

The Pump Handle



"I had an interview with the Board of Guardians of St. James's parish, on the evening of Thursday, 7th September, and represented the above circumstances to them. In consequence of what I said, the handle of the pump was removed on the following day."

John Snow, 1855

December 2009 Topics

- Influenza H1N1 Update
- Acute Viral Gastroenteritis Activity Update
- Norovirus Outbreak in Grand Forks County
- HIV/STD/TB/Hepatitis Symposium May 2010



Influenza H1N1 Update

Influenza activity continues to decline in the state. As of Jan. 2, 2010, 3,239 laboratory identified influenza cases had been reported from 51 counties. Only 36 cases have been reported to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) since Dec. 8, 2009. Of the 3,239 cases, 543 have been confirmed as 2009 H1N1 influenza cases. Not every influenza case is subtyped. Of those cases that were subtyped, most were identified as 2009 H1N1; therefore H1N1 is the predominant influenza strain circulating in North Dakota. The median age of all reported influenza cases is 12.94 years (2009 H1N1 median age is 15.32 years), and the ages have ranged from 1 week to 87 years. Of the 3,239 influenza reports, 1,369 reports included hospitalization data, of which 100 cases required hospitalization. Three influenza-related deaths have been reported in North Dakota. One was male and two were female. All were older than 60 with underlying health conditions.

2009-2010 Influenza H1N1 Confirmed Case Summary					
Total Cases		Age Information		Influenza Virus Strains	
		Range	Cases	Type	Cases
Gender		<10	1266	A, Novel H1N1	543
Female	1638	10-19	988	A, H1	0
Male	1601	20-29	446	A, H3	1
		30-39	182	A, Unspecified	2659
Hospitalized	100	40-49	162	B	25
		50-59	132	Unknown	11
Deaths	3	60 and over	63	Total	3,239

The NDDoH has activated a toll-free influenza hotline for people to call if they have questions about influenza. The hotline cannot provide medical advice to callers. For that information, people should call their physicians. The number to call is 1.866.207.2880. The hotline is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Standard Time. Information about influenza also is available on the Department of Health's influenza website at www.ndflu.com.

Influenza Website

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) influenza website has information regarding both seasonal and H1N1 influenza. Some topics on the website include:

- North Dakota influenza statistics.
- Fact sheets and other influenza materials.
- Educational material order forms.
- Flu shot clinic locator.
- Vaccine information.
- Testing and reporting information.

The 2009-2010 Influenza Campaign On-Line Reporting Site also is found on the NDDoH influenza website. At this site, www.ndflu.com/Reporting/OnLineReporting.aspx, reports are available for school absenteeism and outbreaks and also influenza and influenza-like illness outbreak reports for long-term care and other types of institutions.

Check out the NDDoH influenza website at www.ndflu.com for the latest information about influenza. If you have additional questions, please contact the NDDoH, at 701.328.2378 or 800.472.2180.

National Influenza Vaccination Week

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is January 10 through 16, 2010. Although influenza activity is decreasing in the United States, flu activity is unpredictable and may continue for many months. NIVW is a national observance that was established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination, as well as fostering greater

use of flu vaccine after the holiday season into January and beyond. For more information about NIVW visit www.cdc.gov/flu/NIVW/index/htm.

H1N1 Vaccine Update

Health-care providers throughout North Dakota are encouraged to vaccinate all individuals wishing to be vaccinated against H1N1 influenza. This includes healthy individuals of any age, the elderly and long-term care residents.

As of Friday, Dec. 18, 2009, the NDDoH is no longer allocating H1N1 vaccine to providers based on the number of doses originally prebooked. In order to receive H1N1 vaccine, providers will need to actively place an order for vaccine using the H1N1 Vaccine Order Form. A H1N1 vaccine order form can be found at www.ndflu.com/vaccine.

For more information about H1N1 vaccine, please visit www.ndflu.com/Vaccine/ or call the NDDoH at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378. Questions regarding laboratory testing may be directed to the Division of Laboratory Services at 701.328.6272.



Acute Viral Gastroenteritis Activity Update

Since Dec. 1, 2009, there have been two confirmed viral gastroenteritis outbreaks reported to the NDDoH. One outbreak was associated with a wedding in Grand Forks county and the other outbreak involved three individuals having a common meal in Williams county. Both outbreaks were confirmed as norovirus. No outbreaks associated with institutions have been reported.

