



The Englewood Health Watch

El Observador de Salud de Englewood

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Preparation is Protection!

On October 29, 2012, New Jersey witnessed one of the biggest, most destructive hurricanes to hit the East Coast since the early 1900s. Hurricane Sandy left the state of New Jersey with flooding, no power and destroyed homes. Mandatory evacuations were ordered, roads were closed and residents were instructed to stay in their homes to stay safe. However, even though residents were pre-warned to take proper safety precautions, several residents did not comply, resulting in life-threatening situations.

Hurricane Sandy is a great example of how a natural disaster can be devastating unless prior safety precautions are taken to keep you out of harm's way. Keeping your family safe before, during and after an emergency is extremely important. In order to be prepared for an emergency, families should follow three simple steps: Create an emergency supply kit, establish a family action plan, and stay informed.

Creating an emergency supply kit is a great way for a family to be prepared and quickly remove themselves from harm. Kits should include the following: Water (one gallon per person, per day), nonperishable foods, a flashlight, battery-powered radio, extra batteries, personal hygiene items, personal medications, a first aid kit, money, blankets, and important contact information. It is also important to supply games or stuffed animals to keep small children entertained. If you have any pets, it is also imperative to have a supply of food and water for them as well.

Knowing what to do when an emergency happens is the best protection for your family. Developing an action plan for an emergency is very important. Discuss important contact information of friends and family members, crucial meeting points in case loved ones are separated during an event of an emergency, as well as local emergency response units.

Staying informed about emergency preparedness is extremely important. Radiological or chemical contaminants could enter the environment at any time, prompting authorities to call for people to "shelter in place". This means to take immediate shelter wherever you are, whether it is at work, school or at home, in order to protect yourself from harm.

Emergencies can be very frightening and stressful situations when they do occur. It is important to be prepared at all times in case a disaster strikes. Constantly talk to your family about your emergency action plan, maintain your emergency preparedness kit, and stay informed with any helpful preparedness tips. And remember, preparation is protection! A good book to read is The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes.

Megan Maletich, Health Educator
Emergency preparedness tips adapted from cdc.gov.

September is Fruits & Veggies - More Matters Month

Fruits and vegetables provide many of the vitamins and minerals needed for good health. They also help reduce the risk of cancer, obesity, and many other chronic diseases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity now affects 17% of all children and adolescents in the United States - triple the rate of just one generation ago. Some of the major concerns of obesity are that children are not engaging in physical activity, but more importantly their dietary habits.

Introducing children to fruits and vegetables at an early age is important for growth and development. Half of a plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables during every meal. Some ways of introducing nutritious, colorful foods are through fun interactive activities. Allow children to help in the kitchen and during grocery trips.

Some great ways children can help include:

10) Mean Green Cleaning Machine. Let them wash fruits and vegetables when preparing for cooking or eating

9) Pick a Peck! When shopping, let them select a new fruit or vegetable to try.... or several!

8) Make it Snappy! Let them snap the green beans, snap peas, or break the flowerettes from the broccoli or cauliflower.

7) I Spy. Play "I spy" in the produce section when grocery shopping.

6) Tear It Up! Let them tear the lettuce for salads and sandwiches.

5) Measure Up! Let them measure the frozen vegetables before cooking them.

4) Peel & Slice. Older children can peel and slice carrots, potatoes, cucumbers ... the list goes on!

3) Stir & Spice. Make applesauce from fresh apples. Let them help stir and add the cinnamon.

2) A Sprinkle a Day... Let them sprinkle herbs and other seasonings onto vegetables.

1) Monster Mash! Pull out the potato masher!

Remember it is easy to color your plate. Just add a few colorful fruits and vegetables to each meal, or try choosing a fruit or vegetable as a snack throughout the day.

Lismary Espinal, Youth Health Educator
Source: Adapted from www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
For more information: www.cdc.gov/obesity www.cdc.gov/nutrition

Cyclospora

Maybe you've heard about something in the news lately called *Cyclospora cayetanensis*, but what is it exactly? It is a one-celled parasite that you get by drinking water or eating food that's been contaminated by an infected person.

Unfortunately, no one knows exactly how cyclospora is transmitted. A person infected with cyclospora passes the parasite in stool. Unlike some other foodborne parasites, cyclospora doesn't become infectious until days or weeks after it's passed in a bowel movement. So it's unlikely that you can get the infection directly from an infected person, such as a restaurant worker who doesn't wash his or her hands adequately after using the toilet. However, since 1995, lettuce, fresh basil and imported raspberries have been implicated in cyclospora outbreaks in the United States and Canada.

Symptoms vary from none to severe and mimic many other infections. Some people infected with the microscopic parasite develop no signs or symptoms. For others, signs and symptoms — which usually begin within two to 11 days of eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water — may include:

Watery diarrhea; frequent, and sometimes explosive, bowel movements; bouts of diarrhea alternating with bouts of constipation; loss of appetite; weight loss; bloating; flatulence; burping; stomach cramps; nausea; vomiting; muscle aches; low-grade fever; fatigue; general feeling of unwellness (malaise).

Many conditions can cause diarrhea and other gastrointestinal signs and symptoms. If you develop persistent diarrhea that lasts several days or recurs, contact your doctor so that he or she can identify the cause and recommend treatment. Also, if you've eaten a food that's been recalled because of a cyclospora outbreak, be sure to tell your doctor. If you experience dehydration due to diarrhea, see your doctor. Warning signs of dehydration include: Sunken eyes; dry mouth and tongue; reduced production of tears; decreased urine output

Although, there is no guaranteed way to avoid the parasite, good old soap and hot water while hand washing and proper handling of food, such as washing fruits and veggies, can help reduce your risk of getting the infection.

