

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES  
INFORMATION**

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2004, Revised December 2005



## INTRODUCTION

Pace University is committed to protecting and promoting the health and safety of all our students, faculty, staff, and visitors while pursuing our educational mission. This packet contains information about select diseases that may have a potential threat to the public health of our community. Learning the signs and symptoms of illness will allow everyone to share joint responsibility in preventing and/or limiting the introduction or spread of communicable illnesses onto our campus and surrounding community.

The worldwide SARS epidemic and the current threat of avian flu acutely highlight the need for awareness, education and preparedness to safeguard the health of individuals. Yet, these are not the only conditions of concern; there are numerous others that warrant equal and practical concern. The information included here is being provided in an effort to respond proactively to issues related to communicable diseases at Pace University. Education is a key component in the promotion, maintenance and restoration of health within a community.

Should there be an outbreak of a highly communicable disease on campus, the individual's privacy will be protected to the extent guaranteed by law and disclosures of personal health information will be made only to appropriate persons as mandated by New York State Public Health Law. The University, however, is not equipped to isolate individuals suspected of having a communicable disease that requires isolation. Administration will assist in every possible way with health officials in making alternate arrangements. All individuals requiring medical care or intervention will be processed as per Health Department protocol.

A "Communicable Diseases Response" protocol has been created to guide your actions. In addition, the established University protocols are valuable adjuncts to the information presented in this packet. These protocols include Campus Preparedness and Emergency Planning for a campus, city or national emergency, sexual assault; Emergency Response Plan, and Emergency Protocols for different crises such as, emotional distress and psychological emergency, transport for medical emergency, sexual assault, and violence and crime on campus. Suicide prevention is also addressed. Contacts for community health sites are also listed.

We can all work together to make Pace University a safe and healthy community in which to learn. We hope you find this resource useful in helping you be an active participant. Individuals working in critical departments will receive this information in a formal training session. All others are encouraged to read this material and contact University Health Care with any questions.

## New York State Public Health Law

In the Public Health the term infectious, contagious or communicable disease includes diseases determined by the commissioner, and confirmed by the Public Health Council, to be communicable, rapidly emergent or a significant threat to public health. The list of currently designated diseases is available on the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) web site.

All health care personnel are obligated to report cases or suspected cases or outbreaks of communicable diseases to the city, county or district health officer by the vehicle set forth in the document "New York State Department of Health Communicable Disease Reporting Requirements". The full name, age and address of every person with a suspected or confirmed communicable disease must be disclosed to the health officer, at which time an investigation will be launched.

It is the responsibility of the health care provider to immediately isolate the individual to the best of their capability and provide instructions to the individual and contacts regarding prevention of spread of the disease, pending official action by the health officer, which includes reporting to the NYSDOH. Once an investigation is launched, NYSDOH officials are in charge of operations until the public health threat has ended.



## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES RESPONSE

### NEW YORK CAMPUSES

University Health Care

41 Park Row, Room 313

Phone: (212) 346-1600

Hours: Monday – Friday 9 AM – 5 PM

After business hours: **SECURITY** (212) 346-1800

### WESTCHESTER CAMPUSES

University Health Care

Goldstein Health, Fitness, & Recreation Center, Room 125

Phone: (914) 773-3760

Hours: Monday – Friday 9 AM – 5 PM

After business hours: **SECURITY**

Pleasantville – (914) 773-**3400**  
Briarcliff – (914) 923-**2700**  
White Plains – (914) 422-**4111**

## POLICY

Pace University is committed to protecting and promoting the health and safety of all of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors while pursuing our educational mission. The purpose of this protocol is to guide our actions to prevent and/or limit the introduction or spread of communicable illnesses onto our campus and surrounding community.

## PROCEDURES

- Refer to the list of communicable diseases (of concern) Information Sheets. Current management guidelines for these illnesses and others are available at: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)), New York State Department of Health ([www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us)), Westchester County Department of Health ([www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com)), and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ([www.nyc.gov/html/doh](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh)).
- During office operational hours, contact **UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE**.
- After hours and/or weekends, contact **SECURITY**.
- Further procedures may include:
  - Referring to Medical Emergency Transport Protocol
  - Initiating Emergency Response Plan: **SECURITY**
  - Notifying local Departments of Health: Westchester – (914) 813-5159 or New York City – (212) 788-9830

