

# The Noble County Health Monitor

A monthly publication sponsored by the Noble County Health Department

## January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

All women are at risk for cervical cancer. More than 12,000 women in the United States get cervical cancer every year. Read below to find out more information on cervical cancer and what you can do to reduce your risk.

### What is cervical cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. Cancer is always named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other body parts later. When cancer starts in the cervix, it is called cervical cancer. The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus. The cervix connects the vagina (the birth canal) to the upper part of the uterus. The uterus (or womb) is where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant. Cervical cancer is the easiest gynecological cancer to prevent with regular screening tests and follow-up. It also is highly curable when found and treated early. Up to 93% of cervical cancers are preventable. The pap test looks for precancers, cell changes, on the cervix that can be treated, so that cervical cancer is prevented. Depending on your age, your doctor may recommend you have a Pap test, or an HPV test, or both tests together. The Pap test only screens for cervical cancer. It does not screen for any other gynecologic cancer. The HPV test looks for HPV—the virus that can cause precancerous cell changes and cervical cancer.

### How can I avoid HPV and the health problems it can cause?

You can do several things to lower your chances of getting HPV. *Get vaccinated.* The HPV vaccine is safe and effective. It can protect against diseases (including cancers) caused by HPV when given in the recommended age groups. CDC recommends HPV vaccination at age 11 or 12 years (or can start at age 9 years) and for everyone through age 26 years, if not vaccinated already. For more information on the recommendations, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/public/index.html> *If you are sexually active* use latex condoms the right way every time you have sex. This can lower your chances of getting HPV. But HPV can infect areas not covered by a condom – so condoms may not fully protect against getting HPV; Be in a mutually monogamous relationship – or have sex only with someone who only has sex with you. At any age, having a new sex partner is a risk factor for getting a new HPV infection. People who are already in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship are not likely to get a new HPV infection. (continued on page 3)



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Issue

“It’s a funny thing about life, once you begin to take note of the things you are grateful for, you begin to lose sight of the things that you lack.”

-Germany Kent

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For more health information contact:  
**NOBLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
740-732-4958  
[www.noblecohd.org](http://www.noblecohd.org)

### Interesting Fact

Pleated white hat that chefs wear — technically called a *toque* — has 100 folds for a reason! According to Reclutant Gourmet, the pleats used to signify a chef’s level of experience, like the number of ways he or she knew how to prepare eggs.

## Exercising at the gym versus home: Which one is better?

With the start of a New Year many people make New Year's Resolutions which usually includes getting healthier and saving money. Many think that in order to achieve a healthier lifestyle they need to spend money on a gym membership, therefore working towards one resolution and not the other. No one needs to join a gym to exercise regularly. There are many different exercises you can do with little to no extra equipment. If you wanted to add some equipment, a small investment such as hand weights, resistance bands, and a stability ball—greatly expands your exercise options with little cost.

Gyms do have advantages, though. Monthly fees are a big incentive to exercise. Classes offer companionship, a chance to learn proper technique, and opportunities to challenge your body. Gyms can afford sturdy equipment that would drain your bank account and take up floor space at home. Often personal trainers are available for weekly appointments, small group training sessions, or a short-term overhaul to freshen your routine. Also, for many people, being around others who are investing time and effort in their physical fitness is motivating.

In the end it doesn't matter if you choose to workout at a gym or at home the most important part is getting active and staying active.



## Flu Activity now "Widespread" Across the State

In week 52 of the flu season, which ended Dec. 28, there were 387 new influenza-associated hospitalizations reported. There have been 1,003 flu-associated hospitalizations reported in Ohio so far this flu season compared with 555 reported during the same time period last year. Flu activity typically peaks between December and February.

"Getting the flu vaccine is the safest and most effective way to prevent the flu for everyone 6 months and older," said Dr. Mark Hurst, Medical Director at ODH. "Flu hospitalizations could still be on the rise. You need to protect yourself, your friends and your family and get a flu shot now if you haven't already."

The flu vaccine can vary in how well it works, but people who still get sick despite having received the flu vaccine may have milder symptoms. Symptoms of flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Flu vaccination is available at most healthcare providers' offices, local health departments and retail pharmacies. There are no flu vaccine shortages across Ohio.

Effective ways to avoid getting or spreading the flu include: washing hands frequently or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer; covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or coughing or sneezing into elbows; avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth; and staying home when sick. "If you are sick with the flu, stay home. Start the new year off right by helping to protect others when you are not feeling well," Dr. Hurst said.