For more information visit
<http://www.cdc.gov/diseasesconditions/>

Valarie Buchta, Public Health Nurse

Pertussis?? What??

As soon as our children are born, we do everything we can to protect them. We buy car seats to bring them home from the hospital, buy books on how to care and feed them, purchase outlet covers and safety gates. We stop at nothing to ensure their health and safety.

In the past few years, there has been a resurgence of whooping cough, aka pertussis, a very contagious disease. Pertussis can cause violent and rapid coughing, over and over, until the air is gone from the lungs and you are forced to inhale with a loud "whooping" sound. This extreme coughing can cause nausea and extreme fatigue. The cough can last for months. Whooping cough (pertussis) can cause serious illness in adults, children and especially infants. One in 10 children with whooping cough (Pertussis) contracts pneumonia, and more than half of the infants one year old and younger are hospitalized.

It is common for adults and adolescents to infect infants as they can be carriers and not even know they have the disease. Also, their immune systems are more mature and are better equipped to fight diseases. Pertussis is spread when someone who has the disease coughs or sneezes in close proximity to other people, who then breathe in the bacteria.

What can you do? A Tdap vaccine is recommended every 10 years. This is especially important if you visit with or care for infants less than 1 year old, if you might become pregnant, before leaving the hospital with a newborn child, or if you are a healthcare worker.

The Englewood Health Department offers low cost (\$16.00) vaccinations of Tdap. If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment for vaccination, please call the Health Department's Public Health Nurse at 201-871-6511. For more information, visit the CDC website at

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/default.htm

Go to www.soundsofpertussis.com to hear what pertussis is like. Get vaccinated and spread the word, not the disease.

Valarie Buchta, Public Health Nurse

What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are wingless, reddish-brown blood-sucking insects that can grow up to 7mm in length. They feed on human and animal blood and cause itchy bites and come out to feed about every 5 -10 days. Bed bugs can also survive a whole year without a blood feeding.

The presence of bed bugs can be detected through blood stains, fecal droppings, and eggs. They are considered to be experts at hiding. During the day, they hide in a variety of places such as:

- * mattress seams & tufts, box springs, bed frames, head boards, sheets, pillowcases
- * crevices & cracks in furniture or upholstered furniture
- * baseboards of walls
- * seams of chairs & couches, between cushions, and in the folds of curtains

Health Concern

When bed bugs bite, they inject an anesthetic that prevents a person from feeling the bite and an anticoagulant that thins the blood. These bites are similar to those of mosquitos and/or fleas. The good news is that bed bugs are not known to transmit disease. Bed bug bites are:

- * Red welts, often with a darker red spot in the middle
- * Swollen in a localized area
- * Itchy
- * Arranged in a rough line or in a cluster
- * Located on the face, neck, arms and hands

Most bed bug bites heal in a few days, but in unusual cases, the bite marks may persist for several weeks. Usually, an anti-itching ointment will help, but if bites become infected or you experience allergic or severe skin reactions, you should see your doctor for professional treatment.

Preventing Bed Bugs

Infestation of bed bugs usually occurs in apartments, shelters, hotels, nursing homes, hospitals, cruise ships, buses, trains, and dorm rooms. Bed bugs are transported from place to place as people travel. These insects can travel up to 100 feet

per night, but they tend to live within 8 feet from where people sleep.

In order to prevent bed bugs from entering your home:

- * Use a protective cover that encases the mattress & box springs.
- * Reduce clutter in your home so they have fewer places to hide.
- * Never bring bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home.
- * Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.
- * When traveling, inspect the bed & furniture. Keep suitcases off the floor & bed, and inspect them before you leave.
- * If you suspect you have been around bed bugs, immediately wash and dry your clothing on hot settings or store it in a sealed plastic bag until you can launder them.
- * Seal cracks and crevices with caulk, even if you don't have bed bugs. This will help prevent bed bugs and other pests from coming in.

Getting Rid of Bed Bugs

- * Get rid of clutter to reduce places bed bugs can hide.
- * Wash & dry bedding & clothing at high temperatures. Wool items, plush toys, shoes, and many other items can be placed into a hot dryer for 30 minutes to get rid of bed bugs.
- * Scrub mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bed bugs and their eggs.
- * Vacuum mattresses, bed frames, nearby furniture, floors and carpets. Pay special attention to cracks & open spaces. Immediately after vacuuming, put the vacuum cleaner bag in a sealed plastic bag, and dispose of it in an outdoor container.
- * If you find bed bugs on a mattress, cover it with a waterproof, zippered mattress cover labeled "allergen rated" or "for dust mites". Keep the cover on for at least one year.
- * If your box spring is infested, seal it inside a vinyl box spring cover for at least one year. If no cover is available, throw it away.

Jennifer Galarza, REHS (Health Inspector)

Sources:

Bed Bugs. (n.d.). Mayo Clinic:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/bedbugs/>

Bed Bugs FAQs. (n.d.). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/faqs.html#what>

Preventing and Getting Rid of Bed Bugs. (n.d.). NYC Health:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/vector/bed-bug-guide.pdf>

Stop Those Marauding Mosquitoes

The old bird bath. Those clogged gutters you haven't cleaned. Those old tires on the side of the garage.

These are all perfect places for mosquitoes to breed. It doesn't take much water or time for stagnant water to become Club Med for mosquitoes.

Look over your yard, and check for spots of standing water. Remove items which hold water, clean gutters, change the water in your bird bath every 2-3 days.

A little prevention goes a long way in limiting mosquitoes and disease such as West Nile virus they may carry. For additional information call Matt Traudt, Public Health Investigator, at (201) 871-6517. Mosquito problems in your area? You may contact the Bergen County Mosquito Control at (201) 634-2880.

Matt Traudt, Public Health Investigator

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Deborah L. Baldwin, CMR, Editor.