



Public Health Bulletin

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Single Puff Can Cause Damage to Smoker's DNA

WASHINGTON – Just one puff of a cigarette could damage a smoker's DNA, the first step to cancer and heart disease, say researchers.

It obviously takes more than that to cause disease, but the team at the University of Pittsburgh were surprised at how little smoke it took to do the initial damage.

William Saunders and his colleagues studied the effects of real cigarette smoke on human fibroblasts, common cells found in the connective tissue that holds much of the body together.

They exposed batches of growing cells to liquefied cigarette smoke and saw the chromosomes that carry the DNA were pulled apart from both ends.

"Double-stranded breaks are considered the most mutagenic type of DNA damage because the broken ends can fuse to other chromosomes in the cell," Saunders said in a statement.

This happened with very small amounts of smoke, Saunders said in a statement prepared

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Gregory Thomas, M.D., M.P.H.



Hepatitis A Exposure - Protecting the Public via Prompt Reporting

Acute hepatitis A is a serious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV) that may result in hospitalization (up to one in five persons) or death (up to 100 per year in the U.S.).

In 2004, California reported 745 cases of hepatitis A and 553 cases to date in 2005. Currently, San Luis Obispo County has reported seven cases compared to four cases in 2004.

Prompt diagnosis and prophylaxis is important to prevent others from becoming infected and ill.

The Centers for Disease Control 2000 Case Definition provides the following criteria for diagnosis and reporting purposes:

Clinical case definition: an acute illness with a) discrete onset of symptoms and b) jaundice or elevated serum aminotransferase.

Laboratory criteria for diagnosis: Immunoglobulin M (IGM) antibody to hepatitis A virus (anti-HAV) positive.

Case classification

Confirmed: a case that meets the clinical case definition and is laboratory confirmed or a case that meets the clinical case definition and occurs in a person who has an epidemiologic link with a person who has laboratory confirmed hepatitis A (i.e., household or sexual contact with an infected person during the 15-150 days before the onset of symptoms).

When a diagnosis or suspicion of hepatitis A infection is determined, the Public Health Department (PHD) is asking providers to report immediately to the PHD so preventative measures, such as prophylaxis of close contacts with Immune Serum Immunoglobulin (ISG)

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Healthy Kids Program Update

More than 440 kids have been enrolled in the Healthy Kids health insurance program since September 2005, with many more parents inquiring about health insurance coverage for their children.

With this year's whooping cough outbreak and the beginning of flu season, it becomes an even greater public health issue to ensure that all of our children have access to quality health care - and for our kids to stay healthy!

Healthy Kids offers comprehensive health insurance for county children under the age of 19 who meet income guidelines and are not eligible for other health insurance programs.

This program, administered by the Children's Health Initiative of San Luis Obispo, is both publicly and privately funded. First 5 San Luis Obispo County is funding health insurance premiums for all children 0 - 5 years of age who meet these guidelines.

Private funding is being sought from individuals and organizations for the cost of health insurance premiums for 6 - 18 year old children. If you are interested in providing a tax-deductible gift, please call the Children's Health Initiative of San Luis Obispo at 781-1612.

Join the Children's Health Initiative as we help to ensure that all children in SLO County have access to quality health care.

Prenatal Screening for Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Since December 2003, pregnant women enrolled in prenatal care throughout San Luis Obispo County have been screened with the 4P's Plus, a screening instrument designed to identify those women at highest risk for using alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.

Eighteen of the twenty obstetric providers in San Luis Obispo County integrated the screen into routine prenatal care. Those women with a positive screen underwent a more thorough assessment for substance use through a follow-up structured clinical interview conducted at the same prenatal visit.

The data has shown that of those women screened, 39% have used tobacco and/or alcohol in the month before they knew they were pregnant, and of those 39% who screened positive, 57% continued to use after they knew they were pregnant.

Through the Public Health Maternal Child and Adolescent Health program, a nurse and social worker continue to support the physicians in screening, assessing and providing referrals for women identified as using alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs during pregnancy.

Obstetricians provide all pregnant women with educational intervention on substance use and the effects on the mother and fetus and long-term effects on the child.

The County of San Luis Obispo, the First 5 Children and Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County and the California Endowment have supported these efforts.

As a result of the emerging information and the documented numbers of children being born exposed to alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs during the prenatal period, a plan has been initiated to develop a comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment and Treatment Center, anchored by universal screening of children birth to five years of age throughout the county.

