



The Englewood Health Watch

El Observador de Salud de Englewood

a Newsletter Published by the Englewood Department of Health

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Vol 5 No 3

Spring 2012

March / April / May

National Public Health Week - 4/2-8

“A Healthier America Begins Today” is this year’s theme for National Public Health Week, which will focus on a holistic approach to disease prevention and wellness. The American Public Health Association (APHA) is the lead organizer and, according to its [press release](#), the core mission of NPHW has been “to emphasize the essential role communities play in creating a healthier America.”

Health statistics show how crucial it is for Americans to begin living healthy if they haven’t already. They must take any step, large or small, to improve their health status. Please plan to visit the Health Department during this week. Consult with our health professionals on topics such as Active Living and Health Eating; Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs; Communicable Diseases; Reproductive and Sexual Health; Mental and Emotional Well-being.

Know Your Status-STI Awareness

April is Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Awareness Month, an annual observance to raise awareness of the impact of STIs and the importance of discussing sexual health with your healthcare provider. According to the CDC, there are 19 million new cases of STIs each year in the United States. Half of the new cases occur among young people ages 15-24. STIs do not discriminate; they affect people of all races, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation.

It is extremely important to know your status, especially if you are sexually active. Most STIs have no signs or symptoms. STIs that are left untreated can lead to serious long-term health consequences like infertility. It is important to talk to your partner openly and honestly about STIs. The more you know about STIs the more you can do to protect yourself.

Common types of STIs

Curable:

- * Gonorrhea - a bacterial infection of the genitals, anus or throat.*+
- * Chlamydia - a bacterial infection of the genitals, anus, or throat (most commonly reported STI in the US). *+
- * Syphilis - spread from person to person through direct contact with a syphilis sore.

Incurable:

- * HIV/AIDS - a viral infection transmitted through direct contact with blood, semen, and vaginal secretions +
 - * Herpes - a viral infection that is spread from skin to skin contact
 - * Hepatitis B - a viral infection transmitted through blood or body fluids that contain blood. +
 - * HPV - a viral infection that infects the genitals, mouth and throat. Can cause genital warts and cervical cancer +
 - *If left untreated it can impact a woman’s ability to have children.
- +Spread during vaginal, anal or oral sex.

Protection:

Condoms when use correctly and consistently is one of the best ways to protect oneself from contracting a STI.

Testing:

A sexual health campaign, GYT: Get Yourself Tested seeks to make testing and talking about STIs a routine part of sexually active 15-25 year olds lives.

Visit <http://www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/test/> or <http://www.findstdtest.org/> to find a STI testing location near you.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Rabies in Humans

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that is typically present in the saliva of infected and clinically ill mammals and is transmitted through a bite to humans or other animals. The virus causes an acute, progressive inflammation of the brain and spinal cord. The early symptoms of rabies in people are similar to that of many other illnesses, including fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, increase in saliva, difficulty swallowing, and fear of water. Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms.

Rabies is found naturally in New Jersey, occurring primarily in bats and skunks, although other animals are also found rabid each year, including domestic species such as dogs, cats, horses, and cattle. Contamination of open wounds or mucous membranes with saliva or nervous tissue from a rabid animal could potentially constitute an exposure. The incubation period in humans is usually several weeks to months, but ranges from days to years. Remember, while rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms of the disease have developed; prompt medical intervention can prevent rabies in humans, if received as soon as possible after the bite occurs (or possible bite when dealing with bats).

Preventing exposure to animals with rabies is always the best way to prevent rabies. Do not handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. Keeping all pets vaccinations current to protect your family and pets. If bitten by animal or if infectious material (such as saliva) gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound, wash the affected area thoroughly and seek medical attention immediately. Rabies in both animals and humans in New Jersey is reportable to the in New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

For more information visit:

<http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/rabies/index.php>

FINAL FREE RABIES CLINIC FOR DOGS & CATS

THURSDAY, APRIL 28TH - 6 TO 7 P.M.

At the Department of Health
73 South Van Brunt Street

Licensing required if not already licensed for 2012

(Late fee applicable on all renewals)

Are you prepared for a medical emergency?

For emergency preparedness purposes, we have all been told to make sure we have adequate drinking water, extra batteries and non-perishable food items on hand. But what if you become incapacitated and cannot speak for yourself? How will you let emergency service personnel know what medications you are taking? Who to contact? Do you have allergies? Do you want CPR? It is just as important to plan for a medical emergency as it is for a natural or manmade disaster.

To prepare for an emergent situation, you should keep a list of your health information with you at all times. You should have:

1. Your Health Insurance Provider.
2. Your physicians name.
3. A list of medications you are taking, including dosage and frequency.

4. Any allergies you may have.
5. An emergency contact name and phone number.
6. Do you have a living will or a DNR (Do not resuscitate).

It is so important to keep this information in your wallet with your personal identification information so you can be properly assisted in your time of need should you be unable to participate in your care.

