

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

October 2007 Topics

- Influenza Season and Vaccine Update
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Influenza Season and Vaccine Update

The influenza season in North Dakota occurs October through May. Currently, there have been two laboratory-identified influenza cases reported to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) as of Oct. 30, 2007. The best time to get vaccinated is in October and November. However, since the peak influenza season usually does not occur until after the New Year, getting the flu shot in December or later is beneficial. It is never too late to get the flu shot!

There are two types of influenza vaccine available. One is inactivated vaccine which contains killed virus (flu shot) and the other is live attenuated vaccine which contains weakened influenza viruses (nasal spray). Both types of influenza vaccine contain three different influenza virus strains: one A (H3N2), one A (H1N1) and one influenza type B.

REMEMBER: You cannot get the flu from the flu shot!

This year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and vaccine manufacturers are projecting that a total of 132 million flu vaccine doses will be available nationwide for the 2007-2008 flu season. In North Dakota, a total of 267,350 doses of flu vaccine have been distributed as of Oct. 18, 2007. Vaccine is available for anyone who wants to protect themselves and those around them from the flu.

To see if there is a vaccine clinic in your area or to register a clinic, visit www.flucliniclocator.org.

For more information about influenza or to order free educational materials, visit the NDDoH Influenza website at www.ndflu.com.



Norovirus Activity Update

Since Oct. 1, 2007, zero norovirus outbreaks, with illness onset occurring during the month of October, have been reported in health-care facilities to the NDDoH compared to six (four in long-term care facilities, one in an assisted living facility and one in a developmental center) at the same time last year.

All unusual disease clusters are reportable to the NDDoH. 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/. Fact sheets and other resources, such as guidelines for outbreak management, also are available.

For more information about norovirus surveillance in North Dakota, call Julie Goplin at 701.328.2378.



Be Food Safe During the Holidays

Help educate the public on food safety this upcoming holiday season with a few simple tips (source: www.fsis.usda.gov/):

- Frozen turkeys should be thawed before cooking.
 - Allow about 24 hours per 5 pounds of turkey if thawed in a refrigerator at 40 degrees F.
 - You also can submerge the turkey in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes. Allow about 30 minutes defrosting time per pound of turkey and cook immediately after thawing.
- Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the turkey.
 - Every part of the turkey should reach a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees F.
 - The stuffing should reach 165 degrees F, whether cooked inside the bird or in a separate dish.
- Leftovers should be refrigerated in shallow containers within two hours.
 - Use leftover turkey and stuffing within three to four days; gravy within one to two days; or freeze these foods.
 - Reheat thoroughly (165 degrees F) until hot and steaming.
- Avoid licking the spoon or the mixing bowl if the batter contains uncooked eggs.
- Egg mixtures in eggnog, mousse, custard or cream pies should be cooked to 160 degrees F, or pasteurized eggs also can be used.
- Keep pumpkin pie, eggnog, cheesecake, cream pies and cakes with whipped-cream or cream-cheese frostings refrigerated at 40 degrees F. All perishable foods should be refrigerated within two 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 rapidly identified. Stool samples should be collected if a foodborne illness is suspected.

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



Avian Influenza Workshop Held

On Oct. 17, 2007, the NDDoH along with the State Board of Animal Health hosted an Avian Influenza Workshop. The workshop was intended to bring together different agencies involved in identifying and controlling human/animal infections and illness associated with high pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The workshop provided a mechanism to facilitate discussion, interaction and planning among individuals from the various agencies and professions.

Sixty-two people attended the training from the following agencies: NDDoH Division of Disease Control, Division of Laboratory Services and Environmental Health Section, State Board of Animal Health, local public health units, U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, N.D. Dept. of Agriculture and the N.D. Veterinary Corps. These groups represented a variety of professions including, but not limited to, nursing, environmental health, veterinarians, laboratorians, epidemiology, public information and wildlife services.

Five breakout sessions were held with representatives from each agency and profession present in each group. Discussions centered on the need for improved communication between animal and human health personnel, working together to release public information and determining the lead agency during various times of the outbreak.

For more information or if you're interested in the workshop materials, contact Brenda Carmon at the NDDoH at 800.472.2180 or bcarmon@nd.gov.



Meet the New Disease Control Epi's

Please help us welcome the new epidemiologists to the Division of Disease Control!

Name: Rachel Cora Anne Birk

Title: Field Epidemiologist

Health Unit: Bismarck Burleigh Public Health

Education Background: B.A. in microbiology from the University of Missouri-Columbia; M.S. in microbiology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Past Experience: I worked four years as a laboratory technician in agriculture and three years in a microbiology laboratory studying yeast.

Family/Hobbies: I was married on May 26, 2007, to Kevin Birk, meteorologist with the National Weather Service. We don't have children, yet. My favorite sports to play are bowling and swimming. My favorite sports to watch are St. Louis Cardinals baseball, football and college basketball. Kevin and I like to go camping on weekends when the weather permits. During our free time we like to spend time in our new hot tub.

Name: Greg Welch

Title: TB Coordinator/HIV Prevention Epidemiologist

Health Unit: NDDoH

Education Background: B.S. degree in microbiology from South Dakota State University

Past Experience: After performing two years of active duty in the Army Medical Service Corps, I worked as a public health specialist for the South Dakota Department of Health for 24 years. I have worked as a research associate for the University of South Dakota, School of Medicine conducting a study involving Hepatitis C. Most recently, I was the STD and hepatitis project manager for the Wyoming Department of Health from

September 2005 to April 2007. I was a member of the Army Reserve for 28 years, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Family/Hobbies: I have a wife (Marcie) and a son (Kyle), whom I love spending my free time with.

Name: Denise Larson

Title: HIV Prevention Coordinator/TB Consultant

Health Unit: NDDoH

Education Background: B.S. degree in community health from the University of Northern Colorado; M.S. in public health. I've just recently decided to continue on in school and work on my Ph.D. in public health with a specialization in epidemiology.

Past Experience: Before coming to North Dakota, I worked in a community health center as a certified pharmacy technician. My primary roles were managing the drug assistance programs and helping the patients, staff and the community at large to better understand Medicare Part D.

Family/Hobbies: I have been married for 11 years to my wonderful husband Jon and have two girls, Hannah, age 11, and Natalie, age 8. Between family, work and school I do not get much free time, but when I can find some time I enjoy digital photography.

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include Michelle Feist, Julie Goplin, Tracy Miller and Kirby Kruger. For questions, suggestions or inquiries, or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact Julie Goplin of the Division of Disease Control at 701.328.2375 or by email at jgoplin@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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