

Central PA Health Care Quality Unit

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Healthy Outcomes

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National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages.

Why Vaccinate? On-time vaccination throughout childhood is essential because it helps provide immunity before children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. Vaccines are tested to ensure that they are safe and effective for children to receive at the recommended ages. Vaccines are recommended for adults based on age, health conditions, job, and other factors.

Learn all about vaccines and immunity, what vaccines are made of, and how they are kept safe. [Making the Vaccine Decision](#)

What **Vaccines**
do **You** need?



Adults need vaccines too!
Answer a few quick questions to find out which

vaccines you may need. (This list may include vaccines you've already had). **Discuss the list with your doctor or healthcare professional. Take the [CDC Adult Vaccine Quiz](#) (adults 19 years or older).**

SPOTLIGHT ON SHINGRIX



WHO SHOULD GET SHINGRIX? *(CDC recommendation)*

Adults 50 years and older should get two doses of Shingrix, separated by 2 to 6 months. Adults 19 years and older who have or will have weakened immune systems because of disease or therapy should also get two doses of Shingrix. If needed, people with weakened immune systems can get the second dose 1 to 2 months after the first.

- If you had shingles in the past, Shingrix can help prevent future occurrences of the disease. Chickenpox and shingles are related because they are caused by the same virus (varicella zoster virus). After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays dormant (inactive) in the body. It can reactivate years later and cause shingles
- You can get Shingrix whether you remember having had chickenpox in the past.
- More than 99% of Americans born on or before 1980 have had chickenpox, even if they don't remember having the disease.

YOU SHOULD GET SHINGRIX EVEN IF IN THE PAST YOU:

- Had shingles
- Received ZOSTAVAX
- Received varicella (chickenpox) vaccine

There is no maximum age for getting Shingrix.

THE BENEFITS OF SHINGRIX

You can protect yourself against shingles.

Shingles is a very painful disease, and your risk of getting it increases as you age. Also, you are more likely to have severe, long-term pain if you get shingles when you are older. About 1 out of every 3 people in the United States will develop shingles in their lifetime.

- Shingrix provides strong protection against shingles and long-term pain from the disease. Two doses of Shingrix are more than 90% effective at preventing shingles. So, it's very important that you get this vaccine.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SHINGRIX INCLUDING THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINATION VISIT [CDC Shingles Vaccination](#)

Do you have to worry about monkeypox?

By Mark Shelly, MD, GMC System Medical Director, Infection Prevention and Control

In May 2022, a worldwide outbreak of monkeypox was reported. Monkeypox is present in west and central Africa populations and occasionally occurs in travelers. The current outbreak has resulted in hundreds of cases outside Africa with cases scattered across the U.S., including Pennsylvania.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now calls monkeypox a Level 2 concern, meaning Americans should take precautions when traveling, but don't need to cancel their plans. It's still believed that the overall health risk to the public remains low right now.

What to look for with monkeypox

Consider monkeypox with any new, unexplained rash. The typical monkeypox lesions involve:

- Deep-seated and well-circumscribed lesions, often with central umbilication (a navel-like notch or depression)
- Lesion progression through specific sequential stages — macules, papules, vesicles, pustules, and scabs

The rash is sometimes preceded a few days by a fever, swelling of lymph nodes and other non-specific symptoms. Because it can show up in the genital area, it can be confused with herpes simplex, herpes varicella/zoster, syphilis, or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Who should raise the concern for monkeypox?

In the current outbreak, cases have been described in those with close physical contact with someone with monkeypox. This has included men who have had sex with other men. Since it has now been identified worldwide and in many U.S. states, taking a travel history is also important.

Transmission is primarily by close contact with infectious materials, but can also occur through:

- Contact with contaminated clothing or bedding
- Droplets and inhalation (so airborne precautions are indicated when cases are suspected or identified)

Anyone with a rash that looks like monkeypox should talk to their healthcare provider, even if they don't think they had contact with someone who has monkeypox. [About Monkeypox](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine/Booster Update

As of June 18, 2022, the [CDC](#) has determined that all children ages 6 months and older, including children who have already had COVID-19, should get vaccinated. Parents and caregivers can now get their children 6 months through 5 years of age vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines to better protect them from COVID-19.

* [FDA Authorizes Novavax Covid Vaccine, A Fourth Option For US](#)



**American
Red Cross**

**Blood
Services**

Unfortunately, the need for blood doesn't take a summer break. Volunteer donors are the only source of blood for and platelets for patients with blood disorders, trauma victims and those experiencing difficult childbirths.

Donate by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), call **1-800-RED CROSS** or download the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

Pedestrian Safety Tips **PAY ATTENTION WHILE WALKING**



Pedestrian Safety, visit [PENNDOT](#)

Pennsylvania's pedestrian fatalities increased from 150 to 201 in 2018, a startling **34 percent increase**. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that 26 percent of pedestrian fatalities occur between the hours of 6:00pm and 8:59pm. With these statistics in mind, one should consider route of travel and determine the walkability of that route, for safety.

