

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

March 2009 Topics

- Disease Control Flood Surveillance Efforts
- April Is STD Awareness Month
- Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency
- Influenza Update
- Viral Gastroenteritis Activity Update
- Save the Date! Hepatitis C Training Workshop



Disease Control Flood Surveillance Efforts

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) Division of Disease Control started surveillance of North Dakota emergency rooms on Mar. 23, 2009, to monitor flood-related injury and illness during the 2009 spring flood season. Emergency rooms have been reporting the total number of visits to their facilities, along with information about those who came in with injuries and illnesses related to flooding. Some of the injuries that the facilities were asked to look for ranged from sore wrists and ankles all the way to motor vehicle accidents and other serious traumas. Illnesses could include carbon monoxide poisoning, exhaustion, hypothermia, mental health issues and cardiac-related events.

As of Apr. 3, 2009, there have been 205 injuries, 58 illnesses and two deaths related to the flood reported to NDDoH. The efforts of the reporting facilities have been greatly appreciated. The NDDoH will continue to monitor flood related issues into the coming weeks as flooding subsides and the recovery effort starts.

For additional information about flood cleanup health and safety information, please visit www.ndhealth.gov/flood.



April Is STD Awareness Month

April is National Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) Awareness Month, an observance created to increase awareness about STDs, including their transmission, prevention and treatment. STDs continue to be a major health threat in the United States, especially among adolescents and young adults. One in four young women between the ages of 14 and 19 in the United States, or 3.2 million teenage girls, are infected with at least one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs): human papillomavirus (HPV), chlamydia, herpes or trichomoniasis. If undetected and left untreated, STDs can lead to potentially severe health consequences, including ectopic pregnancy or infertility in females. These severe health consequences underscore the importance of annual chlamydia screening and vaccination for HPV as part of a comprehensive approach to sexual health in young women.

In North Dakota, preliminary data indicate 1,894 cases of chlamydia and 140 cases of gonorrhea were reported to the NDDoH in 2008. Of these totals, 74 percent of chlamydia cases and 65 percent of gonorrhea cases occurred among people ages 15 to 24.

Throughout STD Awareness Month in April 2009, MTV and the Kaiser Family Foundation, working with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other partners nationwide, will launch a new campaign named “It’s Your (Sex) Life” to inform young people about STDs and encourage testing. Messages of the campaign include:

- **Communicate:** Take control of your sex life by talking about it with your partner, your health-care provider, and your parents.
- **Delay & Reduce:** Make thoughtful decisions about when is the right time to have sex, and with whom -- the first time and every time.
- **Protect:** If you are having sex, learn about and use the tools to protect yourself from STDs and accidental pregnancy: always carry condoms and find a birth control method that works for you.
- **Test:** If you are sexually active, getting tested for HIV and other STDs is a routine part of taking care of your health.

Additional information about STDs is available at www.gyt09.org. North Dakota STD statistics can be found at www.ndhealth.gov/STD/Data/STDData.htm.



Be Food Safe During an Emergency

All parts of North Dakota have been facing weather emergencies. Here are some important tips to minimize the potential for foodborne illness (source: www.fsis.usda.gov/):

- Steps to follow to prepare for a possible weather emergency:
 - Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. This thermometer will indicate the temperature in case of a power outage and will help determine the safety of the food.
 - Make sure the freezer is at 0 degrees F or below and the refrigerator is 40 degrees F or below.
 - Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator or coolers after the power is out.

- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.
- Group food together in the freezer; this helps the food stay cold longer.
- Steps to follow after the weather emergency:
 - The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about four hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for about 48 hours.
 - Discard refrigerated, perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers and deli items after four hours without power.
 - Food may safely be refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40 degrees F or below when checked with a food thermometer.
 - Never taste food to determine its safety!
 - Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water. Discard wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and pacifiers.
 - Thoroughly wash all metal pans, ceramic dishes and utensils that came in contact with flood water with hot soapy water and sanitize by boiling them in clean water or by immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water.
 - **When in doubt, throw it out!**

If a foodborne outbreak (two or more people ill with similar symptoms after consuming a common food) is suspected, it is important to notify the NDDoH or local public health unit as soon as possible so that exposed individuals, as well as the source and the cause of the illness, can be identified rapidly. Stool samples should be collected if a foodborne illness is suspected.

Call the NDDoH at 800.472.2180 to report a suspected foodborne outbreak.



Influenza Update

As of Apr. 4, 2009, a total of 1,321 laboratory-identified influenza cases have been reported to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) from 46 counties. Of the 1,321 reported cases, 78 percent were identified as type A (n=1,036), 21 percent as type B (n=274) and one percent unknown type (n=11). Of the 1,036 influenza A cases, 88 have been sub-typed, with 79 identified as type A H1 and 9 as type A H3.

Since Oct. 1, 2008, 21 influenza viruses have been submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for resistance testing. Results have been received on one influenza type A H1 and one influenza type A H3 viruses. The influenza A H1 virus was found to be resistant to oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and sensitive to zanamivir (relenza) and adamantanes. The influenza type A H3 virus was found to be resistant to adanamtanes and sensitive to oseltamivir and zanamivir. These antiviral resistance patterns are consistent with current national influenza virus resistant trends.

For more information about influenza, antiviral resistance, influenza activity or to order educational materials free-of-charge, visit the NDDoH influenza website at www.ndflu.com.



Viral Gastroenteritis Activity Update

Since Dec. 1, 2008, 16 viral gastroenteritis outbreaks have been reported to the NDDoH from institutional settings. Thirteen outbreaks have been reported from long-term care facilities, one

outbreak reported from an assisted living facility and two outbreaks have been reported from schools. Four outbreaks have been laboratory confirmed as being norovirus.

A viral gastroenteritis outbreak is considered consistent with norovirus if ALL of the following are met:

- Vomiting is present in more than 50 percent of cases.
- The incubation period is from 24 to 48 hours.
- The duration of illness is from 12 to 60 hours.
- No bacterial pathogens are isolated from stool.

Report all outbreaks of suspected acute viral gastroenteritis using the online report form located on the NDDoH Division of Disease Control website at www.ndhealth.gov/disease/Gastroenteritis/. For more information about norovirus surveillance in North Dakota, call Sarah Weninger at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378.



Save the Date! Hepatitis C Trainig Workshop

The NDDoH is hosting a hepatitis C training workshop July 20, 2009, at the Holiday Inn in Fargo, N.D.

Some topics include:

- The liver.
- Hepatitis C transmission and prevention.
- Diagnostic tools.
- Symptoms and disease progression.
- Disease management.
- Treatments.
- Complimentary medicine.

Watch for more information regarding registration or contact Julie Wagendorf, Hepatitis Program manager, at 701.328.2378.

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include Michelle Feist, Julie Wagendorf, Kirby Kruger, Tracy Miller, Lindsey VanderBusch 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.



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