

Write to Prison Health News at 4722 Baltimore Ave Philadelphia, PA 19143 and we will do our best to answer your health questions. Below is information to consider when writing to us for health information.

### Here's what we CAN do:

- Provide medical factsheets
- Send information about medications
- Offer information about options for testing and treatment
- Send general information about specific conditions

### Here's what we CANNOT do:

- Answer more than 2 questions in one letter
- Interpret health test results
- Suggest a diagnosis for your symptoms
- Provide analysis for complex cases
- Provide legal advocacy
- Send books
- Offer pen pal referrals

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**Prison Health News**  
**4722 Baltimore Ave.**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19143**

Please write to us if your address changes.

*All subscriptions are **FREE!***

Many thanks to the PHN Advisory Board for their wisdom and insight:  
**Madusa Carter**, Philadelphia, **Ignacio H. Carrillo**, currently incarcerated in Illinois, **A. Maxwell Hanna**, Oregon, **Elisabeth Long**, San Francisco, **Fatima Malika Shabazz**, Los Angeles, **Lisa Strawn**, San Francisco

# PRISON HEALTH NEWS

IN A WORLD WHERE  
YOU CAN BE ANYTHING



BE KIND

Artwork by Loni Krick

### WHO WE ARE...

We are on the outside, but some of us were inside before and survived it. We're here to take your health questions seriously and make complicated health information understandable. We want to help you learn how to get better health care within your facility and how to get answers to your health questions. Be persistent—don't give up. Join us in our fight for the right to health care and health information. Read on...  
From  
The PHN Team

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## WRITE AN ARTICLE OR SEND US YOUR ART!

Would you like to see your art, writing or poetry in *Prison Health News*?

If you want to write an article on something you think is important for prison health, send it and we will consider publishing it in *Prison Health News*. Tell us your story of struggling to receive quality health care, either for yourself or others. Do you have tips and tricks for staying healthy and taking care of yourself behind the walls that could be useful to others in the same position? You can also write us first to discuss ideas for articles. Please let us know if it's OK for us to put your writing or artwork on our website or social media. Let us know if you'd like us to use your full name, first name only, or "Anonymous." Having your name on the internet means anyone can find it. Please keep in mind that we may make small changes to your article for length or clarity. For any major changes to your work, we will try to get in touch with you first. You can submit your work to this address:

**Prison Health News**  
4722 Baltimore Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA  
19143

## TIPS FOR NAVIGATING HEALTH CARE IN PRISON

BY CHAD MILLER

Please inform your readers that the point and purpose of federal laws like the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are to protect you and your privacy.

Note: I have found when I deal with medical staff concerning my health, records, or services, I throw acronyms like "HIPAA" or "ADA" around and things begin to happen, such as appointments to be seen. I encourage all incarcerated readers to contact your law librarian, counselor or ombudsman at your institution and learn the standard operating procedures to get the staff to perform well. They hold us to a standard; I hold them to the written standards.

As much as I agree with Anonymous' words about civil disobedience from your Winter 2023 issue, I have found unity to be very silent in prison today. So instead, knowing the law, knowing the policies and procedures is very important. Educating yourself with the language "they" use is highly beneficial. A tip I have learned is: Do not tell the nurse or doctor what is wrong with you. Never say "Dr. Jones, I have a dislocated disk and need my medication for the pain." Remember, you are not a doctor, so you cannot diagnose yourself. Go in and say, "Doc, it hurts here when I do this." "Doctor, I sat up and this happens, and I cannot sit for long without pain here—help me!" They want to be important and diagnose you. Let them! Always make your request forms say simple, short requests. The longer a request is written, with a story of who did what or didn't do something, it gets passed over.

When you do get seen, don't tell them what you want, tell them you need relief and ask for anything to help. You might be surprised at what they will do for you next time.

### **Jailhouse Lawyers' Handbook**

National Lawyers Guild - Prison Law Project

PO Box 1266

New York, NY 10009-8941

Write them to ask for a free copy.

### **Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter**

P.O. Box 1911, Santa Fe NM, 87504

Monthly newsletter about current events important to people in prison. Write to them to ask about the cost.

