

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 2013 Topics

- Free-B Webinar Training
- Reported Rashes by North Dakota Daycare Aided Investigation
- December Influenza Update



FREE-B Webinar Training

The North Dakota Department of Health Division of Disease Control, along with the Division of Food and Lodging, will be hosting a foodborne outbreak training via webinar based on? FREE-B (Food Related Emergency Exercise Bundle), an exercise developed by FDA, CDC and USDA FSIS & APHIS. The training will be held March 10, 11 and 12, 2014, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. each morning.

The training involves a comprehensive foodborne outbreak scenario and includes the epidemiological investigation, traceback and recall identification and implementation, role of regulatory agencies and other issues associated with a cluster of illness linked to a foodservice establishment.

If you have any interest in learning more about foodborne outbreak investigations and would be interested in participating in this training, please contact Alicia Lepp at alepp@nd.gov for more information.



Reported Rashes by North Dakota Daycare Aided Investigation

On October 30, 2013, a daycare in North Dakota reported three reactions of children that experienced a rash covering their bodies roughly 45 minutes after eating lunch. The rash was reported to last for about half an hour. No other symptoms were reported. The suspected food item was rice. The staff indicated that the bag of rice used for the lunch

looked discolored compared to other bags of the same kind of rice they had at the daycare. The DoH advised the daycare to discontinue use of the rice and no other complaints were reported by the daycare.

On December 3, 2013, a second state reported 25 children in a school developing a rash within 30 minutes of consuming lunch and the rash was resolved within 90 minutes. The food most likely to have contributed to the rash was determined to be rice. Two staff members who handled or were near the bags of rice also developed a rash.

Because these two states reported similar reactions after consuming the same rice product, the FDA worked with state agricultural and public health departments to conduct testing on the remaining rice in the second state. A market withdrawal was performed by the company and FDA worked with the company to resolve the issue.

This scenario reminds us of the importance of reporting any reactions, from rashes to vomiting and diarrhea, when they occur in two or more people after consuming a similar food item. Having similar reactions reported in two states led public health investigators to believe this was due to a common exposure and not an isolated incident, leading to the product in question to be withdrawn from the market. Reporting incidences such as these helps keep our food safe.

To report a foodborne illness or reaction, please call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180. To learn more about food safety, visit www.foodsafety.gov.



December Influenza Update

We saw a significant increase in lab-reported influenza cases during the last few weeks of December, with 608 cases of lab-confirmed influenza reported as of December 28, 2014. The 2009 H1N1 pandemic strain of influenza (pH1N1) continued to be the dominant circulating strain, with 82 of 83 specimens undergoing additional genetic testing coming back as the pH1N1 strain. A unique aspect of the pH1N1 strain is that it can disproportionately affect young and middle-aged adults compared with other strains of seasonal influenza. North Dakota has seen an increase in the number of influenza cases and hospitalizations reported for this age group so far this season. These cases serve as an important reminder that influenza can affect people of any age, and vaccination is recommended for all age groups.

The NDDoH influenza site is updated weekly on Thursday with the latest influenza data. For more information about influenza, the surveillance program, local flu shot clinics, or to order free educational materials, visit the NDDoH influenza website at www.ndflu.com.



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Terry Dwelle, MD, MPHTM, State Health Officer
Kirby Kruger, Director, Division of Disease Control; Chief Medical Services Section
Tracy K. Miller, MPH, State Epidemiologist