

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 2010 Topics

- World AIDS Day December 1, 2010
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World AIDS Day December 1, 2010

World AIDS Day serves as a day to heighten awareness and to focus on prevention efforts to decrease the devastating impact the HIV/AIDS epidemic has on the world. Observation of this day provides an opportunity for governments, national AIDS programs, churches, community organizations and individuals to come together to battle the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The theme for World AIDS Day 2010 is "Universal Access and Human Rights." The theme was chosen to remind people that HIV hasn't gone away, and that there are many things still to be done.

As of Dec. 31, 2009, 480 cases of HIV/AIDS have been reported in North Dakota since HIV surveillance began in 1984. Of the 480 cases reported, 222 are still known to be living in North Dakota. So far in 2010, 21 HIV/AIDS cases have been reported to the North Dakota Department of Health. About one-fourth of the people estimated to be HIV positive are believed to be unaware of their infections, underscoring the need for HIV testing and prevention services.

For more information about HIV testing and other HIV/AIDS services, call the North Dakota Department of Health HIV/AIDS program hotline at 800.70.NDHIV or visit the program's website at www.ndhealth.gov/hiv.



Acute Viral Gastroenteritis Activity Update

As of Oct. 1, 2010, two confirmed viral gastroenteritis outbreaks have been reported to the NDDoH. These outbreaks were confirmed norovirus outbreaks. One family reported illness following a picnic in their home. Children and adults ill with vomiting and/or diarrhea attended the picnic and also prepared some of the food items. One norovirus outbreak also occurred in a long-term care facility. This outbreak lasted 31 days, with 33 percent of residents and 13 percent of staff ill with vomiting and diarrhea.

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 CDC estimates noroviruses cause 23 million cases of acute gastroenteritis each year and about 50 percent of all foodborne outbreaks.

The recommended measures for the prevention and control of norovirus infections are (1) practice good hand hygiene, (2) disinfect contaminated surfaces and, (3) if working in health-care or in food service, do not return to work or school until 24 to 72 hours after symptoms resolve. Please visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5633a2.htm for more information about the prevention of norovirus.

To report an acute viral gastro-enteritis outbreak, please contact the NDDoH at 800-472-2180 or 701-328-2378. Institutions such as long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities and hospitals are encouraged submit on online report form at www.ndhealth.gov/disease/GI/.



Influenza Update – National Influenza Vaccination Week

As of Nov. 5, 2010, a total of five laboratory-identified influenza cases have been reported to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) from three counties. All reported cases were identified as influenza A viruses. Currently flu activity is low in North Dakota, making this an excellent time for people to get flu vaccine. Flu vaccine is plentiful, and, this season, more vaccine has been distributed in the United States than past influenza seasons.

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is Dec. 5 through 11, 2010. 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. The NDDoH is utilizing NIVW to encourage people who have not already received flu vaccine to do so. During this week, vaccine providers are encouraged to plan influenza vaccine clinics and to offer flu vaccine throughout the influenza season. For more information about NIVW, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/NIVW/index.htm.

The NDDoH influenza website is updated weekly with the latest influenza data. For more information about influenza and the surveillance program or to order free educational materials, visit the NDDoH influenza website at www.ndflu.com.



Be Food Safe During the Holiday Season

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

- Store and prepare food safely.
 - Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within four hours of shopping or preparing.
 - Find separate preparation areas in the work space for raw and cooked food.
 - 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.
- Leftovers should be refrigerated in shallow containers within four 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.

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 NDDoH at 800.472.2180 to report a suspected foodborne outbreak.



Yellow Fever Vaccine Online Course

To protect the health of travelers and prevent the international spread of yellow fever, health-care professionals need to be well informed about all aspects of yellow fever disease and vaccine.

CDC’s Travelers’ Health Branch has developed a new online course that provides comprehensive and up-to-date information about the history and epidemiology of yellow

fever, vaccine recommendations, the pre travel consultation, and how to become a designated yellow fever vaccination provider.

This course is intended for physicians, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists and public health professionals. Most participants who complete the course will earn two continuing education credits (CEUs).

After completing this Web-based course, the learner should be able to:

- Identify the epidemiology of yellow fever, including causes, transmission and clinical features of the disease.
- Identify common and rare adverse events, as well as precautions and contraindications associated with yellow fever vaccine administration.
- Recognize the quality and effectiveness of clinical interventions to improve health for specific audiences.
- Recognize elements of a pre-travel consultation and best practices to follow in yellow fever designated clinics.

The course can be found online at www.cdc.gov/travel-training/. You should allow about two hours for completion. If you are interested in becoming a certified yellow fever vaccine clinic, please contact the North Dakota Department of Health immunization program at 701-328-3386 or toll-free at 800-427-2180.

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



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