### **Prison Legal News**

P.O. Box 1151 Lake Worth, FL 33460

Monthly 72-page magazine on the rights of people in prison and recent court rulings. Sample issue: \$5. Subscription: \$36/year.

### **Protecting Your Health & Safety: A Litigation Guide for Inmates**

PLN, P.O. Box 1151 Lake Worth, FL 33460

325-page manual explains legal rights to health and safety in prison, and how to advocate for those rights when they are violated. A publication of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Make a \$16 check or money order out to Prison Legal News.

### **ameelio.org**

If you have loved ones on the outside, they can use this nonprofit phone app to send you letters and photos for free.

### **Prison Health News Guidebooks**

Write to Prison Health News at the address on the next page to request our guidebooks on the following topics:

- Diabetes
- COVID-19
- Commonly Prescribed Medications

**Write to us** if you know about a great organization that is not yet listed.

### **National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated**

856-225-2718

<https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/resources/>

This is a resource for those with family members on the outside. They do not respond to mail, but your loved ones can find their resources on their website. They have fact sheets and a directory of programs that offer services for children and families of the incarcerated.

### **Transgender Law Center**

PO Box 70976

Oakland, CA 94612

Collect line for people in prison: 510.380.8229

Connects transgender and gender-nonconforming people with advocacy information. They cannot take on legal cases or direct advocacy, but provide access to resources.

### **Fair Shake Re-Entry Center**

P.O. Box 63, Westby, WI 54667

Send them a donation of \$5 or more for a reentry packet to help you plan for your release. They can also send free offline software that allows you to find resources without using the internet.

# Information and Support Resources

## **Center for Health Justice**

900 Avila Street #301

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Prison Hotline: 213-229-0985

Free health (including HIV and mental health) hotline Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Those being released to Los Angeles County can get help with health care and insurance.

## **Prison Yoga Project**

P.O. Box 415

Bolinas, CA 94924

Write to ask for a free copy of one of the following books: Yoga: A Path for Healing and Recovery, Yoga: un Camino para La Sanacion y la Recuperacion, or the prison yoga book for women, Freedom from the Inside.

## **POZ Magazine**

Attn: Circulation Department

157 Columbus Ave, Suite 525

New York, NY 10023

Magazine for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Give your full name and address, and state that you are HIV positive and cannot afford a subscription.

## **Black and Pink National**

Inside Member Mail

6223 Maple St #4600

Omaha, NE 68104

Black & Pink distributes a free national newsletter to incarcerated LGBTQIA2S+ members and incarcerated members living with HIV/AIDS around the country. Each issue includes pieces submitted by incarcerated members, relevant news, history, opinions from our non-incarcerated community, and a calendar.

## **California Coalition for Women Prisoners**

4400 Market St., Oakland, CA 94608

Organizes with members inside and outside prison to challenge the institutional violence imposed on women, trans and GNC people, and communities of color by the prison industrial complex (PIC). They send The Fire Inside newsletter.

## **National Prisoner Resource Directory**

Prison Activist Resource Center

PO Box 70447

Oakland, CA 94612

Free 26-page national resource guide for people in prison. It contains contact information for other organizations that can provide free books and information on finding legal help, publications, resources for women and LGBT people, and more.

## **SERO Project**

P.O. Box 1233

Milford, PA 18337

A network of people living with HIV working to end HIV criminalization, mass incarceration, racism and social injustice and to improve policy outcomes, advance human rights and promote healing justice.

## **Just Detention International**

3325 Wilshire Blvd, #340

Los Angeles, CA 90010

If you have experienced sexual harm in custody, write to ask for their Survivor Packet, which includes a self-help guide for survivors and info on prisoners' rights and how to get help via mail and phone. Survivors can write via confidential, legal mail to Cynthia Totten, Attorney at Law, CA Attorney Reg. #199266 at the above address. Please note that they do not provide legal representation or counseling services.

## **Hepatitis Education Project**

1621 South Jackson Street, Suite 201

Seattle, WA 98144

Write to request info about viral hepatitis, harm reduction, and how you can advocate for yourself to get the treatment you need.