A team of community leaders and professionals has been working with Dr. Ira Chasnoff and Dr. Richard McGourty of the National Training Institute in Chicago to develop a plan for community-wide outreach, comprehensive screening, follow-up assessment and universal access to treatment services. The leadership team is in its second year of planning for the center and is currently working on funding of the project. The Child Assessment Center is anticipated to open within the next year.

For more information, call Jan Campbell at San Luis Obispo County Public Health at 781-5592.

San Luis Obispo County Continues to Lead the Way

Did you know?

- The City of San Luis Obispo established smoke-free work-sites in 1990, five years before the state passed a smoke-free worksite law. The local ordinance also included smoke-free bars, a provision that didn't go into effect statewide until eight years later!
- In 2002, the California Men's Colony went smoke-free almost three years before a state law was passed.
- During the 2005 legislative session, both State Senator Abel Maldonado and Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee supported SB 576, which would have required all health insurance and health care service plans that provide outpatient prescription drug benefits must also provide tobacco cessation services. Unfortunately, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill.
- The San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department, Tobacco Control Program provides **free** stop smoking classes throughout San Luis Obispo County. For more information, please see below.

Stop Smoking Services

Any smoker who is ready to stop smoking should call the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department, Tobacco Control Program at 781-5564 for **free** stop smoking classes or individual counseling with a skilled facilitator. Sessions are held throughout the county in San Luis Obispo, North County, South County and Morro Bay.

The Baby's First Breath Program can help pregnant and postpartum women stop smoking and stay off tobacco. Smoking while pregnant can cause premature birth, low birth weight, and/or SIDS. Secondhand smoke after the baby is born can cause asthma, ear infections, colds and allergies in newborns and their siblings. The program offers individual assistance specifically designed for women who are pregnant and/or new parents.

For participants in the program, nicotine replacement therapies (e.g., nicotine gum or the transdermal patch) are covered by many insurers. In addition, the Tobacco Control Program can provide these products to eligible participants who are not covered by any other source.

Call 781-5564 with questions or to schedule an appointment.

Hepatitis A (cont.)

can be instituted promptly.

Recently, a food handler in San Luis Obispo County was diagnosed with hepatitis A, but the Health Department did not receive notification for more than two weeks.

It is especially critical that persons in sensitive positions be reported to the Health Department, even if you do not have laboratory confirmation yet. It is important for work restrictions to be implemented if the ill person is employed in a sensitive occupation such as a food handler, day care worker or health worker. Contacts may also be offered Hepatitis A immunization for future protection.

If you have questions on reporting or diagnosis, please call Janelle Gorman, Supervising Public Health Nurse at 781-5500.



Single Puff (cont.)

ahead of a meeting of the Environmental Mutagen Society in Pittsburgh.

Cigarette smoking is known to cause lung cancer and is also linked to bladder, larynx and esophageal cancer, as well as heart disease.

San Luis Obispo County Reported Cases of Selected Communicable Diseases - Winter 2005

Disease	Jan.-Sept.	October	November	December	Total 2005	Total 2004
AIDS	13	0	1	0	14	7*
Amebiasis	1	0	0	0	1	1
Brucellosis	2	0	0	1	3	1
Campylobacter	44	3	4	3	54	43
Chlamydia	404	72	19	54	549	474
Coccidioidomycosis	61	2	15	37	115	76
Cryptosporidiosis	4	0	1	1	6	53
E. Coli 0157:H7	6	0	0	0	6	2
Giardia	19	0	0	0	19	11
PPNG	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gonorrhea	40	3	3	3	49	37
Hepatitis A	5	0	0	0	5	4
Hepatitis B	51	19	16	8	94	41
Hepatitis C Acute	1	0	0	0	1	0
Hepatitis C Chronic	383	61	29	29	502	402
Hepatitis, Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0
Listeriosis	0	0	1	1	2	2
Measles (Rubeola)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meningitis - Total	26	4	2	2	34	38
Meningitis - Viral	18	3	2	0	23	31
Meningitis, H-Flu	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meningococcal Disease	0	1	0	0	1	0
Pertussis	6	13	65	26	110	0
Rubella	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salmonellosis	17	2	0	4	23	25
Shigellosis	4	0	0	1	5	2
Syphilis - Total	11	1	1	0	13	12
Tuberculosis	4*	1	2	0	7	4*
West Nile Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0
W. Nile Virus Neuroinvasive	0	0	0	0	0	1

*Represents late reporting



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