests and discussion of symptoms and possible tick exposure with a health care provider. While Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics, the best way to

*Continued on page 7*





# Free Perinatal Hepatitis B Educational Opportunities

The New Jersey Immunization Network, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Health, Saint Barnabas Medical Center, the New Jersey Hepatitis B Coalition, Rutgers University, and the New Jersey Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics encourages health care providers to view a new, on-demand educational module on administration of the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine. Topics featured in this free module include:

- What is hepatitis B and why is it an issue in New Jersey?
- What are the issues with perinatal transmission?
- Can an infant acquire hepatitis B virus (HBV) even if the mother is not infected?
- How are pregnant women with HBV identified and what prenatal care is recommended?
- What are the best practices at delivery centers to achieve universal HBV birth dose administration?
- How important is HBV testing in infants born to HBV positive mothers?

Health care providers can access the webinar at <http://bit.ly/perinatalhepB>.

**VACCINATE YOUR BABY AGAINST HEPATITIS B**  
IT COULD SAVE YOUR BABY'S LIFE.

**WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?**

- HEPATITIS B is a serious liver disease caused by the HEPATITIS B VIRUS.
- HEPATITIS B OFTEN DOESN'T CAUSE SYMPTOMS. Many people can live with hepatitis B for years without feeling sick.
- 1 IN 4 people living with hepatitis B can develop serious liver problems, INCLUDING LIVER CANCER.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- All pregnant women are routinely tested for hepatitis B.
- People who find out they have hepatitis B can take steps to keep their baby and family protected.
- The HEPATITIS B VACCINE is the 1st cancer prevention vaccine.

**HOW IS HEPATITIS B SPREAD?**

- Hepatitis B is spread through contact with blood. An infected family member or caregiver can pass the virus to an infant.
- A pregnant woman who has hepatitis B can pass the virus to her infant at birth, but the vaccine can help prevent the baby from getting infected.
- Most people living with hepatitis B got infected as infants or young children when their immune systems were not fully developed.

**WHY SHOULD MY BABY BE VACCINATED AGAINST HEPATITIS B?**

- The hepatitis B vaccine can prevent a baby from getting infected. CDC recommends all babies get the first hepatitis B vaccine shot at birth and follow the vaccine schedule to get the remaining shots.
- The hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective.
- Delaying the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine can put your baby at risk for hepatitis B.
- The hepatitis B vaccine has helped prevent millions of infants from getting hepatitis B, which can be a deadly disease.

The New Jersey Hepatitis B Coalition also developed patient educational materials to raise awareness about perinatal hepatitis B among pregnant women. For electronic copies of the document above, please contact Ruth Brogden at [ruth.brogden@rwjbh.org](mailto:ruth.brogden@rwjbh.org).

Get more information at <http://nj.gov/health/cd/handwashing.shtml>.

## The NJDOH Communicable Disease Service includes:

Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program (IZDP): 609-826-5964

Regional Epidemiology Program (REP): 609-826-5964

Vaccine Preventable Disease Program (VPDP): 609-826-4860

We're on the Web!  
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## Vaccinating Adults: New Resources

The New Jersey Department of Health, Vaccine Preventable Disease Program is proud to announce three new resources available to assist in vaccinating adults.

### 1. Adult Immunization Brochure:

This brochure features information on why adults need to be vaccinated, what vaccinations are needed, and a tear-off immunization record card. It can be accessed at [http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/vpdp/adult\\_immunization\\_brochure.pdf](http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/vpdp/adult_immunization_brochure.pdf). Copies are available for free upon request by calling 609-826-4861.