I also recommend writing to the Prison Book Program, c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore, 1306 Hancock Street, Suite 100, Quincy, MA 02169 and asking for "We the People Legal Primer." This is a great beginners guide before the *Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook*, which was created by the Center for Constitutional Rights and the National Lawyers Guild.

## CANCER FIGHTERS AND SURVIVORS AT SCI-HUNTINGDON

SUBMITTED BY JOHN BLUE

### **"Remember What We Are Fighting For"**

We, the brothers, cancer survivors at Huntingdon in Pennsylvania, along with some of the medical staff, have started a cancer support group. We meet a couple times each month to help each other fight this monster that has come into our lives.

As our support group is in its infancy, we've been approved to have our first fundraiser in the form of a walk-a-thon to support the surrounding communities. I write this with the hope that you will publish this letter of notice so others in our position can realize that they too can lean on one another and fight this horrible disease that affects us all in one way or another. Our founder and group facilitator, Darryl Butler, CN6175, with staff supervisor Ms. Melanie Wagman, L.P.N., starts every group off by saying: "Remember What We Are Fighting For!" And that's a cancer-free life to share with our family and friends. Thank you for your time and ears.

—the men fighting back at Huntingdon

### **Cancer Support Group**

#### **"Remember What You Are Fighting For"**

1. This cancer support group was developed for those who are battling this deadly disease to have a designated time and space to come together, be themselves, and relate to one another.
2. This group is dedicated toward helping its members "Remember What You Are Fighting For" and acquiring the tools and knowledge necessary to be successful.
3. Our aim is to provide a peaceful and non-judgemental environment; one of inclusion, inspiration, encouragement, empathy, and direction.
4. Our short-term aim is for group members to be supportive of one another while learning from each other's individual experiences what could be expected in the course of this battle. The long-term aim is to raise cancer awareness and generate support from within our population, as well as from outside groups.

# TYPE 1 DIABETES EXPERT

BY STERLING ALLAN

**Note from PHN editors:** *This article is specifically about managing type 1 diabetes, which is an autoimmune problem usually diagnosed in childhood or early adulthood. The author has a lot of experience managing his sugars. What works for him might not work for everyone.*

Here in prison, I was able to maintain my A1C in the “normal” range for four years, despite how difficult it is. My purpose here is to share some key takeaways I’ve learned the hard way, so you can benefit from my pioneering efforts without the difficulties.

First, let me say that I no longer target a “normal” blood sugar average, which is 100 mg/dL on the glucometer. My motivation has come from what my doctor told me when I was first diagnosed as a type 1 diabetic two decades ago. He said I could live a full life if I maintained good control of my blood sugar.

The problem with shooting for a 100 average is that it means skirting dangerous lows to balance the highs. When I learned that going dangerously low results in brain cells diminishing, I changed my strategy. That is a terrible downside that is unacceptable to me. So, two years ago, I changed my target to 150, which is about an A1C of 6.8%. I’m confident that this is still in a range that can result in a full life, unimpaired, but it averts the dangerous lows.

I’ve not had a single incident since the time I had three incidents requiring dextrose injections in three weeks with an A1C of less than 4.8%. I’ve had other less severe episodes where my sugar got too low ... I had to eat five oranges once to counteract this. I’ve not lost consciousness, whereas when I targeted 100, I would have one or two such incidents per year on average (here in prison). Now, rarely do I go low enough to trigger my body’s emergency release of glucose from the liver via glycogenolysis. My typical fluctuations range between 80 and 300. Extremes are 50 or 400 and are rare. My present two-week average of readings on my glucometer is 153, very close to my 150 target.

Here are some principles that serve me well:

- Don’t eat until after you get insulin (unless you are low and need to eat enough to get back on target).
- Know approximately how fast your blood sugar drops after getting fast-acting insulin (mine drops about 125/hour).
- If your blood sugar is high (e.g., above 150) before eating, you might need to increase your fast-acting insulin to keep your sugars in a normal range.