## Contacts and Web Site Links

Security:	<b>New York City</b> (212) 346-1800 <b>White Plains</b> (914) 422-4111 <b>White Plains</b> (914) 422-4166 <b>Pleasantville</b> (914) 773-3400 <b>Briarcliff</b> (914) 923-2700	B Level East Preston Hall Lobby Graduate Center Lobby Goldstein Center Lobby Dow Hall Lobby
University Health Care	New York City (212) 346-1600 Pleasantville (914) 773-3760	41 Park Row, Room 313 Goldstein Health, Fitness & Recreation Center, Room 125
Counseling Services	New York City (212) 346-1526 <b>24-hour hot line</b> (212) 604-7000 Westchester (914) 773-3710  <b>24-hour hot line</b> (914) 347-6400	156 William Street, 12 <sup>th</sup> FL  Administration Cntr, 2 <sup>nd</sup> FL Education House, 2 <sup>nd</sup> FL (White Plains, by appt.)

### Web sites accessible from the Pace University home page:

- Health Services
  - University Health Care
- Counseling Services
  - Alcohol and Other Drugs
  - Violence
- Campus Preparedness and Emergency Planning
  - Emergency Response Plan
  - Different Responses for Different Crises
  - University Services
  - National and Local Resources

### Disease information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
 New York State Department of Health  
 Westchester County Department of Health  
 New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us)  
[www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com)  
[www.nyc.gov/html/doh](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh)

## GENERAL INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

### Visual Alerts

- Post visual alerts (in appropriate languages) prominently at the entrances to all locations where individuals congregate.
- Place informational literature in easily visible and accessible locations

### Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette:

- To contain respiratory secretions, all persons with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of presumed cause, should:
  - Cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing
  - Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions
  - Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use
  - Perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials

### **Masking and separation of persons with symptoms of respiratory infection**

- During periods of increased respiratory infection in the community, offer masks to persons who are coughing. (Respirator masks are not necessary.)
- Encourage coughing persons, however, to sit at least 3 feet away from others in common areas year-round.

### Physical safeguards:

- Ensure the availability of waste receptacles
- Ensure the availability of soap and disposable towels for hand washing where sinks are available

### General Handwashing:

- In addition to respiratory hygiene, always wash your hands after:
  - Going to the bathroom
  - Before and after eating
  - After contact with or being near someone who is ill
  - Before and after handling and preparing food
  - After touching animals

**IMPORTANT:** Become informed about the signs and symptoms of acute respiratory illnesses that might pose a public health threat. Visit the web site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for detailed information on many illnesses. If you are ill, stay home to avoid infecting others.

**See a health care professional for evaluation if you are concerned.**

## **Chickenpox (varicella zoster)**

### **What is chickenpox?**

Chickenpox is a highly communicable disease caused by the varicella virus.

### **Who gets chickenpox?**

Chickenpox is common in the United States and occurs most frequently in winter and early spring in temperate climates. Most individuals acquire chickenpox by adulthood, if not vaccinated against it.

### **How is chickenpox spread?**

Chickenpox is transmitted to others by direct person-to-person contact, by droplet or airborne spread of discharges from an infected person's nose and throat or indirectly by contact with articles freshly soiled by discharges from the infected person's lesions. The scabs themselves are not considered infectious.

### **What are the symptoms of chickenpox?**

Initial symptoms include sudden onset of slight fever and feeling tired and weak. An itchy blister-like rash soon follows these. The blisters tend to be more common on covered than on exposed parts of the body and eventually dry, crust over and form scabs. They may appear on the scalp, armpits, trunk and even on the eyelids and in the mouth. Mild or unapparent infections occasionally occur in children. The disease is usually more serious in adults than in children.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms commonly appear 14-16 days (range of 10-21 days) after exposure to someone with chickenpox or herpes zoster (shingles).

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread chickenpox?**

A person is most able to transmit chickenpox from one to two days before the onset of rash until all lesions have crusted. People who are immunocompromised may be contagious for a longer period of time.

### **Does past infection with chickenpox make a person immune?**

Chickenpox generally results in lifelong immunity. However, this infection may remain hidden and recur years later as shingles in a proportion of older adults and sometimes in children.

### **What are the complications associated with chickenpox?**

Newborn children (less than one month old) and immunocompromised persons may have an increased risk of developing a severe form of chickenpox or shingles.

### **Is there a vaccine for chickenpox?**

A vaccine against chickenpox was first licensed in March 1995. It has been recommended for persons over 12 months of age. Older children and adults who have previously had chickenpox do not need to be vaccinated. Contact your doctor or local health department for further information about the chickenpox vaccine.

