

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

September 2011 Topics

- Influenza Surveillance and Vaccine Update
- Investigation of *Listeria* Case Linked to Cantaloupes
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Influenza Surveillance and Vaccine Update

It is here once again! Influenza is knocking on our door. What are you doing to prevent it? Hopefully by now most of you have received your yearly influenza vaccination. If not, we would encourage anyone interested in protecting yourself, your family and your patients from influenza to go out and get vaccinated. For more information about influenza vaccine and where you can go to get vaccinated, visit www.ndflu.com and click on the link about vaccine.

Currently activity is low in North Dakota, but there have been cases reported already this season in North Dakota and many providers are reporting people coming in complaining of flu-like illness. This year, the North Dakota Department of Health is planning their activities around capturing information not only on cases of influenza, but monitoring emergency departments for increases of influenza-like illness, working with providers to get samples sent to the Division of Laboratory Services for sub-typing and getting information from schools on absences due to illness. All of this data together will help describe how influenza is impacting our communities. This data will be available for anyone interested at our website www.ndflu.com. Data here will be updated weekly, each Wednesday, by 12 noon. If you would like to either receive a weekly update about

influenza activity in North Dakota or if you would like to help us and become a Sentinel Provider, please contact Lindsey VanderBusch at lvanderbusch@nd.gov.



Investigation of *Listeria* Case Linked to Cantaloupes

As of October 17, 2011, a total of 123 persons infected with *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 26 states. There was one case matching the outbreak strain of listeria in North Dakota. The patient was a female age 60 or older who resides in Stutsman County. The patient became ill in early September, was hospitalized and has since recovered from her listeria infection.

The source of the outbreak is whole cantaloupe grown at Jensen Farms in Granada, Colorado. The cantaloupes are sold under the name Rocky Ford cantaloupes and should not be consumed. Public health officials continue to collaborate with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine the extent of the distribution of the contaminated products. It appears that Walmart stores in North Dakota received this recalled product. The North Dakota Department of Health and local public health units are in the process of following up with each location to make sure they were aware of the recall and all product has been sold or removed from the retail shelves.

Although Jensen Farms issued a voluntary recall of Rocky Ford-brand cantaloupes on September 14 and the recalled cantaloupe should be off store shelves, more ill people may be reported because of the time lag between diagnosis and laboratory confirmation and also because up to two months can elapse between eating contaminated food and developing listeriosis.

Listeriosis is a serious infection caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. The disease primarily affects older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, pregnant women, and newborns. Symptoms of listeria include fever, muscle aches and sometimes nausea and diarrhea. Infected pregnant women may experience a mild, flu-like illness. Infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage or stillbirth, premature delivery or infection of the newborn. High-risk individuals experiencing these symptoms within two months after eating contaminated food should seek medical care and tell the physician or health-care provider about eating the contaminated food.

Listeria infections often are associated with contaminated raw fruits and vegetables, hot dogs, deli meats, cold cuts and soft cheeses. To prevent listeria infections, individuals should always thoroughly wash all raw produce; heat hot dogs, deli meats and cold cuts until they are steaming; and avoid milk or soft cheeses made with unpasteurized milk. The CDC recommends the following steps if Rocky Ford-brand cantaloupes from Jensen Farms are in your home, or were in your home:

- **Dispose** of cantaloupes in a closed plastic bag placed in a sealed trash can. This will prevent people and animals from eating them.
- **Wash** the inside walls and shelves of the refrigerator, cutting boards and countertops; then sanitize them with a solution of one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of hot water.
- **Dry** with a clean cloth or paper towel that has not been previously used.

- **Wipe up spills** in the refrigerator immediately and clean the refrigerator regularly.
- **Always wash hands** with warm water and soap following the cleaning and sanitation process.

For further information about listeria, please contact the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378. Further information regarding the outbreak investigation can be found at www.cdc.gov/listeria/index.html.



Hepatitis A Case Investigations in North Dakota

In September 2011, the Division of Disease Control investigated two reports of acute Hepatitis A cases in North Dakota. The first report was laboratory confirmed, but did not have risk factors that are associated with hepatitis A infections and the second report did not have any symptoms and is not a confirmed case of hepatitis A. To be considered a case of acute hepatitis A, the individual must meet the confirmed case definition. Confirming case status promptly is essential in order to ensure close and household contacts receive appropriate prophylaxis in the required timeframe after exposure.

Confirmed Hepatitis A Case:

- Clinical: An acute illness with a) discrete onset of symptoms **and** b) jaundice or elevated serum aminotransferase levels.
- Laboratory: Immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibody to hepatitis A virus (anti-HAV) positive

Or

- A case that meets the clinical case definition and occurs in a person who has an epidemiologic link with a person who has laboratory confirmed hepatitis A

Clinicians should limit laboratory testing for acute HAV infection to individuals with clinical findings typical of hepatitis A or to individuals who have been exposed to settings where HAV transmission is suspected. IgM anti-HAV positive tests in older people without typical symptoms of hepatitis are more likely to represent either false-positive test results or are the result of HAV infection that occurred months to years previously, rather than more recent HAV infection. (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report May 13, 2005 / Vol. 54 / No. 18).

For more information, please call the North Dakota Department of Health's Division of Disease Control, at 701.328.2378 or 800.472.2180 or visit www.ndhealth.gov/disease/hepatitis.



Infection Prevention Week - October 17-21, 2011

International Infection Prevention Week (IIPW) is October 17-21 and infection preventionists around the world are asking everyone to "Give Healing a Hand." President Ronald Reagan first proclaimed the third week of October as National Infection Control Week in 1986, making this the 25th anniversary. The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), has led the annual effort to highlight the infection prevention profession and their ongoing work to improve patient outcomes and reduce infections.

Infection preventionists work to educate health-care workers, patients and the community about infection prevention to strengthen the efforts in improving health-care quality and safety. Clients have a voice in their care and are an important member of the health-care team. Infection preventionists encourage clients to speak up and ask questions about their care.

During IIPW, APIC honors the hard work of infection preventionists and hopes to raise awareness among other health-care workers, administrators, government officials and consumers about the importance of preventing infections. Infection prevention is everyone's business!

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include, Lindsey VanderBusch, Sarah Weninger, Faye Salzer, 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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