Confined behind tall walls and razor wires,  
with the nation of prisoners constantly rising higher.  
Countless amounts will never be released,  
except in a body bag once deceased.  
Most inmates have done their wrong,  
but guidelines are designed to hold prisoners much too long.  
Prisons in America have become the No. 1 prison industry!  
Where men and women are stocked as commodity,  
and forced to work for a paltry sum under servitude for free.  
Refusal in being without pay and thrown into the hole.  
Along with a definite denial of parole.  
Since the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation,  
minorities have been swallowed by incarceration.  
It’s easy to see the similarities between prison life and slavery.  
Inside these walls, phone rates and commissaries are still high.  
Because financial support comes from Securus, Global Tel Link, Aramark food service and Smart Communications too.  
As far as these corporate raiders are concerned, that’s just a few!  
Inmates are forced to make prisoner’s clothes, bed linens, bras, panties/boxers, T-shirts, socks,  
boots, hats, and coats too.  
It’s a shame many tax-paying citizens don’t know.  
We are in the era of the new Jim Crow.  
There’s no justice or equality.  
America was built through slavery.  
Don’t take my word for it, study your history.  
Racist lawmakers and politicians make decisions,  
causing Blacks, Latinx, and poor whites to fill prisons.  
Outsiders believe we’re being rehabilitated.  
But being caged only generates hatred.  
The majority of defendants are victimized and doomed  
way before entering the courtroom.  
The vocabulary and legal terminology used  
leaves most inmates dazed and confused.  
And often the attorney who’s allegedly protecting your constitutional rights is  
secretly drinking  
martinis with the DAs and judges at night.  
Quick to offer some type of plea deal,  
or make you wait many years for an appeal.  
Court officials share a bond, and we are not a part.  
Stacking the odds against you from the start.  
Just like slave masters buying and selling slaves,  
working them till they’re dead in their graves.  
So, at times, it seriously baffles me.  
Why is America called “THE LAND OF THE FREE”?  
Especially when the United States of America is warehousing the largest  
nation of prisoners in this country!

- **Secondary stage:** This second stage may begin when the initial sores are healing or have healed. These symptoms usually start with a non-itchy rash on the palms of your hands, soles of your feet, or elsewhere on your body. You may also get sores in the mouth, vagina, or anus and flu-like symptoms. These symptoms can last 2-6 weeks at a time, for up to 2 years. They eventually go away even without treatment.
- **The latent (inactive) stage** of syphilis does not have symptoms, but the infection is still there.
- **The third/late stage** may occur years after the initial infection, if it was not treated. This stage can include serious problems with the brain, nerves and heart, including tumors, blindness and dementia.
- **How to prevent it:** Condoms, including internal condoms, and dental dams (but they may not provide full protection if sores are in areas a condom does not cover). Avoiding vaginal, anal, or oral sex when your partner has syphilis sores reduces your risk.
- **Treatment/cure:** Antibiotics can cure syphilis. They cannot reverse the damage caused by late-stage syphilis.

#### Trichomoniasis (“Trich”)

- **What is it:** An STD caused by the parasite *Trichomoniasis vaginalis*. It is the most common curable STD. Symptoms are more common in people with vaginas.
- **How it spreads:** Trichomoniasis spreads through sexual fluids. It is often passed through vaginal sex. It can also be passed through anal and oral sex, but this is uncommon. It is not spread through casual contact like kissing, hugging, or sharing food or drinks.
- **Symptoms:** Trichomoniasis often doesn’t cause symptoms. Symptoms, which may appear 5-28 days after infection, include itching, swelling, or soreness of genitals, burning after peeing or ejaculating, penile discharge, or white/yellow/green vaginal discharge with a fishy smell.
- **How to prevent it:** Condoms and avoiding sharing sex toys.
- **Treatment/cure:** Antibiotics can cure trichomoniasis. Reinfection is common, so individuals should be retested 3 months after treatment. Because trich spreads so easily, it’s important for your sexual partners to get treated, too.

### **ANATOMY OF AMERICA’S WASTEFUL PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX** BY BRYANT ARROYO

America! America!  
Land of the free, a society filled with justice and equality.  
This is a clear example of hypocrisy,  
unless they forgot to include me,  
and millions of others kept in captivity.