### **What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of chickenpox?**

The best method to prevent further spread of chickenpox is for people infected with the disease to remain home and avoid exposing others who are susceptible. If they develop symptoms, they should remain home until one week after the skin eruption began or until the lesions become dry and crusted.

### **Is there a treatment for chickenpox?**

In 1992, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration approved acyclovir for treatment of chickenpox in healthy children. However, because chickenpox tends to be mild in healthy children, most health care providers do not feel that it is necessary to prescribe acyclovir.

## Diphtheria

### **What is diphtheria?**

Diphtheria is an acute bacterial disease that usually affects the tonsils, throat, nose or skin. It is extremely rare in the United States.

### **Who gets diphtheria?**

Diphtheria is most common where people live in crowded conditions. Unimmunized children under 15 years of age are likely to contract diphtheria. The disease is often found among adults whose immunization was neglected, and is most severe in unimmunized or inadequately immunized individuals.

### **How is diphtheria spread?**

Diphtheria is transmitted to others through close contact with discharge from an infected person's nose, throat, skin, eyes and lesions.

### **What are the symptoms of diphtheria?**

There are two types of diphtheria. One type involves the nose and throat, and the other involves the skin. Symptoms include sore throat, low-grade fever and enlarged lymph nodes located in the neck. Skin lesions may be painful, swollen and reddened.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms usually appear two to four days after infection, with a range of one to ten days.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread diphtheria?**

People who are infected with the diphtheria germ may be contagious for up to two weeks, but seldom more than four weeks. If the patient is treated with appropriate antibiotics, the contagious period can be limited to less than four days.

### **Does past infection with diphtheria make a person immune?**

Recovery from diphtheria is not always followed by lasting immunity.

### **Is there a vaccine for diphtheria?**

Diphtheria vaccine is usually combined with tetanus vaccine and pertussis vaccine. The primary series of five to six injections is given during infancy and childhood. After the age of 7 years, a combination of tetanus vaccine and diphtheria vaccine (Td) should be given every 10 years to maintain immunity throughout adulthood.

### **How can diphtheria be prevented?**

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunization in the community. Other methods of control include prompt treatment of cases and a community surveillance program.

### **What is the treatment for diphtheria?**

Certain antibiotics, such as penicillin and erythromycin, can be prescribed for the treatment of diphtheria. A diphtheria antitoxin is also used for treatment.

### **What can be the effect of not being treated for diphtheria?**

If diphtheria goes untreated, serious complications such as paralysis, heart failure and blood disorders may occur. Death occurs in approximately 5 to 10 percent of all cases.

## Influenza (Flu)

### **What is influenza?**

Influenza or flu is a viral infection of the nose, throat, bronchial tubes and lungs. There are two main types of influenza virus: A and B. Type A virus tends to cause more severe illness than type B. Each type includes many different strains, which tend to change each year.

### **When does influenza occur?**

Influenza occurs most often in the winter months. Illnesses resembling influenza may occur in the summer months but they are usually due to other viruses.

### **Who gets influenza?**

Anyone can get influenza, but it is most serious in the elderly, in people with chronic underlying illnesses (such as cancer, emphysema or diabetes) or in those with weakened immune systems.

### **How is it spread?**

Influenza is highly contagious and is easily transmitted through contact with droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person during coughing and sneezing.

### **What are the symptoms of influenza?**

Typical flu symptoms include headache, fever, chills, cough or sore throat and body aches. Intestinal symptoms are uncommon. Although most people are ill for only a few days, some people have a much more serious illness, such as pneumonia, and may need to be hospitalized. Approximately 20,000 people die each year in the United States from the flu or related complications.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

The incubation period for influenza is one to five days.

### **How is influenza diagnosed?**

Usually, a health care professional will diagnose a case of the flu based on typical symptoms of fever, chills, headache, cough and body aches. Specific lab tests to confirm the flu are costly and time consuming and are usually limited to outbreak or disease surveillance efforts.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread influenza?**

The contagious period varies, but probably begins the day before symptoms appear and extends for a week.

### **Does past infection with influenza make a person immune?**

Generally, no. The viruses that cause flu frequently change, so people who have been infected or given a flu shot in previous years may become infected with a new strain. Because of this, and because any immunity produced by the flu shot may decrease in the year after vaccination, people should be vaccinated every year.