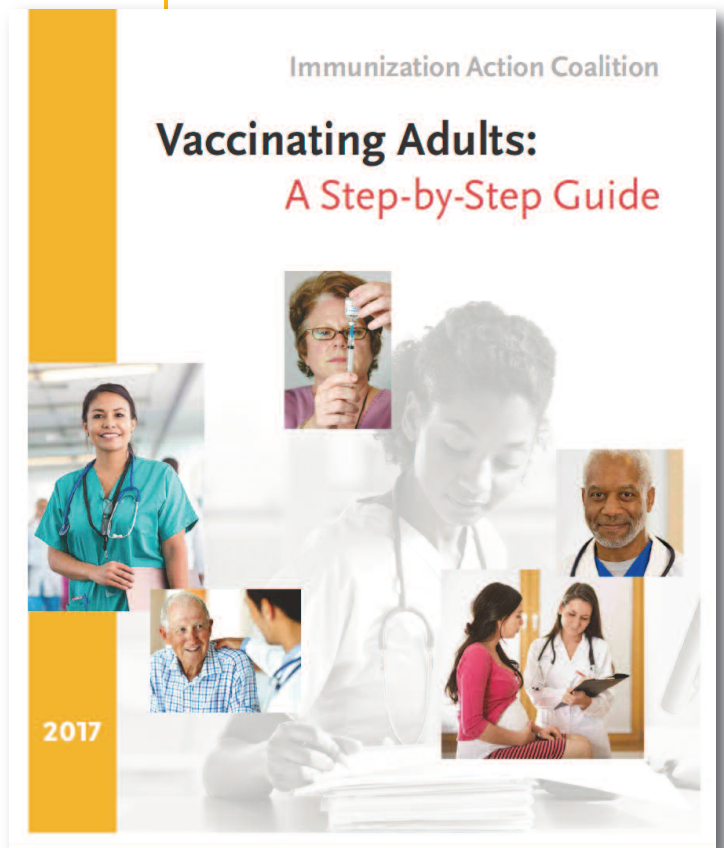
### 2. New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIIS) – Information for Adults:

This newly developed rack card serves to provide adults with information on the benefits of having their immunization record entered into the statewide immunization registry. It also includes enrollment information and other frequently asked questions about the registry. It is available in both English at

[http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/vpdp/njiis\\_information\\_adults.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/vpdp/njiis_information_adults.pdf) and in Spanish at [http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/vpdp/njiis\\_information\\_adults\\_spanish.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/vpdp/njiis_information_adults_spanish.pdf). Limited copies are available for free upon request by calling 609-826-4861.

### 3. Vaccinating Adults: A Step-by-Step Guide:

This updated guide from the Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) provides easy-to-use, practical information covering important “how to” activities to help you enhance your existing adult immunization services or introduce them into any clinical



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## What's the latest? EpiCenter™, Surveillance, and Expanded Data

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) Communicable Disease Service (CDS) collects emergency department (ED) registration data, including the chief complaint, for surveillance using EpiCenter™.

EpiCenter is a secure, online system that includes analysis and mapping tools to create a health surveillance picture of ED activity in the state. When unexpected increases above normal values are detected, the system generates alert emails to let users know that the increase occurred so an investigation can be initiated if needed. These surveillance capabilities are valuable for epidemiology as it gives CDS, local public health agencies, and health care facilities insight into issues of public health concern in the community. For example, an increase in respiratory visits could indicate the onset of the influenza season as a precursor to positive laboratory results. EpiCenter is now currently in place for 78 of the state's 79 acute care and satellite EDs. NJDOH staff, local health departments, and hospitals have access to data and analysis tools that can help monitor ED visits for disease patterns, such as influenza-like-illness and gastrointestinal disorders, as well as environmental issues like heat-related illness, carbon monoxide poisonings, and chemical exposures. With this system in place NJDOH has been able to follow, in near real-time, disease patterns and trends to monitor for unusual activity.

A new initiative within EpiCenter is to include additional data elements from facilities into the existing data feed such as triage notes and diagnosis codes. Currently, these new data elements are being submitted by 13 EDs which have been valuable when investigating alerts from those hospitals. Having access to more detailed information related to a patient's visit has already shown the following benefits:

- Reduces the need for follow-up calls to already over-burdened ED staff
- Provides the capability for expanded use of EpiCenter by other NJDOH programs including providing data for grants and initiatives related to the opioid abuse/overdose crisis in the state
- Characterizes the level of respiratory symptoms in New Jersey, which is particularly helpful in monitoring each year's incidence and patterns of influenza-like illness
- Provides additional information that would allow NJDOH to identify potential outbreak cases of health care-associated infections

Funding is available for hospitals to enhance data feeds to include these additional data elements. To request access to the system, or for any questions or more information, you can contact Teresa Hamby ([teresa.hamby@doh.nj.gov](mailto:teresa.hamby@doh.nj.gov)) or Stella Tsai ([stella.tsai@doh.nj.gov](mailto:stella.tsai@doh.nj.gov)) by email or by phone, 609-826-5964. 📞



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*Vaccinating Adults, continued from page 3*

- setting, including:
  - setting up for vaccination services
  - storing and handling vaccines
  - deciding which people should receive which vaccines
  - administering vaccines
  - documenting vaccinations (including legal issues)
  - understanding financial considerations and billing information

In addition, it is filled with hundreds of web addresses and references to help you stay up to date on the latest immunization information, both now and in the future. The 142-page guide is available from IAC for purchase or for free download at [www.immunize.org/guide](http://www.immunize.org/guide).

