

Reproductive Health Education (RH Ed) is an educational newsletter from the Health Advocates at Finger Lakes Community Health. This newsletter covers all reproductive health topics, in addition to related services offered at our health centers.

March is **Vulva Awareness** Month!

The outside of the female genital is known as the vulva. The vulva includes the urethra, labia majora, labia minora, clitoris and the opening to the vagina. Often women and men simply refer to the female genitals as the vagina, which is in fact the inside the female's body. When looking outward at a female's genital, you are actually looking at the vulva.

Prevention.com interviewed Liddy Edwards, MD Chief of Dermatology at the Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, North Carolina, on vaginal health. She explained that the vulva naturally secretes thick oils to protect the delicate skin from friction that it's exposed to on a daily basis. These secretions also contain healthy bacteria to maintain healthy pH levels. Dr. Edwards goes on to say that the use of feminine hygiene products to clean or deodorize the area are best left at the drugstore as they decrease these healthy secretions. When using lubricant, avoid ones with dyes, perfume, fragrance or flavor as you may experience irritation. Using full-coverage, unbleached 100%

cotton underwear helps to avoid skin irritation as well. If you do experience irritation, the use of Vaseline is best as it is fragrance, alcohol and preservative free; therefore it's less harsh on the skin.

The size, shape and color of the vulva can vary greatly between women but it's important to consult with your medical provider if you experience pain, lesions, skin allergies, frequent urinary tract infections or have family history of vulval cancer or conditions.



Provider Spotlight!



Frank Giannelli, PA
Finger Lakes Community Health

March is also colon cancer awareness month.

“ Colon cancer is the third most common cause of cancer related deaths in men and women, and the lifetime prevalence is about 1 in 5 (that's 20%!!!).

The symptoms of colon cancer are quite vague - stomach pains, blood in your stool and weight loss. Therefore, the United States Preventative Task Force recommends screening starting at age 50 (or 40-45 depending on genetic risk factors) regardless of symptoms. There are multiple ways to screen for colon cancer. The best and most accurate way to screen is via a colonoscopy. This procedure is done once every 10 years (if your results are normal), or more frequently such as every 3-5 years if you have certain types of polyps (growths).

For those of you who aren't eager to be sedated and have a camera placed in your... cough... rectum, there are other less accurate but accepted screening techniques such as the FIT (Fecal Immunochemical Test) screening where blood is searched for in a stool sample. This annual exam is less invasive, and if positive, a colonoscopy would then be performed to rule out cancer.

The good news is that the death rate from colon cancer has been steadily decreasing over the last 20 years due to, both, regular screenings (which lead to earlier detection) and advances in treatment techniques. This March, I urge all of you to do the following:

1. Talk to your healthcare provider about your personal risk of colon cancer and when screening is right for you, and
2. Talk with your friends and loved ones and encourage them to talk with their own healthcare providers as well. ”

Locations:

Bath

Community Health

117 E. Steuben St
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 776-3063

Geneva

Community Health

601B Washington St
Geneva, NY 14456
(315) 781-8448

Newark

Community Health

513 W. Union St
Newark, NY 14513
(315) 573-7577

Ovid

Community Health

7150 N. Main Street
Ovid, NY 14521
(607) 403-0065

Penn Yan

Community Health

112 Kimball Ave
Penn Yan, NY 14527
(315) 536-2752

Port Byron

Community Health

60 Main St
Port Byron, NY 13140
(315) 776-9700

Sodus

Community Health

6692 Middle Rd
Suite 2100
Sodus, NY 14551
(315) 483-1199

Administrative Offices

14 Maiden Lane
Penn Yan, NY 14527
(315) 531-9102

What, Exactly, Is Endometriosis??

Endometriosis is an often painful disorder, where the tissue that normally lines the uterus grows outside of the uterus. This tissue still thickens and breaks down as it normally would during the menstrual cycle but with Endometriosis the blood has nowhere to go, resulting in pain. Endometrial tissue can sometimes be found in the ovaries and will cause the formation of blood-filled cysts. These cysts can result in scar tissue that could bind organs together or even cause fertility problems.

Painful periods, pain with intercourse, infertility, fatigue, diarrhea, and/or constipation can all be signs of Endometriosis. If you have any of these symptoms, it is recommended that you see a doctor. The exact cause of endometriosis is not known.

FLCH staff attended Family Planning Day of Action on January 25 in Albany. We stood together with over 500 other advocates across New York State and heard speakers from the assembly supporting the importance of women's health. We are grateful to be living in NYS, where we have historically been leader's in women's healthcare. Thank you for supporting **#NY4 ReproHealth!**



Where are we (FLCH) this month?

- **March 3 & 4:** Palmyra-Macedon School
- **March 12:** Lyons Central School Community Fair
- **March 16:** Male Health Services Training, Troy, NY
- **March 23:** Port Byron School Fair
- **March 29 & 31:** South Seneca School

Would you like us to visit your program or school to provide evidence based programming on pregnancy prevention, STI prevention, healthy relationships and more?

*For more information go to www.localcommunityhealth.com or contact us today to schedule a time!



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