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**January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month! About 20 million Americans currently have HPV (human papillomavirus), the most common sexually transmitted disease. HPV is a major cause of cervical cancer.**

**The good news?** HPV can be prevented by the HPV vaccine and cervical cancer can often be prevented with regular screening tests (called Pap tests) and follow-up care. In honor of National Cervical Health Awareness Month, health officials encourage:

- \* Women to start getting regular Pap tests at age 21
- \* Women to get the HPV vaccine before age 27
- \* Parents to make sure their pre-teens get the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12
- \* Men to get the HPV vaccine if you are under age 22.

Due to changes in national health care law, you and your family members may be able to get these services at **no cost to you**. Check with your insurance company or call (518) 474-1222 or (866) 442-2262.

## Health Officials Express Serious Concerns about Electronic Cigarettes

You may have seen someone smoking or “vaping” an electronic cigarette recently or heard about electronic cigarettes in the news. Perhaps you have even tried an e-cigarette, believing manufacturer’s claims that these products offer a harmless and even beneficial alternative to smoking tobacco. Think again! Electronic cigarettes sales are not currently regulated though they are under review by the FDA for health effects. Here’s what we do know about “e-cigarettes.”

- ⊗ An e-cigarette is a battery-powered device that is often designed to look like a regular tobacco cigarette.
- ⊗ Typically, e-cigarettes are composed of a rechargeable, battery-operated heating element, a replaceable cartridge that usually contains nicotine and/or other chemicals, and an atomizer that, when heated, converts the contents of the cartridge into a vapor. This vapor can then be inhaled by the user.
- ⊗ **Nicotine** is a highly addictive compound that comes from the tobacco plant. When smoked, nicotine is rapidly absorbed into the blood and affects the brain within seconds, activating the same reward system as do other drugs, such as cocaine or amphetamine. Nicotine also increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- ⊗ The FDA has found irritants, toxins, and carcinogens in some e-cigarettes.
- ⊗ While there are strict rules limiting tobacco advertising, there are no such bans on e-cigarettes.
- ⊗ Advertisements for e-cigarettes on TV, radio, print and social media could revive an interest in smoking by glamorizing a behavior that health officials have spent decades trying to deglamorize.
- ⊗ E-cigarettes have enticing flavors, making them appealing to children.
- ⊗ Children who would not consider smoking traditional cigarettes **are** trying e-cigarettes.
- ⊗ Children risk becoming addicted to nicotine when they smoke e-cigarettes, and over time, they may begin to use more traditional forms of tobacco, such as cigarettes or smokeless tobacco products.
- ⊗ There are a number of FDA-approved smoking cessation aids. For more info call SCDHS at 631-853-4017.



**Do You Know?** In 2009, Suffolk County banned the sale of electronic cigarettes to persons under the age of 19 AND prohibited the use of electronic cigarettes anywhere that cigarette smoking is prohibited in the county.



**January is National Blood Donor Month. Become part of Long Island’s lifesaving team by rolling up your sleeves and giving the gift of life. Make an appointment with Long Island Blood Center today by visiting [www.nybloodcenter.org](http://www.nybloodcenter.org) or calling 1-800-933-BLOOD.**

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!