

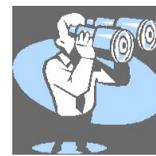


# The Englewood Health Watch

## El Observador de Salud de Englewood

a Newsletter Published by the Englewood Department of Health

Nelson Xavier Cruz, MS, MBA  
Director, Health Services / Health Officer



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#### Health Department Undergoing Renovations

The Englewood Health Department facility is getting a facelift that is expected to make things more convenient and safer for its clients and employees. The Vital Statistics and Licensing area is being completely redesigned to comply with Federal mandates for confidentiality, privacy, and security of information. Since this area is the portal of entry into the Health Department, the renovations will enhance the overall function and aesthetics of the department. The Department's current facility was built in the 1970s, and currently employs 13 people.

Health officials reported that the 73 South Van Brunt Street facility renovations to its front office and customer service area began on Thursday, April 16. Access to services will continue throughout the work via the Nursing area entrance. Vital Statistics and Licensing services and staff have been relocated to the Nursing area to serve the public during this period. The project was anticipated to last eight weeks, with completion slated for mid-June.

"The front office has been redesigned so that it will be easier for customers to walk in and get the services they need, and improve the work space for staff," the Director/Health Officer, Mr. Nelson Xavier Cruz, said. "We have one large counter with very limited space, and there is no privacy for interviewing customers in the reception area now. This redesign allows us to better serve our customers, and provides for better use of limited space. Also, as a part of the front office renovation," he said, "the vital statistics staff will be provided with workstations to improve workflow and processing of information, which will save time and money."

Although most normal operations will continue during this phase, Mr. Cruz requested patience through the necessary changes. Due to the construction, The Child Health Conference for May 26 and June 23 have been cancelled to ensure public safety.

Customers may call the Health Department at (201) 568-3450 to discuss service needs and/or visit our web site at [www.cityofenglewood.org/health.html](http://www.cityofenglewood.org/health.html) where certified copies of birth, death, marriage, civil union and domestic partnership records, the latest health advisories, and other information regarding our health services may be obtained.

#### Colorectal Cancer

##### *What is Colorectal Cancer?*

Also called colon cancer, it occurs in the colon or rectum. The colon is known as the large intestine or large bowel, and the rectum is the passageway that connects the colon and the anus. Most current statistics, from 2005, revealed that 72,007 men and 69,398 women were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, with 26,781 men and 27,259 women who died as a result.

It is the second leading cancer killer in the United States. Black people have the highest incidence rate for colorectal cancer, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native. Data also showed that Blacks were more likely to die of colorectal cancer than any other group, followed by Whites.

##### *Signs and Symptoms*

Usually in the early stages of the disease there are no symptoms. Symptoms vary depending on the size and location of the tumor. Affected individuals will experience a change in bowel habits: diarrhea or constipation, rectal bleeding, blood in the stool (bowel movement), abdominal discomfort such as cramps, gas or pain, feeling that the bowel does not empty completely, weakness, fatigue, unexplained weight loss.

##### *Risk Factors*

*Modifiable* factors include: lack of regular physical activity, overweight and obesity, low fruit and vegetable intake, low fiber and high fat diet, alcohol consumption, tobacco use. *Non-modifiable*: advanced age, inflammatory bowel disease, personal or family history, genetics.

##### *Who is at Risk?*

People aged 50 and older. A family history of colorectal polyps, colorectal cancer or inflammatory bowel disease.

##### *Prevention*

Get regular screening at 50 or older. Colorectal cancer usually starts as a polyp or a growth in the intestine. Screening tests can find polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy – to check for polyps in the rectum and the lower third of the colon. It is used in combination with fecal occult blood test.

Colonoscopy – similar to flexible sigmoidoscopy allows the physician to check the rectum and the entire colon.

Fecal Occult Blood Test – can be done at home. Stool samples are put on test cards and returned to the doctor or lab.

Double Contrast Barium Enema – X-rays of the colon after an enema is given with a liquid called barium.

##### **Time for a Picnic**

There is nothing like a good picnic with lots of good food and friends. The most important thing to remember is the safety of the food. It is important to always prepare and store the food safely. Following these few simple steps will help ensure a great picnic:

- \* As always, wash your hands and the surface area.
- \* Cook food in plenty of time to chill completely in the refrigerator or make sure to keep it hot.
- \* Have enough coolers with ice or ice packs to store perishable foods. Keep food at 41° F.
- \* Don't put the cooler in the trunk of the car; put it in the air conditioned car.
- \* Keep the cooler in the shade and keep the lid closed.
- \* Put drinks in a separate cooler so the cooler containing the food won't constantly be opened.
- \* Make sure you have plenty of safe drinking water. Don't forget to bring water for cleaning and preparation.
- \* Pack raw meat, poultry or seafood on the bottom of the cooler to prevent them from dripping on other foods.
- \* Take-out food, such as fried chicken, should be eaten within two hours of pick up. When taking food off the grill, make sure to use a clean platter and not the one which held the raw meat.
- \* Don't leave perishable food out for more than two hours. Put the food back in the cooler as soon as you are done eating.
- \* Don't keep leftovers from the picnic. Most likely the food has been out more than two hours.

There is nothing more American than picnics with friends and family— so remember these few ideas to have a great picnic. For more information, contact the Environmental Health Division at 201-871-6510.

