

FOR THE HEALTH OF IT!



Respiratory Illnesses

Every year, respiratory viruses such as influenza (flu), COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cause hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths during the fall and winter virus season. Children under 5 years old, older adults, and individuals with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of severe illness from any of these viruses.

Tools and habits to help prevent serious illness from flu, RSV, and COVID-19:

- Vaccines - talk to your doctor or pharmacist to see if you are up to date on your vaccinations and if you are eligible to receive a flu, RSV, or COVID-19 vaccination
- RSV preventive antibodies - a RSV preventive antibody may be recommended for infants, talk with your pediatrician to find out if your child is eligible to receive RSV antibodies
- Test at home or at the doctors so you know which virus you may have
- Masks
- Handwashing
- Cover your cough and sneezes
- Stay home when you are sick
- Keep your distance from people that are sick

The CDC provides a [community snapshot](#) that signifies respiratory virus activity levels. The NYS Department of Health also provides weekly [Influenza](#) and [COVID-19](#) activity reports. You can read these reports to discover the virus activity levels in New York State and in Warren County,

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Cervical Health Awareness

Cervical cancer is growth of cells that starts in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. Various strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV) play a role in causing most cervical cancers. HPV is a common infection that is passed through skin to skin contact, usually during sexual activity. Long-lasting infection of HPV can cause precancer and cell changes that can then turn into cervical cancer if not caught or treated early enough.

In early stages, cervical cancer might not cause any signs or symptoms. As it grows, a person may experience:

- Vaginal bleeding after intercourse, between periods or after menopause.
- Menstrual bleeding that is heavier and lasts longer than usual.
- Watery, bloody vaginal discharge that may be heavy and have a foul odor.
- Pelvic pain or pain during intercourse.

Risk factors

- Smoking tobacco
- Having many sexual partners or becoming sexually active at a young age (increases risk of HPV infection)
- Other sexually transmitted infections
- A weakened immune system

Prevention

- Ask your doctor about the HPV vaccine.
- Have routine PAP tests.
- Practice safe sex.

HPV Vaccine

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is spread through skin to skin contact, usually during sexual activity. Certain strains of HPS can cause genital warts or cancer—cervical, vaginal, vulvar, penile, anal, and oropharyngeal. There's about 31,000 HPV related cancer diagnoses each year. For most people an HPV infection may not cause any symptoms so they may not even know they are infected, but they could still spread it.

HPV vaccination can help prevent these HPV related cancers, and genital warts. Vaccination offers the most protection if given before potential exposure and is recommended starting at age 9. If the first dose is given before a teen's 15th birthday, only two doses are needed. series

HPV vaccine series started between ages 9 and 14

2 doses given 6 months apart

HPV vaccine series started at age 15 or older

3 doses given over a 6-month period

Everyone through age 26 can and should get the HPV vaccine if they have not already. Adults ages 27 to 45 who have not been received the HPV vaccine yet can talk to their provider about their risk for new HPV infections, and the benefits of getting vaccinated.

Cervical cancer is just the tip

of the iceberg: it is the only type of cancer caused by HPV that has a recommended screening test to detect it at an early stage. There are other HPV related cancers that do not have screening tests, which means they might not be detected until they cause serious health problems.



HPV: Myth vs Fact



Myth: HPV isn't that common.

FACT: 1 in 4 Americans are infected with HPV. More than 80 percent of Americans will be exposed to HPV at some point in their lives.

Myth: The HPV vaccine has severe side effects, such as infertility

FACT: Individuals may experience mild side effects following vaccination, like soreness, headache, fatigue, or nausea. No research has found that the vaccine causes infertility

Myth: The HPV vaccine isn't effective.

FACT: The vaccine has shown to be almost 100% effective and can prevent most HPV related cancers.

Myth: The HPV vaccine is just for girls

FACT: Anyone can become infected with or spread HPV, so boys should also get the HPV vaccine at the recommended ages

Myth: You only need the HPV vaccine if you are sexually active.

FACT: It is strongly recommended to get the HPV vaccine before ever becoming sexually active. Getting the vaccine protects you for life!

Indoor Tanning 101

Research indicates that UV light from the sun and tanning beds can both cause melanoma and increase the risk of a benign mole progressing to melanoma. Indoor tanning equipment emit harmful UVA and UVB radiation. The amount of radiation produced during indoor tanning is similar to that of the sun, and in some cases might be stronger.

