

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

November 2011 Topics

- It is Soft, Furry and Cute – at the Same Time a Serious Health Risk
- Disease Reporting Among Non-resident North Dakotans
- Influenza and Respiratory Panels
- Having Delicious and Safe Holiday Meals
- New Disease Control Employee!



It is Soft, Furry and Cute - at the Same Time a Serious Health Risk

Wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes are the most commonly identified animals with rabies in the United States. In North Dakota, the skunk is the most common wild animal identified with rabies. There have been rabies-positive raccoons identified in North Dakota in recent years as well; therefore, people coming into contact with raccoons and skunks in North Dakota are considered to be at high risk for exposure to rabies.

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) investigates several cases each year due to people harboring raccoons as pets despite the fact that Title 36 of the North Dakota Century Code prohibits ownership of skunks and raccoons. Likewise, a person may not keep a skunk or raccoon in captivity or as a pet (www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t36c01.pdf). There were two occurrences in 2011 involving captive baby raccoons and possible human exposure to the rabies virus. In both instances, rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) was initiated. Reasons for initiating the rabies PEP included the unavailability of the animals for rabies testing and ongoing contact with the raccoons for an extended period of time.

Unless a wild animal has been tested and determined not to be rabid, rabies PEP should be initiated as soon as possible following an exposure to protect people from developing rabies. The rabies status of a wild animal cannot be reliably determined based on signs and

symptoms alone. All raccoons, skunks and other wild animals that have potentially exposed an individual(s) to rabies should be humanely euthanized and submitted for rabies testing as soon as possible. If the results of the rabies testing are negative, the exposed persons do not need to undergo the costly rabies post-exposure vaccinations.

More information about animals and rabies in North Dakota is available at www.ndhealth.gov/disease/Rabies/ or by calling the NDDoH at 701.328.2378.



Disease Reporting Among Non-resident North Dakotans

The Division of Disease Control continually monitors a list of mandatory reportable conditions (Article 33 [Administrative Rule 33-06-01](#)) in an effort to stay current with emerging diseases, monitor changes among routinely reportable illnesses, connect those in need with medical services, and to detect outbreaks in order to provide public health improvement.

As part of our surveillance activities, we look for areas in the state where these diseases are being identified to look for clusters of illness in order to implement prevention protocols. Additionally, as part of our routine investigation, we follow up many of these disease reports by interviewing the person in which the disease has been identified. That is why it is so important for us to obtain correct demographic information (i.e., address, telephone number, gender, race, and date of birth) from the providers seeing these patients.

Over the last few years, have seen an increase in disease reports for people who are currently living in North Dakota but have a permanent address in another state. While this does not change the investigation we conduct, it takes much longer to get started because the only address we are provided is the out-of-state address, so finding this individual takes additional time.

In response to this problem, we are asking that doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, laboratorians, etc., **please document not only the out-of-state permanent address but also document the current North Dakota address for these individuals.** Individuals such as college students or more recently the oil field workers often have a permanent out-of-state address but are living in North Dakota for school or work.

For more information on the reportable conditions, visit the Disease Control website at www.ndhealth.gov/Disease/Documents/ReportableConditions.pdf or call 701.328.2378.



Influenza and Respiratory Panels

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) Influenza Program not only collects information on influenza case reports and influenza-like illness, but also performs surveillance for other respiratory pathogens. A select number of laboratories report the number or rapid respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) tests that were positive and the number of tests that were performed. This allows us to potentially describe any increases in influenza-like illness when we are not necessarily seeing influenza disease. In recent years, the NDDoH Division of Disease Control has received funding for participating providers to conduct enhanced influenza surveillance, which provides free testing for not only influenza, but a broad panel of respiratory pathogens that include RSV,

parainfluenza, rhinovirus and others. This data has been interesting in terms of early season influenza-like illness. Already this year, while we have only had six cases of influenza reported statewide, we have seen instances of rhinovirus, parainfluenza 1, parainfluenza 3, adenovirus and RSV. If you are a provider interested in enrolling in this project, please contact Alicia Lepp at alepp@nd.gov. Also, be sure to track the trends of influenza each week on the NDDoH influenza website at www.ndflu.com.