### **What is the treatment for influenza?**

Rest and liquids are usually adequate. Prescription drugs called amantadine and rimantadine may prevent or reduce the severity of influenza type A, but are not effective against type B. Newer prescription drugs called zanamivir and oseltamivir may reduce the severity of influenza types A and B.

### **What can be done to control or prevent influenza?**

Routine immunization against influenza is the most important control measure. Influenza vaccine (flu shot) may be available through your personal physician or local health department. Studies have shown that even in years when new strains emerge, people in high-risk groups who obtain annual flu shots tend to have milder illness and are less likely to be hospitalized with complications due to influenza.

## **Measles (Red measles; Rubeola)**

### **What is measles?**

Measles is an acute, highly contagious viral disease capable of producing epidemics.

### **Who gets measles?**

Although measles is usually considered a childhood disease, it can be contracted at any age. In recent years, outbreaks have mainly involved high school and college students who are unvaccinated or have received only one dose of measles vaccine.

### **How is measles spread?**

Measles is spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people or, less frequently, by airborne transmission. Measles is one of the most readily transmitted communicable diseases.

### **What are the symptoms of measles?**

Measles symptoms generally appear in two stages. In the first stage, the individual may have a runny nose, cough and a slight fever. The eyes may become reddened and sensitive to light while the fever consistently rises each day. The second stage begins on the third to seventh day and consists of a temperature of 103-105° F, and a red blotchy rash lasting four to seven days. The rash usually begins on the face and then spreads over the entire body. Koplik spots (little white spots) may also appear on the gums and inside of the cheeks.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms usually appear in 10-12 days, although they may occur as early as seven or as late as 18 days after exposure.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread measles?**

An individual is able to transmit measles from five days prior to and five days after rash onset.

### **Does past infection make a person immune?**

Yes. Permanent immunity is acquired after contracting the disease.

### **What is the treatment for measles?**

There is no specific treatment for measles.

### **What are the complications associated with measles?**

Pneumonia occurs in up to 6 percent of reported cases and accounts for 60 percent of deaths attributed to measles. Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) may also occur. Other complications include middle ear infection and convulsions. Measles is more severe in infants and adults.

### **How can measles be prevented?**

Anyone born on or after January 1, 1957, who does not have a history of physician-diagnosed measles or serologic confirmation of measles immunity, should receive two doses of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine for maximum protection. The first dose should be given at 12-15 months of age. The second dose should be given at four to six years of age (school entry) with other vaccines. MMR vaccine is recommended for all measles vaccine doses to provide increased protection against all three vaccine-preventable diseases: measles, mumps and rubella. Measles immunization is required of all children enrolled in schools and pre-kindergarten programs. Since August 1, 1990, college students have also been required to demonstrate immunity against measles.

## **Mumps (infectious parotitis)**

### **What is mumps?**

Mumps is an acute viral disease characterized by fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands.

### **Who gets mumps?**

Although older people may contract the disease, mumps usually occurs in children between the ages of five and 15. Mumps occurs less regularly than other common childhood communicable diseases. The greatest risk of infection occurs among older children. Mumps is more common during winter and spring.

### **How is mumps spread?**

Mumps is transmitted by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of infected individuals.

### **What are the symptoms of mumps?**

Symptoms of mumps include fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands, usually the parotid gland (located just below the front of the ear). Approximately one-third of infected people do not exhibit symptoms.

### **How soon after infection do symptoms occur?**

The incubation period is usually 16 to 18 days, although it may vary from 12 to 25 days.

### **What complications have been associated with mumps?**

Swelling of the testicles occurs in 15-25 percent of infected males. Mumps can cause central nervous system disorders such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal column). Other complications include arthritis, kidney involvement, inflammation of the thyroid gland and breasts and deafness.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread mumps?**

Mumps is contagious three days prior to and four days after the onset of symptoms.

### **Does past infection with mumps make a person immune?**

Yes. Immunity acquired after contracting the disease is usually permanent.

### **Is there a vaccine for mumps?**

Yes. Mumps vaccine is given on or after a child's first birthday, and is usually administered in combination with measles and rubella vaccine. The vaccine is highly effective and one injection usually produces lifelong protection.

### **What can be done to prevent the spread of mumps?**

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunization in the community. Children should not attend school during their infectious period.

## **Rubella (German measles)**

### **What is rubella?**

Rubella is a viral disease characterized by slight fever, rash and swollen glands. Most cases are mild.