Tips for safe walking include:

- Check traffic patterns to determine the best time of day to walk.
- Sight Distance (Select routes with longer sight distances which enables drivers to see pedestrians and pedestrians to see vehicles approaching).
- Visibility (Well-lit walking areas are safer).
- Use crosswalks whenever possible.
- **Be Safe Be Seen** -Wear reflective or bright colored clothing.
- Use sidewalks whenever they are available. If there is no sidewalk, walk as far left as possible.
- Walk facing traffic and make eye contact with passing motorists.
- **Heads UP Phones Down** (Pedestrians should always be aware of surroundings).

Deborah Erdman RN MSN CCRN TCRN, Outreach/Injury Prevention Coordinator, Geisinger Medical Center

Detect Health Risks and Destabilization Early

The **Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST)** is a simple 22 item scale designed to find out which individuals are at most risk of illness, and then to take action in the form of special attention and prevention. There continues to be a significant increase in the number of people who have not had their Annual HRST screening in Pennsylvania. **There are 13,735 people fully screened/rated HRSTs in PA, but 5,553 have not been updated in over 365 days.** That is over 40%!

Think about completing the annual update as a yearly check-up. We all experience changes throughout the year—maybe you've had a mole that's gotten larger/darker, experienced a fall, or been diagnosed with an infection this past year. We all have risk, and the people you support need to have their risks identified at least annually and as needed, so your team (nurse, DSP, Supports Coordinator, family, and self-advocate) can develop plans and interventions to lower the risk of health complications or even death.

Why Screen? Using the HRST to its fullest degree can:

- ✓ Prevent unnecessary deaths
- ✓ Reduce and prevent health-related complications
- ✓ Promote a better quality of life
- ✓ Identify additional services for the individual and training for the staff
- ✓ Help families to have meaningful conversations with community physicians, clinicians, and other medical professionals

How do I update the HRST?

Per the PA HRST Protocol, the annual update/review of the HRST shall be completed for the **individual within 90 days prior to the annual ISP planning meeting.** This review consists of ensuring the current scores for the 22 rating items and the medication and diagnosis information are accurate.

IntellectAbility has built In-app training courses: ([HRST In-app Training Guide](#))

You may find **Capturing Change in the HRST** (13-minute video tutorial) beneficial. The In-app Training can be accessed by logging into the HRST and clicking on the gold mortarboard (graduation cap) icon in the top right corner of the message center, clicking on the green tab labeled Trainings.



NEED HELP? Need a refresher? Have a question? Interested in virtual coaching sessions? Contact the HRST Pennsylvania support team with questions:

pasupport@ReplacingRisk.com – This support email address is a direct link to our Service Division. We will assist you with access to your database, provide free virtual coaching, and assist you with navigating HRST successfully.

paclinassist@ReplacingRisk.com – This support email address is a direct link to our Nurses. Please do not hesitate to contact us with clinical questions. Free virtual coaching is also available for Clinical Reviewers.

Visit your HRST web page. At the bottom of the web page, you will see a black-shaded area with hyperlinks. Click on the text 'Contact Support'. This link will allow you to send a message directly to the Support Site.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. WHEN SHOULD I CONTACT THE CENTRAL PA HCQU HRST GATEKEEPERS?

A. Contact your HRST Gatekeepers when:

- You need to *add* a new employee into the HRST database
- You need to *remove* an employee from the HRST database
- If there have been *any changes* to an employee's email address.

Q. WHO ARE THE CENTRAL PA HRST GATEKEEPERS?

A. Gatekeepers are: *(Please email **both** parties)*

Cheryl L. Callahan: ccallahan@geisinger.edu

Patricia L. Brofee: plbrofee@geisinger.edu



FREE [HCQU Online Courses](#)

We are here for your educational credit needs! Our courses are great for DSPs, or anyone interested in expanding their knowledge of different healthcare issues.

We offer health-related courses on aging, mental health, nutrition, safety and more. Check out our latest course: [Menopause](#).

Here's what people had to say about the **Skin Health & Pressure Injuries** online course:

"I have learned new things that I would look for."

"This training was very informative. The displays of skin breakdown was important to actually see the process of the breakdown."

"The training was a refresher, and it was very informative."

Contact Us

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Our HCQU includes registered nurses experienced in serving individuals with an Intellectual - Disability (ID) and/or Autism.

Visit our website for their contact information and the counties they support.



BE HEAT-HEALTHY

Wear light-colored, loose fitting and lightweight clothing.

Take advantage of cool and shady places.

Wear wide-brimmed hats to protect your face and neck.

Drink plenty of water-before getting thirsty.

Know the warning signs of heat illness and what to do.

[Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness](#)

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org). 988 connects you with a trained crisis counselor who can help.

**988
24/7 Crisis
& Support**



Whatever you are going through, you don't have to go through it alone.

Reach out for help and support.

The information offered in this newsletter is to increase your awareness of health-related situations. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. If you believe you or someone you support has a condition, please seek the advice of a physician.