These are valuable resources to assist you in increasing adult immunization rates. Be sure to get your copies today! 

## Celebrate the Power of Immunizations During National Infant Immunization Week

**N**ational Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and to celebrate the achievements of immunization programs in promoting healthy communities throughout the United States. This year, NIIW will take place April 21-28.

Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public

health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases. For more information and tools to help plan your own NIIW event, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/index.html>. 

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# National Infant Immunization Week

**IMMUNIZATION.  
POWER TO PROTECT.**

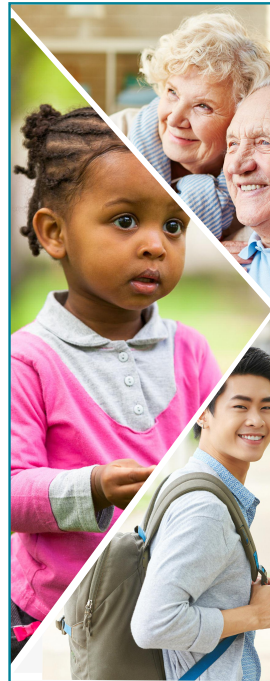


## CDS Making the Rounds!

**D**o you have grand rounds or other professional educational events in the works for 2018? Ed Lifshitz, MD, Medical Director for the Communicable Disease Service, is available to come to your program

and speak on antibiotic resistance/stewardship issues as well as bioterrorism. To make arrangements, please contact Suzanne Miro at [suzanne.miro@doh.nj.gov](mailto:suzanne.miro@doh.nj.gov).

## NJ Immunization Conference



### 2018 NJ Immunization Conference

Integrating Innovations into Practice

Monday, May 21, 2018  
Rutgers University  
Livingston Campus Center • Piscataway, NJ

Continuing education for this activity is pending - See Website for details!

#### REGISTRATION DETAILS:

<http://rutgerstraining.sph.rutgers.edu/immunization2018/>

Nationally Recognized  
Featured Speakers:  
Paul A. Offit, MD  
University of Pennsylvania / CHOP  
  
Robert A. Bednarczyk, PhD  
Emory University

\$55.00 fee includes light breakfast, lunch, materials and continuing ed credits

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## Congratulations!

**Teresa Hamby** of the Communicable Disease Service was recently presented with the "Outstanding Dedication to Public Health Practice" award from the International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS). This award is given to a member for his or her exemplary volunteer service to the ISDS.






*Lyme Disease, continued from page 1*

prevent any tick-borne disease is to avoid tick bites. Actions to help prevent tick bites include avoiding wooded or grassy areas where ticks live, maintaining a debris-free yard and mowed lawn, applying EPA-registered insect repellent with DEET, wearing long-sleeved shirts, and tucking pants into socks. Furthermore, it is recommended to shower within two hours after being outside to help find and wash away unattached ticks, and perform a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view hard-to-see areas. Lastly, pets should be protected by checking for ticks daily and using tick control products as recommended by a veterinarian.

In observation of Lyme Disease Awareness Month, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has several planned activities and events. Upcoming endeavors include a tick-borne disease



**Erythema migrans (bull's eye rash)**

webinar for public health professionals, social media messaging, a radio public service announcement and targeted information and resources sent through LINC.S. In addition, the New Jersey Department of Health Communicable Disease Service maintains the [Vector-borne Illness webpage](#) with updated tick-borne disease materials such as brochures, videos, and fact sheets. 



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# Infectious Disease Fact

## *Clostridium difficile*.....

Using antibiotics can leave a patient vulnerable to another bacterial infection called *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*). However, the *C. diff* infection may not occur for months after the exposure to antibiotics.





# I won't spread flu to my patients or my family.

Even healthy people can get the flu, and it can be serious.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine. This means you.

This season, protect yourself—and those around you—by getting a flu vaccine.



For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CS24717A

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