### **Who gets rubella?**

In unvaccinated populations, rubella is primarily a childhood disease. Where children are well immunized, adolescent and adult infections become more evident. Rubella occurs more frequently in winter and spring.

### **How is rubella spread?**

Rubella is spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected individuals.

### **What are the symptoms of rubella?**

Rubella is a mild illness, which may present few or no symptoms. Symptoms may include a rash, slight fever, joint aches, headache, discomfort, runny nose and reddened eyes. The lymph nodes just behind the ears and at the back of the neck may swell, causing some soreness and/or pain. The rash, which may be itchy, first appears on the face and progresses from head to foot, lasting about three days. As many as half of all rubella cases occur without a rash.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

The incubation period for rubella is 12-23 days; in most cases, symptoms appear within 16-18 days.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread rubella?**

Rubella may be transmitted from seven days before to seven days after rash onset.

### **Does past infection with rubella make a person immune?**

Yes. Immunity acquired after contracting the disease is usually permanent.

### **What is the vaccine for rubella?**

Rubella vaccine is given on or after a child's first birthday, and is usually given in combination with measles and mumps (MMR) vaccine. Children usually receive the first dose between 12 and 15 months of age and the second dose prior to school entry are 4-6 years of age.

### **What can be the effect of not being immunized against rubella?**

Rubella infection is dangerous because of its ability to damage an unborn baby. Infection of a pregnant woman may result in a miscarriage, stillbirth or the birth of an infant with abnormalities, which may include deafness, cataracts, heart defects, liver and spleen damage and mental retardation. Congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) occurs among at least 25 percent of infants born to women who have had rubella during the first trimester of pregnancy.

### **What can be done to prevent the spread of rubella?**

Maintaining high levels of rubella immunization in the community is critical to controlling the spread. Control of the spread of rubella is needed primarily to prevent the birth defects caused by CRS. Therefore, women of childbearing age should have their immunity determined and receive rubella vaccine if needed. Infected children should not attend school during their infectious period.

## **Meningitis, Bacterial (Meningococcal meningitis)**

### **What is meningococcal meningitis?**

Meningococcal disease is a severe bacterial infection of the bloodstream or meninges (a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord). It is a relatively rare disease and usually occurs as a single isolated event. Clusters of cases or outbreaks are rare in the United States.

### **Who gets meningococcal disease?**

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but it is more common in infants and children.

### **How is the germ meningococcus spread?**

The meningococcus germ is spread by direct close contact with nose or throat discharges of an infected person. Many people carry this particular germ in their nose and throat without any signs of illness, while others may develop serious symptoms.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Although most people exposed to the meningococcus germ do not become seriously ill, some may develop fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash. Up to 25 percent of patients who recover may have chronic damage to the nervous system? The disease is occasionally fatal.

### **How soon do the symptoms appear?**

The symptoms may appear two to 10 days after exposure, but usually within five days.

### **When and for how long is an infected person able to spread the disease?**

From the time a person is first infected until the germ is no longer present in discharges from the nose and throat, he or she may transmit the disease. The duration varies according to treatment used.

### **What is the treatment for meningococcal disease?**

Antibiotics, such as penicillin G or ceftriaxone, can be used to treat people with meningococcal disease.

### **Should people who have been in contact with a diagnosed case of meningococcal meningitis be treated?**

Only people who have been in close contact (household members, intimate contacts, health care personnel performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, day care center playmates, etc.) need to be considered for preventive treatment. Such people are usually advised to obtain a prescription for a special antibiotic (either rifampin, ciprofloxacin or ceftriaxone) from their physician. Casual contact as might occur in a regular classroom, office or factory setting is not usually significant enough to cause concern.

### **Is there a vaccine to prevent meningococcal meningitis?**

Presently, there is a vaccine that will protect against some of the strains of meningococcus. It is recommended in outbreak situations, and for those travelling to areas of the world where high rates of the disease are known to occur. For some college students, such as freshman living in dormitories, there is a modestly increased risk of meningococcal disease; students and parents should be educated about meningococcal disease and the availability of a safe and effective vaccine.

## **Mononucleosis, Infectious (Mono)**

### **What is infectious mononucleosis?**

Infectious mononucleosis is a viral disease that affects certain blood cells. It is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), which is a member of the herpes virus family. Most cases occur sporadically. Outbreaks are rare.