Three individuals were associated with the outbreak in Williams county. These individuals shared only one common meal at a restaurant in Williams county. No ill food workers or other illness complaints came from the restaurant.

Outbreaks of gastroenteritis most often occur in the winter and early spring. Norovirus is the most common cause of viral gastroenteritis outbreaks and is often called the “winter vomiting disease” or “stomach flu.” Although it is commonly referred to as the stomach flu, it has no relationship to the influenza virus that causes respiratory infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates noroviruses cause 23 million cases of acute gastroenteritis each year and about 50 percent of all foodborne outbreaks.

Practice good hand hygiene, disinfect contaminated surfaces and do not return to work or school until 24 to 72 hours after symptoms resolve are recommended measures for the prevention and control of norovirus infections. Please visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5633a2.htm for more information about the prevention of norovirus.

To report an acute viral gastroenteritis outbreak, please contact the NDDoH at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378 or submit an online report form at www.ndhealth.gov/disease/GI/.



Norovirus Outbreak in Grand Forks County

On Dec. 16, 2009, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) received a complaint of gastrointestinal illness associated with eating at a wedding reception on Dec. 11, 2009, in Grand Forks County.

Of the 48 guests who attended the wedding reception, 39 (81%) were interviewed by phone using a standardized questionnaire. Of the 39 wedding guests who were interviewed, 24 (62%) became ill after eating at the wedding reception. The most commonly reported symptoms were diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and stomach cramps. The onsets of illness were reported to be from one to 119 hours after the wedding reception meal and the duration of illness ranged from 12 to 83 hours (median 45 hours).

Less than five ill wedding guests submitted stool specimens to the NDDoH Division of Laboratory Services. More than one of these specimens tested positive for Norovirus Group 2 by PCR.

The wedding was held at a hotel and the food was catered by that same hotel. Meal items served at the wedding reception included cheese and crackers, meatballs, ham, chicken marsala, roasted potatoes and green beans. An environmental assessment of the hotel's meal preparation practices did not reveal any deficiencies. Additional investigation found that another large group staying at the hotel during the same time period did not have any members who became ill.

Norovirus is one of the most common causes of gastrointestinal illness outbreaks. It is often spread by eating or drinking contaminated food or water but also can be spread from person to person. Proper food handling, strict hand washing after using the bathroom, and allowing sick employees who handle food to stay home when they are ill are simple measures that can be taken to prevent norovirus outbreaks.

If you would like to report a foodborne illness or have questions about foodborne illness, please contact the NDDoH, at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378.



HIV/STD/TB/Hepatitis Symposium May 2010

The 2010 HIV/STD/TB/Hepatitis Symposium will be held May 19 and 20, 2010, at the Radisson Inn, 201 North Fifth Street, Fargo, N.D.

The symposium will include both plenary and breakout sessions and the following topics will be presented:

- HIV/STDs/TB/Viral Hepatitis in North Dakota
- HIV/STDs and alcohol
- Occupational exposure and hepatitis testimonial
- Culturally sensitive counseling
- HIV/HCV nutrition
- STD screening and sexual history taking
- Pediatric TB
- Hepatitis protocol at the state penitentiary
- HPV male screening process
- HCV counseling and testing

The audience for the symposium includes all health-care and substance abuse professionals who provide services to individuals with HIV, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), tuberculosis (TB) or viral hepatitis. The symposium will provide an opportunity to receive education and resources to improve the capacity to provide these services.

The registration form is available on the NDDoH website at www.ndhealth.gov/disease/hepatitis/. The completed registration form and fee is to be returned no later than March 19, 2010. Additional information about the symposium will be posted on the website as it becomes available. For more information about the symposium, please contact Julie Wagendorf or Krissie Guerard, at 701.328.2378 or 800.472.2180.

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include Dr. Jennifer Cope, Abbi Pierce, Michelle Feist, Julie Wagendorf, Kirby Kruger, Tracy Miller and Sarah Weninger. For questions, suggestions or inquiries, or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact Sarah Weninger of the Division of Disease Control at 701.328.2366 or by email at sweninger@nd.gov.

The pump handle picture in the title was obtained from the website www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html.



Terry Dwelle, MD, MPHTM, State Health Officer
Kent Martin, MD, Chief, Medical Services Section
Kirby Kruger, Director, Division of Disease Control