- Injected insulin doesn’t release all at once but is more gradual, tapering off after about 3.5 to 4 hours. If possible, don’t eat the meal all at once, or eat slowly. Eat the main carb first, wait half an hour, then eat the second-level carb, wait half an hour, then eat the next item.



- Realize that different foods take different lengths of time to become glucose in the blood. Here’s what I found by paying attention (I have rigorous notes):
  - Fruit takes ~15-30 minutes
  - Honey, syrup, and sugar take ~10-15 minutes
  - Wheat takes ~30 minutes
  - Oatmeal takes ~2 hours
  - Corn takes ~2 hours
  - Rice takes ~3 hours
  - Protein (e.g., nuts, peanut butter, eggs, cheese, meat, milk) takes ~5 hours (some of the amino acids, if unused in muscle repair/building, turn to glucose)
  - Beans take ~1 hour
  - Veggies take ~30 minutes (some don’t have much glucose, especially salad and broccoli, but veggies like sweet potatoes and beets have more sugars)
- Understand approximately how much glucose comes from typical food/dish servings.
- The proper long-acting-insulin dose objective is to hold the blood sugar level steady after the short-acting insulin has worn off. The best time to check this is late evening, about 4-5 hours after the PM insulin administration.
- If your prison only administers insulin 2 times per day (as is the case here), have your doctor refer you to an endocrinologist if necessary to get it 3 times per day, one for each meal, and allow a two-time dose at PM if noon doesn’t arrive for some reason.
- Keep an insulin log to track things.
- Check your sugar level at least 6 times per day to know what’s going on. I check mine quite a bit more than that. Data is important. You don’t drive a car blindfolded.
- In interacting with the medical staff, be confident, kind and friendly, but don’t overdo how good you are at this, as that tends to backfire.

## HOLISTIC CORNER: HERBAL REMEDIES

ADAPTED BY HANNAH CALVELLI

A variety of herbs and plants may grow in prison courtyards. In preparation for Spring, we highlight a few of the holistic remedies featured in *The Prisoner's Herbal*, a book by Nicole Rose. We acknowledge that not everyone may have access to courtyards, but we hope this information can be useful for some and interesting to many. Furthermore, while the herbs in this article may have medicinal properties, research and evidence on how well herbal medicines work is limited. We recommend that you speak with a medical professional to address any symptoms you are experiencing.

**Dandelion:** Dandelions are yellow flowers with toothed leaves. Dandelion leaves and flowers can be eaten for their nutritional and digestive benefits. The leaves and flowers stimulate the release of bile, which helps our bodies to break down and digest food. Eating dandelions may also help relieve headaches. The leaves and flowers can be added to hot water to make tea that may help relieve period pains. If you drain the water from the tea, the wet leaves can be applied to the skin to help with soreness from sprains and bruises. The sap (the watery fluid that comes out when the stem is broken) in the dandelion stem can be applied to the skin to relieve discomfort from stings and blisters.



Dandelion Flower (*Taraxacum officinale*)



Dandelion Leaves

**Yarrow:** Yarrow has narrow, dark green leaves deeply cut into short, thin lobes that look like feathers. Small white or pale pink flowers branch from the stems. Yarrow has been used in traditional medicine to treat inflammation and promote wound healing. Some cultures use yarrow to stop nose bleeds by rolling the fresh leaves and stuffing them up the nose.

Oral herpes usually appears as a cold sore (blister on or around the mouth). A genital herpes “outbreak” is when one or more painful blisters appear on or around the genitals. Flu-like symptoms can occur with the first outbreak.

- **How to prevent it:** Condoms, including internal condoms (may not provide full protection if sores occur in areas a condom doesn't cover). People can spread herpes even when they don't have symptoms. But avoiding vaginal, anal, or oral sex when you or your partner has herpes symptoms (during an “outbreak”) lowers the risk.
- **Treatment/cure:** There is no cure, but antiviral medication can prevent or shorten daily outbreaks. Fortunately, herpes is not life-threatening. Herpes sores may make it easier to get HIV.