### **Who gets infectious mononucleosis?**

While most people are exposed to the Epstein-Barr virus sometime in their lives, very few go on to develop the symptoms of infectious mononucleosis. In underdeveloped countries, people are exposed in early childhood where they are unlikely to develop noticeable symptoms. In developed countries such as the United States, the age of first exposure may be delayed to older childhood and young adult age when symptoms are more likely to result. For this reason, it is recognized more often in high school and college students.

### **How is infectious mononucleosis spread?**

The virus is spread by person-to-person contact, via saliva (on hands or toys, or by kissing). In rare instances, the virus has been transmitted by blood transfusion.

### **What are the symptoms of infectious mononucleosis?**

Symptoms include fever, sore throat, swollen glands and feeling tired. Sometimes, the liver and spleen are affected. Duration is from one to several weeks. The disease is very rarely fatal.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms appear from four to six weeks after exposure.

When and for how long is a person able to spread infectious mononucleosis?

The virus is shed in the throat during the illness and for up to a year after infection. After the initial infection, the virus tends to become dormant for a prolonged period and can later reactivate and be shed from the throat again.

### **What is the treatment for infectious mononucleosis?**

No treatment other than rest is needed in the vast majority of cases.

### **What can a person do to minimize the spread of infectious mononucleosis?**

Avoid activities involving the transfer of body fluids (commonly saliva) with someone who is currently or recently infected with the disease. At present, there is no vaccine available to prevent infectious mononucleosis.

## **Pertussis (Whooping cough)**

### **What is pertussis?**

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a highly contagious disease involving the respiratory tract. It is caused by a bacterium that is found in the mouth, nose and throat of an infected person. Approximately 300 cases are reported annually in New York State.

### **Who gets pertussis?**

Pertussis can occur at any age. Although most of the reported cases occur in children under five years, the number of cases in adolescents and adults is increasing.

### **How is pertussis spread?**

Pertussis is primarily spread by direct contact with discharges from the nose and throat of infected individuals. Frequently, older siblings who may be harboring the bacteria in their nose and throat can bring the disease home and infect an infant in the household.

### **What are the symptoms of pertussis?**

Pertussis begins as a mild upper respiratory infection. Initially, symptoms resemble those of a common cold, including sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild cough. Within two weeks, the cough becomes more severe and is characterized by episodes of numerous rapid coughs followed by a crowing or high pitched whoop. A thick, clear mucous may be discharged. These episodes may recur for one to two months, and are more frequent at night. Older people or partially immunized children generally have milder symptoms.

### **How soon after infection do symptoms appear?**

The incubation period is usually five to 10 days but may be as long as 21 days.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread pertussis?**

A person can transmit pertussis from onset of symptoms to three weeks after the onset of coughing episodes. The period on communicability is reduced to five days after antibiotic therapy is begun.

### **Does past infection with pertussis make a person immune?**

One attack usually confers prolonged immunity.

### **What are the complications associated with pertussis?**

Complications of pertussis may include pneumonia, middle ear infection, loss of appetite, dehydration, seizures, encephalopathy (disorders of the brain), apneic episodes (brief cessation of breathing) and death.

### **What is the vaccine for pertussis?**

The vaccine for pertussis is usually given in combination with diphtheria and tetanus. Immunization authorities recommend that DtaP (acellular pertussis) vaccine be given at two, four, six and 15-18 months of age and between four and six years of age.

### **How can a person or community do to prevent the spread of pertussis?**

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunization in the community. People who have or may have pertussis should stay away from young children and infants until properly treated. Treatment of people who are close contacts of pertussis cases is also an important part of prevention.

### **Is there a treatment for pertussis?**

Pertussis is effectively treated with antibiotics.

## **SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)**

### **What is SARS?**

Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a viral respiratory illness that was first reported in Asia in February 2003.

### **What are the symptoms and signs of SARS?**

The illness usually begins with fever (temperature greater than 100.4° F), which is sometimes associated with chills or other symptoms, including a headache, a general feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also experience mild respiratory symptoms at the outset; others also may have diarrhea. After two to seven days, SARS patients may develop a dry cough with most developing pneumonia.

### **What is the cause of SARS?**

SARS is caused by the SARS-associated coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a common cause of mild to moderate upper-respiratory illness in humans and occasionally have been linked to pneumonia in humans, especially people with weakened immune systems. Not enough is known about the new virus to determine the full range of illness that it might cause. The viruses also can cause severe disease in animals, including cats, dogs, pigs, mice, and birds.