RWJ Hamilton Hospital has information cards that are designed to fit in your wallet. Go to www.rwjhamilton.org/top5 to print out a card.

REMEMBER, AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE

Common Food Safety Critical Mistakes

Many of us make the assumption that food safety is something we should only be concerned about when eating at our favorite restaurants. According to the CDC, 1 of 6 people gets sick from eating contaminated food, which is roughly 48 million people. Although the majority of these illnesses happen due to poor food handling practices outside the home, there is still a large amount of food-borne illnesses that have resulted from mistakes in food handling at home. Sometimes these are simple mistakes that can result in serious consequences – even death.

Here are some common food safety mistakes that have been proven to cause serious illness:

Mistake #1: Not washing your hands or not washing them correctly. Germs on your hands can contaminate the food that you are preparing.

Solution: Wash hands the right way — for 20 seconds with soap and warm running water before eating, handling or preparing food.

Mistake #2: Undercooking eggs, poultry, meat, or fish. Cooked food is safe only after it's been cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria.

Solution: Cook all poultry to 160°F, ground meats to 155°F, fresh meat to 145°F and fin fish to 145°F, and cook eggs until yolk or white is firm and use a food thermometer to take these temperatures.

Mistake #3: Letting food cool at room temperature before putting it in the fridge. Bacteria that can cause food-borne illness can grow in perishable foods within two hours unless you refrigerate them.

Solution: Refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours (or within 1 hour if the temperature is over 90°F).

Mistake #4: Eating raw cookie dough or making your own meringues (or other foods with uncooked eggs). Uncooked or “runny” eggs may contain Salmonella or other harmful bacteria.

Solution: Always cook eggs thoroughly. Avoid preparing foods that contain raw or undercooked eggs, or use pasteurized eggs.

Mistake #5: Tasting food to see if it's still good. You can't taste, smell or see bacteria that can cause food illness. Tasting only a tiny amount can cause serious illness.

Solution: When in doubt of the integrity of a food, it is better just to throw it out.

Mistake #6: Cutting vegetables on a cutting board where meat or poultry have been cut. Germs from the raw meat can spread to the vegetables.

Solution: Always separate meats from vegetables, and every time you use a cutting board, wash it thoroughly before using it again.

Mistake #7: Thawing food on the counter. Harmful germs can multiply extremely rapidly at room temperature.

Solution: Thaw food safely, either in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave.

Mistake #8: Not washing fruits or vegetables thoroughly before using them or eating them. Fruits and vegetables

may contain pesticides or other contaminants or germs from the harvesting process.

Solution: Wash all fruit and vegetables thoroughly.

Mistake #9: Putting meat, fish or poultry on the same plate after cooking it. Germs from the raw meat fish or poultry can spread to the cooked food.

Solution: Use a different plate and ALWAYS separate the area where raw food was from the area where you will be putting cooked food.

Mistake #10: Eating or preparing foods from dented or bulging cans. Dented or bulging cans can contain the harmful bacteria Botulism which can cause nerve problems or paralysis.

Solution: Do not eat or prepare foods from dented or bulging cans.

Preparing and cooking food is a basic necessity of our lives. It is also a huge responsibility that should not be taken lightly. One simple mistake can make a friend or a loved one very sick. So it is important that you make note of these common pitfalls in the food preparing and cooking process and try not to commit them. Bon Appétit.

Bacterial Meningitis

Meningitis is a disease caused by the inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. It may develop in response to a number of causes, usually bacteria or viruses, but can also be caused by physical injury, cancer or certain drugs. One of the leading causes of bacterial meningitis in children and young adults in the U.S. is the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*. Bacterial meningitis is usually more severe than viral meningitis and can have serious after-effects, such as brain damage, hearing loss, limb amputation or learning disabilities.

Transmission

Bacteria are spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (coughing, kissing). The bacteria are not spread by casual contact or just breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. Sometimes the bacteria that cause meningitis have spread to other people who have had close and/or prolonged contact with a patient with meningitis caused by *N. meningitidis*. People in the same household or daycare center or anyone with direct contact with a patient's oral secretions would be considered at increased risk of infection. Close contacts of a person with meningitis should receive antibiotics to prevent them from getting the disease.

Symptoms

Symptoms can appear quickly or over several days, typically within 3-7 days after exposure. Infants younger than one month old are at a higher risk for severe infection. They may appear slow or inactive, irritable, vomiting or feeding poorly. If you think you or someone else may have meningitis, see a physician as soon as possible.

Treatment

Bacterial meningitis can be treated with antibiotics. It is important to start early in the course of the disease. Appropriate antibiotic treatment should reduce the risk of dying from meningitis to below 15%, although the risk is higher among the elderly.

Prevention

Keeping up to date with recommended immunizations is the best defense. Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest and not coming into close contact with people who are sick, can also help. There are vaccines for three bacteria that can cause meningitis: *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)

Source: CDC

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Deborah L. Baldwin, CMR, Editor.