Having Delicious and Safe Holiday Meals

The holiday season is quickly approaching. You can help educate the public on food safety this upcoming holiday season with a few simple tips (source: www.ndhealth.gov/FoodLodging/):

- Defrost foods safely.
 - Never defrost foods at room temperature. Defrost foods in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.
 - Refrigerator thawing: A large frozen item like a turkey requires at least a day (24 hours) for every 5 pounds of weight. Even small amounts of frozen food require a full day to thaw.
 - Cold Water Thawing: Place food in a leak-proof package or plastic bag and submerge the bag in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Small packages of product may thaw in an hour and a 3-to 4 pound package may take 2 to 3 hours. For whole turkeys, estimate about 30 minutes per pound. If thawed completely in cold water, the food must be cooked immediately.
 - Microwave Thawing: When foods are thawed in the microwave, they must be cooked immediately because some of the food may have begun to cook during the thawing process.
 - Foods should not be thawed in the garage, basement, car or the outdoors.
- Be safe, don't cross contaminate.
 - Use one cutting board for raw products such as poultry, meat and seafood and use another board for fresh produce and vegetables.
 - Never place cooked food on a plate where raw products were placed.
 - Always wash your hands between handling different food items, especially raw and cooked foods.
- Store and prepare food safely.
 - Wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and work surfaces frequently with hot, soapy water.
 - Avoid licking the spoon or the mixing bowl if the batter contains uncooked eggs.
- Cook food to safe internal temperatures.
 - Use a food thermometer to check internal temperatures of all food. All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees F.
 - Every part of the turkey should reach 165 degrees F.
 - Stuffing should reach 165 degrees F, whether cooked inside the bird or in a separate dish.
- Keep food out of the "danger zone."
 - Keep hot food at or above 135 degrees F. Place cooked food in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays and/or slow cookers.

- Keep cold food such as pumpkin pie, eggnog, cheesecake, cream pies and cakes with whipped-cream or cream-cheese frostings at or below 41 degrees F.
- Discard food left out at room temperature for more than four hours.

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.



New Disease Control Employee!

Name: Mary Woinarowicz

Title: NDIIS Sentinel Site Coordinator

Education: Master's Degree in Sociology from the University of North Dakota with focus in Educational Foundations and Research

Background: I grew up in Bismarck and graduated from Century High School in 2001 before attending UND. I have been in Grand Forks for the past 10 years and just moved back to Bismarck in September when my husband's job gave him the opportunity to relocate.

Past Experience: I have worked at Altru Health System in Grand Forks for the past six years. I started in the finance division working in the business office and then moved to Patient Access. I worked in the emergency room as an admit clerk, was promoted to Specialist and then to Supervisor. The last year I was there, I was in the Learning and Organizational Development Department as a Clinical Trainer for our new computer system, Epic, in the surgery and anesthesia applications.

Family/Hobbies: My husband and I were married on the riverboat in Bismarck in 2007 and we have two children together. We have a 3-year-old son, Cayden, and a 6-month-old baby girl, Harper. We also have two dogs, Molly our chocolate lab and Gracie a white German shepherd. Between dogs, kids, jobs, building a new house and getting to spend time with family (my dad, stepmom and two brothers all live in North Carolina), we stay extremely busy and active chasing after everyone in our household. My only other hobby, that I don't get the chance to enjoy very often, is reading; although recently I have started taking up photography and I really love it.

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include, Michelle Feist, Lindsey VanderBusch, Sarah Weninger, Mary Woinarowicz, Julie Wagendorf, Tracy Miller, and Kirby Kruger. 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 e-mail 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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