### **How is SARS Spread?**

SARS is mainly spread by close person-to-person contact. The virus that causes SARS is thought to be transmitted most readily by being within 3 feet of respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes and/or by touching a surface or object contaminated with infectious droplets. Close contact is defined as having cared for or lived with a person known to have SARS or having direct contact with secretions and/or body fluids of a patient known to have SARS. Examples include kissing or embracing, sharing eating or drinking utensils, close conversation (within three feet) or physical contact. Close contact does not include walking near a person or sitting across a waiting room or office for a brief time.

### **Who is at risk for getting SARS?**

Most exposures to SARS occur in healthcare facilities (to healthcare workers, patients, and visitors) and households (to family members of SARS patients). Community transmission outside of these settings has occurred rarely. In addition, it is possible that SARS virus might be spread more broadly through the air or by other ways that are not yet known.

### **If I were exposed to SARS, how long would it take for me to become sick?**

The incubation period is typically two to seven days, although it may be as long as 10 days.

### **How long is a person with SARS infectious to others?**

Information suggests that people with SARS are most likely to be infectious only when they have symptoms such as fever or cough. However, as a precaution against spreading the disease, CDC recommends that people with SARS limit their interactions outside the home (stay home from work and school) until 10 days after their symptoms have gone away.

### **Do some people who recover from SARS become sick again or relapse?**

CDC and other scientists are trying to gain a full understanding of what factors might influence illness progression and recovery. Such factors could be related to the virus itself, how the body's immune system reacts to the virus, or how infection with the virus is treated.

### **If there is another outbreak of SARS, how can I protect my family and myself?**

There are common-sense precautions that you can take that apply to many infectious diseases. The most important is frequent hand washing with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand rubs. You should avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unclean hands and encourage people around you to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

### **Is it safe to travel to other countries outside of the U.S.?**

At this time, there is no evidence of ongoing transmission of SARS anywhere in the world. In the absence of SARS transmission, there is no need for concern about travel or other activities.

## Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

### What are STDs?

STDs are diseases that are usually passed through sexual contact with an infected partner. STDs include many diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), and syphilis. STDs are widespread; more than 12 million people in the United States are infected each year.

### Who gets STDs?

STDs are a danger to everyone who has sex, even ONCE.

### How are STDs spread?

STDs are spread through contact with infected body fluids, such as blood, semen, or vaginal secretions; and infected skin and mucous membranes, for example, sores in the mouth. Activities that expose you to infected body fluids or skin include 1) vaginal, anal, or oral sex WITHOUT proper use of a latex condom or other barrier method; and 2) sharing needles or syringes for drug use, ear piercing, tattooing, etc. Anal sex is especially risky because it often causes bleeding and provides an entry for infection. Having an STD may increase your risk of getting HIV.

### What are the symptoms of an STD?

The symptoms of STDs may include 1) sores or blisters on or around the sex organs or mouth; 2) pain or burning during urination; 3) discharge from the penis or vagina that smells or looks unusual; 4) itching, swelling, or pain in or around the sex organs; 5) pain during intercourse; and 6) swollen lymph nodes, especially under arms or in groin. On the other hand, an individual may have no symptoms.

### How soon do symptoms appear?

The incubation period for STDs vary but can be as soon as a few days or as long as several months. Specifics for each STD are available on the web site [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or any health department site.

### When and for how long is a person able to spread an STD?

STDs may be transmitted as long as the infection is active. Bacterial STDs, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis can be cured with antimicrobial medications. There is no cure for viral STDs. Symptoms may be controlled with antiviral medications for HIV/AIDS and HSV or surgical procedures for HPV. An infected individual without symptoms often does not know when the risk of transmission of the infection is high. If you are diagnosed with an STD, tell your partners so they can seek treatment.

### Does past infection with an STD make a person immune?

No. Sex without a condom can result in getting an STD again, no matter what STD you've already had.

### Is there a vaccine for STDs?

No. Clinical trials are in progress for vaccines against genital herpes and genital warts.

### What can be the effect of not being treated for STDs?

If left untreated, STDs can have serious side effects, including sterility, brain damage, heart disease, birth defects, low birth rate, premature birth, increased risk of some types of cancer, and death. If you are treated, it is important that you take all medication as prescribed, avoid sexual intercourse until your health care provider says it is okay to resume, and seek counseling if you are worried or upset about having an STD.