Fast facts:

- Indoor tanning can increase users' risk of developing squamous cell carcinoma by 58% and basal cell carcinoma by 24%
- Using tanning beds before age 20 can increase your chances of developing melanoma by 47%, and the risk increases with each use
- Women younger than 30 are six times more likely to develop melanoma if they tan indoors
- Indoor tanning is also associated with increased risk for being diagnosed with melanoma more than once

Both UVA and UVB rays contribute to a higher risk of skin cancer. The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified indoor tanning devices as carcinogenic, meaning they can cause cancer in humans. They list ultraviolet-emitting tanning devices in the same category as plutonium and cigarettes! The best way to avoid the very real risks of indoor tanning is simple: avoid it. You could use self-tanner to look tan year-round without increasing your risk of developing early wrinkles, leathery skin, and skin cancer.

Other risks:

- In emergency rooms across the United States, people are treated for burns, loss of consciousness, and eye injuries caused by indoor tanning
- Getting enough vitamin D from tanning beds isn't possible
- Becoming addicted to tanning is a real risk - evidence indicates that tanning can be addictive and some people find it hard to stop tanning.



It's the LAW!



Effective August 16, 2018, New York State Public Health Law prohibits persons under eighteen (18) years of age from using indoor tanning devices.

indoor tanning? don't even think about it.

Tanned skin is **damaged skin** and indoor tanning **causes skin cancer.**

GET THE FACTS. REDUCE THE RISK. SPREAD THE WORD.
visit: TakeActionAgainstCancer.com

CPIA CANCER PREVENTION IN ACTION
SARATOGA WARREN RALPHSTON
ALBANY MED Health System
GLENS FALLS HOSPITAL Health Promotion Center

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To learn more about the dangers of indoor tanning, and the NYS Indoor Tanning Law, please contact Lauralee Tucker, CPIA Program Coordinator at ltucker@glensfallshosp.org



Get Your Flu Vaccination Today

Did you know that flu season usually peaks after Christmas and it's not too late to get your flu shot in January.

Adults with certain chronic conditions are at higher risk of developing serious complications from flu.

In fact, during recent flu seasons, **9 out of 10 people hospitalized with flu had at least one underlying health condition** – that's why getting an annual flu vaccine is especially important for people with certain chronic health conditions

A flu vaccine reduces the risk of getting sick with flu. For people with certain chronic health conditions a flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of flu-related worsening of chronic conditions and prevent flu-associated hospitalization.

Even if you don't have chronic health conditions you may want to get the flu vaccine to protect the people around you. The flu can be easily transmitted from a person at low risk of complications from the flu to someone at high risk.

Flu vaccines can be given at lots of different places including pharmacies, doctor's offices and community clinics. Visit vaccines.gov to find vaccines near you.

If you do not have insurance or have trouble affording a flu vaccine, contact your local health department.



Winter Mental Wellness

Sometimes our mental health can suffer during the winter months. The lack of sunshine and cold weather can cause feelings of sadness, isolation, and a lack of energy. January is mental wellness month, so it's the perfect time to shift your focus from the holidays to your own personal well-being. Here's a few tips that might help boost your mental wellness this winter season.

1

Plan ahead to keep yourself occupied: Imagine yourself moving through the next few months. What do you want to be doing? Get your supplies out and set up your space to get started. Have an event or a vacation to plan? Now is the perfect time to start.

2

Move your body every day: Staying active can boost your mental wellness. Set a goal that works for you; like 10 minutes of dancing or getting a certain number of steps in each day. Get your friends and family involved too!

3

Improve your mood with fresh air and sunshine: Bundle up and get outside every day! Consider activities that make it fun to get outdoors like sledding, stargazing, walking or hiking. Try a new activity like snowshoeing, visit - for outdoor activity locations around Warren County.

4

Don't forget your basic self-care: Make sure you get enough sleep. Eat nutritious food and drink enough water. These go a long way in helping you stay emotionally well.

5

Get enough light during the day: If you can't get outside, hang out in sunny rooms. If your living or working space is dark, consider getting a light therapy lamp.