##### **The FAQ'S about Bed Bugs**

Bed bugs are a prevalent problem in city environments and are a large nuisance to those experiencing an infestation. Although their bites are annoying, they have not been linked to any diseases. These small bugs bite by piercing the skin and sucking the blood of the host. They live primarily in furniture, bedding, beds and laundry, and are easily spread through clothing and luggage.

*How do I identify bed bugs?* Bed bugs are dark brown and wingless insects that are oval in length and flat. When fed, they appear larger and their color changes to a dull red. Their average size is 1/3 to 3/8 inches long. The eggs of bed bugs are small and white, and nymphs (or immature bed bugs) are nearly colorless but resemble adults in shape.

*Where do they live?* Bed bugs thrive in warm temperatures with a dependable food source. Environmental factors and food availability influence the rate at which bed bugs grow and reproduce. The hiding places of the bed bugs are evident by the noticeable black and brown spots of their droppings. Eggs, egg shells, and molted skin of nymphs are also seen near their resting places. There may be a distinctive odor in rooms where bed bugs are numerous. When an infestation is new, the bed bugs are only found in the seams, tufts and folds of the mattresses and covers. As the infestation grows, they spread to the framework of the bed. If allowed to multiply, they colonize behind the baseboard, the window and door casings, behind picture frames, in furniture, loosened wallpaper, and cracks in plaster.

*How can I tell if I've been bitten?* Bed bugs feed mostly at night by piercing the skin of sleeping humans, but will feed during the day in dimly-lit rooms if they are very hungry. These bugs inject fluids into the human's skin to enable the blood to flow easily as they feed. The bite sites become irritated from the fluid, causing an elongated, spindle-shaped bump on the skin of the host. These bumps become itchy. A bed bug becomes engorged with blood in 3 to 5 minutes and will digest the meal for several days before feeding again.

*How do I control bed bugs?* First, locate their hiding places and vacuum and remove them by hand, with rubber gloves. Be sure to throw the vacuum bag in an outdoor garbage can after you've finished each vacuuming treatment. Insecticide may be needed to eliminate the problem. Find a local exterminator that works with bed bug problems, or find an approved insecticide for use in a house to control bed bugs. Do not use insecticide on mattresses unless the product gives directions to do so. Spray and dust bed frames, bed springs, and other hiding places around the room. Fix cracked plaster in the walls and ceilings and repair peeling wall paper which serve as hiding places for bed bugs as well. Plastic mattress covers may help prevent bed bug infestations, and are useful when utilized in addition to chemical and mechanical treatment to fight a current infestation.

Chemical treatment may not yield immediate results, so a second treatment two weeks later is necessary to kill just-hatching nymphs. In a heavily infested area, it is strongly recommended to get a commercial exterminating service for treatment.

It is important to treat bed bugs at the first sign of their presence. If uncontrolled, they can spread room to room and apartment to apartment. Apartment complexes should not treat them on their own; they should have an exterminator come in to treat the problem.

### **Annual School Audits: Immunization Records**

State laws require that children be immunized if they attend a childcare facility and when they enter school. Immunization records of children entering school are reviewed each fall. In addition, states conduct studies to validate reports from schools. Results from these studies are used to ensure high vaccination levels in the population of children enrolled in schools. Periodic assessments also are conducted in childcare facilities.

A summary of the results of coverage in children schools, childcare centers and Head Start programs is reported to the National Immunization Program (NIP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In many states, audits are performed to validate the school

entry survey. Consequently, school entry surveys should reflect an accurate picture of the immunization levels of children entering school. The levels reported are high (usually greater than 95%) but do not indicate whether the children received vaccines at the most appropriate time. Similar surveys are conducted in licensed day care centers and among children who are enrolled in the Head Start Program.

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/stats-surv/schoolsurv/default.htm>

For additional information, please contact the Public Health Nurse at 201-871-6511.

### **Swine Flu Outbreak**

*What is Swine Influenza?*

It is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by a type of influenza A/H1N1. Swine influenza does not normally infect humans, but sporadic human infections have occurred. From December 2005 through February 2009, 12 cases of human infections have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

*How Does Swine Influenza Spread?*

It is transmitted directly from pigs to people in close proximity to infected pigs in barns and livestock exhibits. Human-to-human transmission occurs through coughing and sneezing, or touching surfaces contaminated with the viruses and then touching their mouth or nose. You CANNOT get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products.

*Signs and Symptoms*

Symptoms are similar to those of regular seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, and lack of appetite, sneezing, coughing, running nose, sore throat, chills, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. It may cause worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease. It can develop into a severe illness with pneumonia, respiratory failure, and death.

*Recommendations*

According to the CDC, to stay healthy you should:

- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Good hand hygiene. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are effective
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- If you get sick, STAY HOME from work or school and limit contact with others
- Get plenty of fluids
- Get plenty of rest

Additional measures that can limit transmission include home quarantine of confirmed or probable cases, reduction of unnecessary social contacts, reduce hugging or kissing, avoid crowded settings. When crowded settings or close contact with others cannot be avoided, the use of face masks or respirators in affected areas is advised. Used correctly they can help prevent some exposures.

For more information, please contact the Public Health Nurse, Grace Morales, or Epidemiologist, Suzie Jean-Louis, of the Englewood Health Department at 201-568-3450.