### HPV

- **What is it:** An STD caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), which has many strains. It can cause a variety of health problems, from genital warts to cervical cancer.
- **How it spreads:** HPV spreads through vaginal, anal, or oral sex, including close skin-to-skin touching during sex. It is most commonly spread through vaginal or anal sex.
- **Symptoms:** Genital warts that appear as a small bump or small group of bumps, vary in size, and can be raised or flat. Not all HPV strains cause warts, and most HPV infections don't cause any symptoms.
- **How to prevent it:** Getting the HPV vaccine (given as a series of shots), which protects against HPV strains that cause the highest risk of cancer. All people aged 9 to 45 can get the HPV vaccine. Using condoms and dental dams reduces but does not eliminate the risk of infection. Getting screened for cervical cancer (“Pap smears”) between ages 21-65 if you have a vagina and cervix allows for early detection and treatment of cervical cancer caused by HPV (but not HPV itself).
- **Treatment/cure:** There is no treatment for HPV, but there are treatments for the problems it can cause, like topical cream for genital warts or surgery for genital warts and cervical precancer. Sometimes the body can clear HPV infections on its own.

### Syphilis

- **What is it:** An STD that develops in stages, caused by the bacteria *Treponema pallidum*.
- **How it spreads:** Syphilis spreads by sexual skin-to-skin contact, including by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has syphilis. It can also be passed during pregnancy from a pregnant person to their fetus. Syphilis cannot be spread by touching shared objects (e.g., toilet seats, doorknobs, clothing, etc.)
- **Symptoms:**
  - **Primary stage:** This first stage includes painless sores in or around the penis, vagina, anus, rectum, or lips that last 3-6 weeks and heal regardless of treatment. These can show up between 3 weeks and 3 months of being infected.

## Chlamydia

- **What is it:** An STD caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia trachomatis*. If left untreated, it can spread to and permanently damage reproductive organs like fallopian tubes and the uterus or cause ectopic pregnancy (a life-threatening condition where pregnancy occurs outside of the uterus).
- **How it spreads:** Through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Chlamydia can also be passed during childbirth from a pregnant person to their baby.
- **Symptoms:** Chlamydia often doesn't cause any symptoms. However, you may notice abnormal vaginal or penile discharge, a burning sensation while peeing, or pain/swelling in one or more testicles.
- **How to prevent it:** Condoms, dental dams, and getting regular screening tests.
- **Treatment/cure:** Antibiotics can cure chlamydia. People who have it should avoid sexual activity until they've completed their antibiotic course to avoid spreading the infection. Reinfection is common, so health care providers recommend retesting about three months after treatment ends.

## Gonorrhea

- **What is it:** An STD caused by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, which can cause genital, rectal, and throat infections. It is especially common in people aged 15-24. If left untreated, it can spread internally and cause serious health problems, including infertility.
- **How it spreads:** Through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be passed during childbirth from a pregnant person to their baby.
- **Symptoms:** Gonorrhea often doesn't cause any symptoms and can be mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection. However, you may notice pain or burning while peeing, increased vaginal discharge, vaginal bleeding between periods, yellow or white penile discharge, or swollen testicles (less common). Rectal symptoms include discharge, anal itching, soreness, or painful bowel movements. Throat infections can cause a sore throat.
- **How to prevent it:** Condoms (including internal condoms) and getting regular screening tests.
- **Treatment/cure:** Antibiotics can cure gonorrhea. While medication will stop the infection, it does not reverse any permanent damage it causes. Gonorrhea reinfection is common, so individuals should be retested 3 months after treatment.

## Herpes (oral and genital)

- **What is it:** A chronic, lifelong viral infection caused by two types of viruses: herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV-1) and herpes simplex virus 2 (HSV-2). HSV-1 and HSV-2 can both cause infections around the mouth (oral herpes) or genitals (genital herpes), but most commonly HSV-1 infects the mouth and HSV-2 infects the genitals. Most adults are infected with HSV-1 at some point in their lives.
- **How it spreads:** Both types spread through skin-to-skin contact, especially through kissing and vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Herpes is not spread by touching shared objects (towels, toilet seats, bedding, etc.)
- **Symptoms:** Most people have no symptoms or mild symptoms.