## January Is National Stalking Awareness Month

January 2020 marks the sixth National Stalking Awareness Month. Stalking impacts over 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men in the United States. Stalking is defined as a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that causes fear. Many stalking victims experience being followed, approached, monitored and/or threatened – including through various forms of technology. Victims and survivors often suffer anxiety, social dysfunction, and severe depression as a result of their victimization.

**If you feel you are in imminent danger or fear a threat of harm, please call 911 immediately!**

People who stalk can be very dangerous. Stalkers can threaten, attack, sexually assault, or even kill their victims. Stalkers' behaviors can escalate from more indirect ways of making contact (i.e. like phone calls or texts) to more direct contact (i.e. delivering gifts or showing up where you are at). While victims cannot control the stalking behavior, they should feel empowered to take steps to keep themselves, their families, and their loved ones safe.

Tips to Consider

- Trust your instincts.
- Call the police if you feel you are in any immediate danger.
- Keep a record or log of each contact with the stalker. Be sure to also document any police reports.
- Stalkers often use technology to contact their victims. Save all emails, text messages, photos, and postings on social networking sites as evidence of the stalking behavior.
- Get connected with a victim service provider who can discuss safety planning.

# National Birth Defects Prevention Month

**January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month. Join the nationwide effort to raise awareness of birth defects, their causes, and their impact!**

Not all birth defects can be prevented. But you can increase your chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and by adopting healthy behaviors before and during pregnancy. Taking care of yourself and doing what's best for you is also best for your baby!

Best For You. Best For Baby. 5 Tips for Preventing Birth Defects.

Be sure to take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

Folic acid is important because it can help prevent some major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine. You need to start taking folic acid at least one month before becoming pregnant and continue during pregnancy. In addition to eating foods with natural folate, you can take a vitamin that has folic acid in it every day and eat fortified food.

Book a visit with your healthcare provider before stopping or starting any medicine.

If you are planning to become pregnant, discuss your current medicines with a healthcare provider. Creating a treatment plan for your health condition *before* you are pregnant can help keep you and your developing baby healthy.

Become up-to-date with all vaccines, including the flu shot.

Vaccines help protect you and your developing baby against serious diseases. Get a flu shot and whooping cough vaccine (also called Tdap) during each pregnancy to help protect yourself and your baby.

Before you get pregnant, try to reach a healthy weight.

Obesity increases the risk for several serious birth defects and other pregnancy complications. If you are underweight, overweight, or have obesity, talk with your healthcare provider about ways to reach and maintain a healthy weight before you get pregnant. Focus on a lifestyle that includes healthy eating and regular physical activity.

Boost your health by avoiding substances that are harmful during pregnancy.

Alcohol can cause problems for a developing baby throughout pregnancy, so it's important to stop drinking alcohol when you start trying to get pregnant. Smoking during pregnancy can also harm the developing baby and can cause certain birth defects. Quitting smoking will help you feel better and provide a healthier environment for your baby. Using certain drugs during pregnancy can cause health problems for a woman and her developing baby. If you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant and can't stop using drugs—get help! A healthcare provider can help you with counseling, treatment, and other support services.

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## Who should get vaccinated?

HPV vaccination is recommended at age 11 or 12 years (or can start at age 9 years) and for everyone through age 26 years, if not vaccinated already. Vaccination is not recommended for everyone older than age 26 years. However, some adults age 27 through 45 years who are not already vaccinated may decide to get the HPV vaccine after speaking with their healthcare provider about their risk for new HPV infections and the possible benefits of vaccination. HPV vaccination in this age range provides less benefit. Most sexually active adults have already been exposed to HPV, although not necessarily all of the HPV types targeted by vaccination. The health department offers the HPV vaccine.

Even though screening works, 10% of women in the US in 2012 reported they had not been screened in the last 5 years. All women are at risk for cervical cancer. It occurs most often in women over age 30. No women should die of cervical cancer. There are programs available to assist with the cost of women's health screenings. Please contact the Southeast Ohio Breast and Cervical Cancer Project a program of the Noble County Health Department at 740-732-4958 or 1-800-236-6253.

## *Have an upcoming event?*

If you would like it in the monthly health monitor please contact Samantha Hesson at 740-732-4958 or [Samantha.Hesson@noblecohd.org](mailto:Samantha.Hesson@noblecohd.org).

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