6

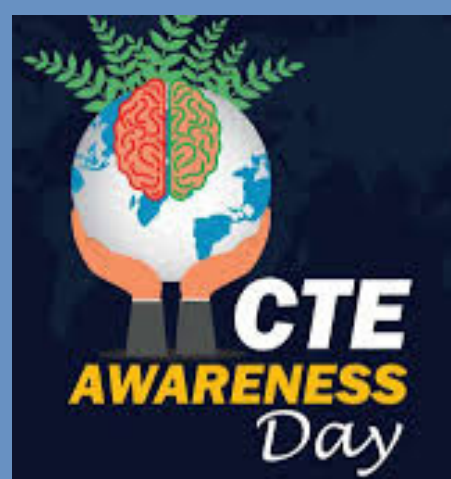
Try something new: When you've been in the same routine for a long stretch of time, your brain benefits from doing something out of the ordinary. Try a new craft, read a new book genre, visit a restaurant you have never been to before.

7

Reach out to someone every day and when you need help: Staying connected is so important for your mental health. And when you are overwhelmed or down in the dumps during the winter months, talking with someone can help.

8

Practice mindfulness: Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and immersed in the current moment. This practice may encourage you to observe your thoughts objectively, without judgement or reaction. Activities like focused breathing, mindful walking, or meditation may reduce stress and anxiety, improve attention, foster emotional resilience, and promote general well-being.



Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) is a diagnosis found on autopsy in people with histories of repeated brain trauma. Some reported experiences by people eventually diagnosed with CTE include difficulty with impulse control, aggression, depression, irritability, paranoia, anxiety, and difficulty with memory and sleep. It is important to remember that these symptoms are common and can be caused by many other things that may be treatable.

There is still debate on how common CTE is, and there is currently no way to diagnose CTE in a living person. One concussion without other brain trauma has never been seen to cause CTE. While the risk factors for developing CTE remain unclear, it is thought that repetitive head or brain trauma is of greater concern.

There currently is no test to diagnose CTE. Most people with head trauma will not develop CTE. However, if you are experiencing long lasting symptoms after a brain injury or head trauma, you should always seek medical attention.

Prevention

Brain injury is difficult to predict or avoid. Prevention is key to reducing the risk. Always wear protective gear, use proper technique, and practice good sportsmanship.

All athletes should be supervised at all times by a professional who is trained to screen for signs and symptoms of concussion.

Follow concussion protocol and listen to the advice of your concussion management team.

Stay up to date with the latest information about concussion diagnosis and management.

Seek medical advice immediately if a concussion or brain injury is suspected.

Cold Weather Safety

Playing outside in the snow can create the best childhood memories. Northern winters are great for sledding, hitting the slopes, throwing snowballs, or ice skating. It's also a great way for kids to get the 60 minutes of daily exercise they need. Be sure your child is dressed right—and know when it's time to come in and warm up!

Children are more at risk from the cold than adults. Their bodies are smaller and they lose heat more quickly. Children exposed to extreme cold for too long and without warm, dry, breathable clothing can get frostbite or hypothermia.

Frostbite

Frostbite happens when the skin, and sometimes the tissue below it, freezes. Fingers, toes, ears, and noses are most likely areas for frostbite. Frostbitten skin may start to hurt or feel like it's burning, then quickly go numb. The area may turn white or pale gray and possibly form blisters.

- If you suspect frostbite, bring your child indoors to gently warm up. Don't rub the affected area, and don't pop any blisters.
- Avoid placing anything hot directly on the skin. Soak frostbitten areas of the body in warm (not hot) water for 20 to 30 minutes. Warm washcloths can be applied to frostbitten noses, ears and lips.
- After a few minutes, dry and cover your child with blankets. Give them something warm to drink.

If the pain or numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call your pediatrician.

Hypothermia

When the body's temperature drops below normal from the cold, dangerous hypothermia begins to set in. A child may start shivering, a sign the body is trying to warm itself up, but then become sluggish, clumsy, or slur their words.

- Hypothermia is a **medical emergency**. Call 911 right away.
- Until help arrives, bring your child indoors. Remove any wet clothing, which draws heat away from the body.
- Wrap your child in blankets or warm clothes, and give them something warm to drink. Be sure to cover core body areas like the chest and abdomen.

Preventing Frostbite and Hypothermia

- **Check the wind chill.** In general, playing outside in temperatures or wind chills below -15° Fahrenheit should be avoided. At these temperatures, exposed skin begins to freeze within minutes.
- **Layer up.** Several thin layers will help keep kids warm and dry. Insulated boots, mittens or gloves, and a hat are essential. Make sure children change out of any wet clothes right away.
- **Take breaks.** Set reasonable limits on the amount of time spent playing outside. Make sure kids have a place to go for regular indoor breaks to warm up.