Yarrow can be put in hot water to make a tea to wash out wounds. Swishing yarrow tea in your mouth may also help with bleeding gums. Some people also drink yarrow tea to soothe colds and fevers, period pains, gut issues, and joint pain.



Yarrow Flower (*Achillea millefolium*)



Yarrow Full Plant

**Daisy:** Daisies have small, oval, fine-haired leaves with toothed edges that grow on short stalks low to the ground. The flower heads are white with a yellow center. Daisies can be crushed into a paste and placed on bruises to help with soreness. They can also be added to hot water to help with coughs and colds. If you let the daisy tea cool, it can be used as a wash for acne rosacea and eczema.



Daisy in Cut Lawn (*Bellis perennis*)



Daisy in Gravel

**Rose:** Roses have prickly stems with large white or pink flowers in the summer that become red in the fall. You may have heard of rose essential oils and extracts, which are made from the rose flower and have been used in traditional medicine for their anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Rose flowers can be placed in hot water to make tea.

Gargling the tea may help with sore throats, mouth ulcers, and bleeding gums. Drinking rose petal tea may also help with stress, poor sleep, period cramps, and hot flashes due to menopause. When the tea cools, it can be used to wash your face. Some say that placing rose petals on cuts can help stop the bleeding faster.



Rose (*Rosa* spp.)



Prickly Wild Rose (*Rosa acicularis*)

## COVID-19 UPDATE: RISING CASES AND UPDATED VACCINES BY LILY H-A

As of October 2023, there has been another surge in COVID-19 cases. Since data reporting to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is more limited than it was earlier in the pandemic, it's harder to know the size of the surge. Still, cases, hospitalizations, and deaths have all increased since summer. When possible, wearing a mask, keeping physical distance between yourself and others, and getting tested if you feel sick or are around someone else who tests positive continue to be good ways to protect yourself and others.

New variants of the coronavirus continue to arise, as experts have expected. There are currently multiple sub-variants of the Omicron variant going around. So far, these new variants and sub-variants seem to have similar symptoms to and cause similarly severe disease as previous variants, although they are more transmissible (easier to get and pass on to other people).

The Food Drug Administration (FDA) approved updated versions of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax vaccines in September and October 2023. These new vaccines were designed around the Omicron XBB.1.5

subvariant, which first appeared in December 2022. These vaccines are available now and are expected to be effective against all the Omicron sub-variants currently infecting people. The FDA has started calling this an "updated vaccine" rather than a "booster," since it's likely that there will be an updated version every year. Updated vaccines are needed because the virus is evolving and because our immunity to the virus after getting vaccinated decreases over time.

The CDC recommends people get an updated vaccine as soon as possible in order to protect against serious illness. It is safe to receive this vaccine at the same time as your annual flu shot, which may make it easier to stay up-to-date on both vaccines in the future. No one version of the COVID vaccine (Pfizer, Moderna or Novavax) is recommended over the others. If you recently had COVID-19, the CDC says you can consider waiting up to 3 months from infection to get vaccinated. If you recently had the previous version of the vaccine (called the bivalent vaccine), you should wait at least two months from your last vaccination date. If you haven't been vaccinated before, you can start with the updated vaccine. You are considered "up to date" after one dose. If you have additional questions about the updated vaccine and how it applies to your situation, you can speak with a medical professional at your facility.

## ASK PHN: TYPES OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND TESTING BY M. ALI

**Dear Prison Health News,**

If you would be so kind (if you haven't already done so), please explain the variety of sexually transmitted diseases such as trichomoniasis, herpes I vs. II, etc.

—Anonymous

**Dear Anonymous,**

Thank you for this great topic suggestion. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), which develop due to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), are very common, impact people of all genders, and can result from any type of sexual activity (vaginal, anal, oral, etc.). STIs can be caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites. STDs don't always cause symptoms or may only cause mild symptoms, so it's important to get tested if you believe you may have been exposed. The good news is STDs are preventable, and most are treatable as well. Talking to your partner about STDs and how to stay safe while having sex is an important way of protecting your health. Prevention is always better than treatment.

While there are many sexually transmitted diseases, these are six common ones: