



Snohomish County Partnership for Secure Medicine Disposal

The Snohomish Health District is partnering with Snohomish County and its local law enforcement agencies to provide residents with an easy, responsible way to safely dispose of unused, unwanted, and expired medicines, including prescribed controlled substances. This is an innovative, multi-agency effort to address growing concerns about prescription drug abuse, accidental poisonings, and the presence of pharmaceutical compounds in our streams and groundwater.

Storing unneeded medicines in our homes can increase the risk of accidental poisoning. Since 2004 unintentional poisoning deaths have outpaced motor vehicle crashes as the number one cause of unintentional injury death in Snohomish County. Most (80%) of those poisoning deaths were due to opioids.

On average 3.3 drugs were reported in prescription opioid deaths, according to Snohomish Health District's August 2009 report entitled *Unintentional Poisonings in Snohomish County* (available at www.snohd.org/snoHealthStats).

Prescription drug abuse is a serious and growing problem in our communities. Abuse of prescription medicines, especially opiate pain relievers, such as OxyContin, Codeine and Vicodin, puts our teens and young adults at risk. Three in five teens say prescription pain relievers are easy to get from parents' medicine cabinets. Data from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse indicate that young adults (18-29 years) accounted for two-thirds of all admissions to substance abuse treatment centers for prescription pain reliever abuse in 2007. Almost 11% of 10th graders reported using pain relievers to get "high" in the past 30 days (*Unintentional Poisonings in Snohomish County*, August 2009).

Medicine return programs provide a secure way of getting rid of unneeded medicines from our homes. National studies are finding that medicines flushed into septic systems or wastewater treatment systems can end up in surface or groundwater. Throwing medicines into the garbage still allows them to be obtained and used illegally. Medicine return programs currently operating at Group Health Clinics and Bartell Drugs locations throughout the Puget Sound region have demonstrated the public's support of these programs. However, these programs are unable to accept controlled substances due to Drug Enforcement Administration regulations.

This partnership with Snohomish County law enforcement provides citizens with 28 secure drop-off locations throughout Snohomish County that accept prescribed controlled substances, in addition to other unwanted medicines. More information and a list of locations are available at www.snoco.org (search "pharmaceuticals"), or by calling the Program Information Line at 425.388.3199. For outreach materials related to the Secure Medicine Disposal Program (i.e., brochures; information to place in newsletters; or small posters), or for business waste disposal questions, please contact Jonelle Fenton-Wallace at jfenton@shd.snohomish.wa.gov.

It is important to look ahead. The Snohomish County program is a pilot program without a sustainable source of funding. Snohomish County is working with other interested parties to develop a long-term program whereby drug companies provide a collection program for unwanted pharmaceuticals from residential sources. The Secure Medicine Return Bill (2SHB1165/PSSB 5279), which would create a statewide, product stewardship funding mechanism, is currently in the State legislature. Visit www.medicinereturn.com for more information.

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Report Snohomish County Communicable Diseases

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After hours emergency only: 425.339.5295
24-hr Reporting: 425.339.5235
H1N1: 425.339.5278 Fax: 425.339.8706

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EpiNews

CD Cases Reported Jan – Dec, End of Year

Disease	2009	2008
AIDS	13	22
Arboviral Disease	0	0
Campylobacteriosis	95	120
Chlamydial infections [§]	1697	1719
E.Coli 0157:H7	29	47
Giardiasis	70	73
Gonorrhea [§]	146	206
Hepatitis A	7	10
Hepatitis B, acute	2	1
Hepatitis B, chronic*	143	99
Hepatitis C, acute	1	1
Hepatitis C, chronic*	521	781
HIV infection	31	27
Listeriosis	2	1
Measles	0	0
Meningococcal disease (N. meningitidis)	2	5
Mumps	0	3
Pertussis	33	47
Rubella	0	0
Salmonellosis	87	90
Shigellosis	14	9
Syphilis; primary, secondary and other	16	22
Tuberculosis, pulmonary	17	17
Tuberculosis, other	10	8

*Includes probable and confirmed cases

[§] Previously counted by date reported; now counted by date of diagnosis

H1N1 in Snohomish County - Update

Influenza virus continues to circulate in Snohomish County and Washington State but at much lower levels than in October and early November. Almost all circulating influenza viruses in Washington are the H1N1 virus. Influenza B infections have been sporadically reported over the past several weeks.

In total, 100 Snohomish County residents were reported to have been hospitalized due to influenza during the period of September 13, 2009 (week 37) through December 26, 2009 (week 51). During week 51 (ending on December 19, 2009), there were 0 hospitalizations reported within Snohomish County.

Out of 102 total cases reported (only deaths and hospitalizations are reported), there have been 6 deaths related to H1N1 in Snohomish County reported from September 13, 2009 (week 37) – December 26, 2009 (week 51). There are 0 deaths reported during week 51.

The age range for hospitalizations and deaths is 0-83, with a mean age of 35.3 and median age of 36. The age range for only deaths is 0-68, with a mean of 39.

Early antiviral treatment is recommended for patients with severe illness as well as those with chronic conditions that place them at high risk for complications from influenza. Treatment is most effective if started within 48 hours of onset.

Snohomish Health District and healthcare partners throughout Snohomish County partnered this fall to sponsor mass H1N1 vaccination clinics. More than 27,000 eligible persons were vaccinated at mass clinics held at locations throughout the county on two Saturdays and one weekday in October and November. As of Thursday, December 10, Snohomish County expanded eligibility for H1N1 vaccine to all persons ages 6 months and older who wish to receive the vaccine. Vaccine is now available at private provider offices, pharmacies, and Snohomish Health District. Vaccination continues to be an important issue because of the potential for a third wave of H1N1 flu this winter.

Table 1. Snohomish County H1N1 Hospitalizations and Deaths by Age Group, 9/16/09 - 12/28/09

Age Group	No. of Influenza Hospitalizations & Deaths	Percent of Total Hospitalizations & Deaths	Population Estimates (2007)	Percent of Total Population (2007)	Rate per 10,000 population (from onset date 4/24/09 - 10/5/09)
0-1	11	10.8	18,964	2.8	5.8
2-4	4	3.9	29,225	4.3	1.37
5-17	15	14.7	129,567	18.9	1.16
18-49	35	34.3	322,571	47.0	1.1
50-64	27	26.5	120,885	17.6	2.2
>64	10	9.8	65,087	9.5	1.5
Total	102	100.0	686,299	100.0	1.5

Data source: WA State Department of Health