

## This Month at Public Health:

### Immunization Clinics

Monday, January 4  
 Thursday, January 7  
 Monday, January 11  
 Thursday, January 14  
 Thursday, January 21  
 Monday, January 25  
 Thursday, January 28

### Optimal Pregnancy Outcome

**Program** - a free service  
 Tuesday, January 5  
 Monday, January 11  
 Tuesday, January 12  
 Tuesday, January 19

### Cholesterol Screenings

Friday, January 15  
 Tuesday, January 26

### Holiday Closings

January 1- New Year's Day  
 January 18- Martin Luther King Day

### **Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health**

500 East Front Avenue  
 Bismarck ND, 58504  
 Phone 701.355.1540

[www.bismarcknd.gov/publichealth](http://www.bismarcknd.gov/publichealth)



**Public Health**  
 Prevent. Promote. Protect.

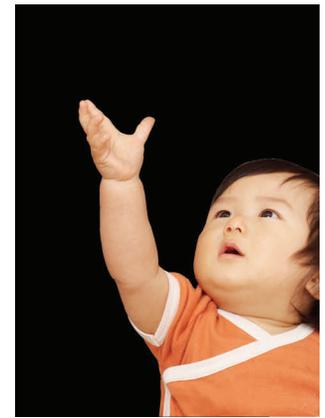
Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health

**BreatheND**  
 Saving lives, saving money. The voice of the people.

# Healthy Living Update

## January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

Birth defects are common, costly, and critical. Every 4½ minutes, a baby is born with a major birth defect in the United States. Become an active participant in National Birth Defects Prevention Month by joining the nationwide effort to raise awareness of birth defects, their causes and their impact.



We know that not all birth defects can be prevented. However, we encourage all women to make healthy choices and adopt healthy habits to help lower their risk of having a baby born with a birth defect. This year we are encouraging all women to make a **PACT** for their own health and the family they may have one day.

### Plan ahead

- Get as healthy as you can before you get pregnant.
- Get 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

### Avoid harmful substances

- Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking.
- Be careful with harmful exposures at work and home.

### Choose a healthy lifestyle

- Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, and healthy fats and oils.
- Be physically active.
- Work to get medical conditions like diabetes under control.

### Talk to your healthcare provider

- Get a medical checkup.
- Discuss all medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Talk about your family medical history.

Women and their loved ones can participate in a **PACT** and take these important steps toward a healthy pregnancy. Share your own tips for healthy pregnancy using #LivingMyPACT on social media.

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network, in collaboration with Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, are working together to raise awareness of birth defects and encourage women to make a **PACT** for prevention. Learn more about the effect you can have on birth defects at [www.nbdpn.org](http://www.nbdpn.org).

## January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

Cervical cancer was once one of the most common causes of cancer death for American women. Fortunately, over the last 30 years, the cervical cancer death rate has been reduced by more than 50%. Testing for cervical cancer before symptoms develop through Pap testing, along with HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccinations have contributed to the decline.

**What causes cervical cancer?** Most cervical cancer is caused by one of the many strains of HPV, which is a very common virus in both men and women. Every year in the United States, 27,000 people are diagnosed with a cancer caused by HPV. Most of these cancers could be prevented by HPV vaccine.

**What are the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer?** Women with cervical cancer and pre-cancer usually have no symptoms. Symptoms often do not begin until the cancer becomes invasive and grows into nearby tissue. When this happens, the most common symptoms are: abnormal vaginal bleeding; unusual vaginal discharge; and pain during intercourse. These symptoms can also be caused by other conditions, which is why you should see your health care professional immediately. Ignoring symptoms may allow the cancer to progress to a more advanced stage and lower your chance for effective treatment.

**Can cervical cancer be found early?** The best way to find cervical cancer early is to have regular screenings with a Pap test (which may be combined with a test for HPV). The Pap test can find early cell changes and treat them before they become cancer. All women should begin cervical cancer screenings (Pap tests) at age 21 and every three years thereafter. Women between ages 30 and 65 can have both a Pap test and an HPV test. Please speak with your medical provider to find the approach best for you.

**Who should get the HPV vaccination?** Preteens should receive three doses of HPV. It is recommended the vaccine be given at age 11-12 for two reasons: The HPV vaccine produces the highest immune response at this age; and the HPV vaccine must be given before exposure to the virus for it to be effective in preventing cancers. Young adults through age 26 who have not received the HPV shots should ask their doctor or nurse about getting them now—it's not too late.

## Open Enrollment at Healthcare.gov Deadline January 31, 2016

Are You Covered? Important Facts to Know:

- Open enrollment for 2016 coverage is November 1, 2015 through January 31, 2016.
- You may open an account now. For more information go to [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).
- If you don't have health coverage that qualifies as minimum essential coverage, you must either pay a fee or get an exemption from paying the fee.

For more information go to [www.getcoverednorthdakota.org](http://www.getcoverednorthdakota.org) or call (888) 872-8305.