Braille is a system of touch reading and writing for blind persons in which raised dots represent the letters of the alphabet. It also contains equivalents for punctuation marks and provides symbols to show letter groupings.

People read braille by moving the hand or hands from left to right along each line. The reading process usually involves both hands, and the index fingers generally do the reading. By using the braille alphabet, people who are blind have access to written documents. Braille gives blind individuals access to a wide range of reading materials including recreational and educational reading, financial statements and restaurant menus.

Reading is a huge part of daily adult life. Take a moment to think about the contracts, regulations, insurance policies, directories, or even cook books a person may need to access daily. Even in current times, where technology can provide text to speech functions, there are many times where it is necessary or more convenient to read. Through braille, people who are blind can pursue hobbies and cultural enrichment with materials such as music scores, hymnals, playing cards, and board games.

World Braille Day is a reminder of the importance of accessibility and independence for people who are blind or visually impaired. Braille literacy is also an important factor in equal opportunities for people with blindness. Today, Rubix cubes, watches, lego-style bricks, and other innovations are constantly changing how we use braille and help increase braille literacy, too. That's why you'll find braille on objects you use every day — signs, ATMs, elevators, calculators, and more.

Staying Safe During Winter Sports & Activities

Ice skating

- Allow children to skate only on approved surfaces. Check for signs posted by local police or recreation departments, or call your local police department to find out which areas have been approved.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet, knee pads and elbow pads, especially while learning to skate to keep them safe.
- Skate in the same direction as the crowd
- Avoid darting across the ice
- Never skate alone
- Not chew gum or eat candy while skating



Sledding

- Keep sledders away from motor vehicles, trees, and fences.
- Children should be supervised while sledding.
- Keep young children separated from older children.
- Sledding feet first or sitting up, instead of lying down head-first, may prevent head injuries.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while sledding.
- Sleds should be structurally sound and free of sharp edges and splinters, and the steering mechanism should be well lubricated.
- Sled slopes should be free of obstructions, covered in snow (not ice), not be too steep, and end with a flat runoff.
- Avoid sledding in crowded areas.

Skiing and Snowboarding

- Children should be taught to ski or snowboard by a qualified instructor in a program designed for children.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.
- Young children should always be supervised by an adult. If older children are not with an adult, they should always at least be accompanied by a friend.
- All skiers and snowboarders should wear helmets. Parents should enforce the requirement for their children regardless of the facility's helmet policy.
- Equipment should fit the child. Skiers should wear safety bindings that are adjusted at least every year. Snowboarders should wear gloves with built-in wrist guards. Eye protection or goggles should also be used.
- Slopes should fit the ability and experience of the skier or snowboarder. Avoid crowded slopes.
- Avoid skiing in areas with trees and other obstacles.

Snowmobiling

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under age 16 not operate snowmobiles and that children under age 6 never ride on snowmobiles.
- Do not use a snowmobile to pull a sled or skiers.
- Wear goggles and a safety helmet approved for use on motorized vehicles.
- Travel at safe speeds.
- Never snowmobile alone or at night.
- Stay on marked trails, away from roads, water, railroads and pedestrians.

Hockey

- Children should wear helmets that fit properly, are age appropriate and certified for use. Helmets should be replaced after a serious fall or crash, as some helmets are only built to withstand one impact.
- Ensure your child's additional ice hockey equipment, such as skates and protective gear, also fit appropriately. The CDC offers specific guidelines for hockey safety.
- In addition to a properly fitting helmet, hockey players should wear a cage or facemask, throat protector and chin strap.

Snow Plow Safety



Families should review the following safety tips with their children:

- Stay far away from the road when standing or playing outside
- Plow trucks are big, with blind spots, and a driver may not see you if you are standing too close to the road. A plow driver often has low visibility as snow flies onto the windshield. This makes it hard for the driver to see anyone along the road
- Plows can throw large chunks of ice and snow as they pass and the flying debris could hurt you.
- Never tunnel or build forts in the snow banks along the side of the road. Drivers will definitely not see you if you have tunneled into a snowbank. If you're in the tunnel, you could be "snowed in" when a truck plows next to you.
- Wear bright colors so that drivers can see you better