### What can be done to prevent the spread of STDs?

Abstinence is the only sure way to avoid getting an STD. Safer practices than vaginal, anal, or oral sex include masturbation, massage, kissing, or fantasy. If you do have sex – be in a monogamous relationship (one partner) or limit the number of partners you have, consistently and correctly use barrier methods like latex condoms, don't inject drugs, avoid alcohol and other drugs, (women) don't douch, and have regular physical exams and tests for STDs. Seek medical care immediately if you suspect you have an STD.

## Tuberculosis (TB)

### **What is tuberculosis?**

Tuberculosis is a bacterial disease usually affecting the lungs (pulmonary TB). Other parts of the body can also be affected, for example lymph nodes, kidneys, bones, joints, etc., (extrapulmonary TB). Approximately 1800 cases are reported each year in NYS.

### **Who gets tuberculosis?**

Tuberculosis can affect anyone of any age. People with weakened immune systems are at increased risk.

### **How is tuberculosis spread?**

Tuberculosis is spread through the air when a person with untreated pulmonary TB coughs or sneezes. Prolonged exposure to a person with untreated TB usually is necessary for infection to occur.

### **What is the difference between latent tuberculosis infection and tuberculosis disease?**

Latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) means the person has the TB germ in their body (usually lungs), but has yet to develop obvious symptoms. In latent TB, the person has a significant reaction to the Mantoux skin test with no symptoms of tuberculosis, and no TB organisms found in the sputum. Tuberculosis disease indicates the person has symptoms, a significant reaction to a Mantoux skin test and organisms found in the sputum. In order to spread the TB germs, a person must have TB disease. Having latent TB infection is not enough to spread the germ. Tuberculosis may last for a lifetime as an infection, never developing into disease.

### **What are the symptoms of tuberculosis?**

The symptoms of TB include a low-grade fever, night sweats, fatigue, weight loss and a persistent cough. Some people may not have obvious symptoms.

### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

Most people infected with the germ that causes TB never develop active TB. If active TB does develop, it can occur two to three months after infection or years later. The risk of active disease lessens as time passes.

### **When and for how long is a person able to spread tuberculosis?**

A person with TB disease may remain contagious until he/she has been on appropriate treatment for several weeks. However, a person with latent TB infection, but not disease, cannot spread the infection to others, since there are no TB germs in the sputum.

### **What is the treatment for tuberculosis?**

People with latent TB infection should be evaluated for a course of preventive therapy, which usually includes taking anti-tuberculosis medication for several months. People with active TB disease must complete a course of treatment for six months or more. Initial treatment includes at least four anti-TB drugs, and medications may be altered based on laboratory test results. The exact medication plan must be determined by a health care professional. Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) Programs are recommended for all TB patients to help them complete their therapy.

### **What can be the effect of not being treated for tuberculosis?**

In addition to spreading the disease to others, an untreated person may become severely ill or die.

### **What can be done to prevent the spread of tuberculosis?**

The most important way to stop the spread of tuberculosis is for TB patients to cover the mouth and nose when coughing, and to take all the TB medicine exactly as prescribed by the health care professional.



## Reporting Information

### New York State Department of Health Regional Epidemiology Staff

#### NEW ROCHELLE

NYS Department of Health  
 Metropolitan Regional Area Office  
 145 Huguenot Street  
 New Rochelle, New York 10801-5228  
 Phone: (914) 654-7000 # 7      8:30 AM to 5 PM  
 Fax: (914) 654-7169

#### COUNTIES SERVED

New Rochelle & Long Island: Bronx, Dutchess,  
 Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Queens, **Rockland**,  
 Suffolk, Ulster, **Westchester**

### Statewide

#### ALBANY – CENTRAL OFFICE

Regional Epidemiology Program  
 NYS Department of Health  
 Bureau of Communicable Disease Control  
 ESP Corning Tower, Room 651  
 Albany, New York 12237-0627  
 Phone: (518) 473-4439  
 Fax: (518) 474-7381

#### NEW YORK CITY

New York City Health Department  
 Communicable Disease Program  
 125 Worth Street, Room 315, CN-6  
 New York, New York 10013  
 Phone: (212) 788-9830      9 AM – 5 PM  
 Fax: (212) 788-4268  
**After Hours:** (212) 764-7667 [Poison Control]

### Local Health Units for General Information

New York City Health Department  
 125 Worth Street  
 New York, New York 10013  
 Phone: 311 for routing

Westchester County Health Department  
 145 Huguenot Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 New Rochelle, New York 10801  
 Phone: (914) 813-5159  
 Fax: (914) 813-5182  
**24-hour Public Health Emergencies:** (914) 813-5000