

# 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 2008 Topics

- National Influenza Vaccination Week: Dec. 8 - 14, 2008
- Be Food Safe During the Holiday Season
- Blood Lead Levels and Wild Game Consumption
- Rabies Vaccine Supply Update
- Importance of Disease Surveillance



### **National Influenza Vaccination Week: Dec. 8 - 14, 2008**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that the third annual National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) will be held Dec. 8 through Dec. 14, 2008. The purpose of NIVW is to raise awareness of the seriousness of influenza and the importance of annual vaccination and to remind people that if you have not yet been vaccinated, it is not too late.

Television and radio public service announcements will be aired during the month of November through NIVW to promote influenza vaccination and to highlight the new ACIP recommendations to vaccinate all children 6 months through 18 years. These public service announcements can be viewed on the health department's website at [www.ndflu.com/News/NewsReleases.aspx](http://www.ndflu.com/News/NewsReleases.aspx).

Currently, influenza activity in the state is low and typically does not peak until January or later. As of Nov. 8, 2008, four lab-identified influenza cases have been reported to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH). It is estimated that more than 146 million doses of flu vaccine will be available for use in the U.S. during the 2008-2009 flu season. Therefore, there should be sufficient supply of vaccine this year, and anyone wanting to protect themselves and others from influenza should get vaccinated.

For more information about National Influenza Vaccination Week and influenza in North Dakota or to order educational materials, visit the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) influenza website at [www.ndflu.com](http://www.ndflu.com).



### **Be Food Safe During the Holiday Season**

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



### **Blood Lead Levels and Wild Game Consumption**

The North Dakota Department of Health is recommending that pregnant women and children younger than 6 not consume wild game harvested using lead bullets. This recommendation was made after a study showed that people who eat wild game harvested with lead bullets have higher blood lead levels than those who do not consume game.

The study, conducted in May of this year by the CDC and the NDDoH, looked at lead exposure from the consumption of wild game. Seven hundred forty-two participants completed surveys and had blood drawn to determine exposures and blood lead levels. Seven hundred thirty-six individuals were included in the final analysis.

Multivariate analysis revealed a significant association with wild game consumption and increased blood lead levels. Persons reporting eating wild game had an average blood lead level of 0.3ug/dl higher than those who did not report consuming game. In addition, those who consumed wild game within the preceding 30 days also had higher blood lead levels than those who last consumed game more than 30 days prior to study participation.

Blood lead levels for study participants ranged from non-detectable to 9.82ug/dl. Although nobody participating in the study had blood lead levels greater than or equal to 10ug/dl, the level above which CDC recommends intervention, the increase in blood levels is important for people at higher risk of lead-associated complications, such as young children and pregnant women. More information is available at [www.ndhealth.gov/lead/venison](http://www.ndhealth.gov/lead/venison).



### **Rabies Vaccine Supply Update**

There are two suppliers of human rabies vaccine in the United States – Novartis (RabAvert) and Sanofi pasteur (IMOVAX). Because of limited supply, suppliers were temporarily only providing vaccine for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

However, as of Oct. 22, 2008, Novartis is able to supply RabAvert vaccine for pre-exposure prophylaxis for individuals at highest risk for rabies exposure. Rabies lab workers, veterinarians, veterinary staff, animal control personnel and wildlife workers are groups at highest risk. Sanofi (IMOVAX) vaccine is currently not available for pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Vaccine for PEP is available through both suppliers. Novartis is supplying RabAvert vaccine for post-exposure prophylaxis without supply restrictions. As a result, a password and public health approval is not required to order this vaccine. To obtain Sanofi pastuer IMOVAX vaccine, providers must first consult with the NDDoH, Division of Disease Control to assess rabies exposure. Once it is determined that PEP is required, a pass-code will be provided to place an order.

Until vaccine supply levels are restored, providers are encouraged to continue to consult with local or state public health departments to ensure appropriate use of PEP.

Additional information, along with the most recent updates can be found on the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/rabies/news/RabVaxupdate.html](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/news/RabVaxupdate.html). Additional updates regarding the rabies vaccine supply will be distributed through the North Dakota Health Alert Network.



## **Importance of Disease Surveillance**

Disease surveillance is a core public health function that is vital to the health of North Dakotans. New and emerging conditions – such as the threat of bioterrorism, SARS, antibiotic-resistant organisms, West Nile virus and the introduction of other arboviral encephalitis – illustrate the importance of public health surveillance.

Disease surveillance depends upon timely and accurate reporting of communicable diseases. Surveillance data is used to monitor variations and outbreaks, identify disease risk factors, and recommend and assess disease intervention and prevention strategies. Delay or failure to report may prevent control measures from being implemented in time and may contribute to secondary transmission of disease.

Advances in technology create the potential to significantly improve and increase timely disease reporting and surveillance. Electronic laboratory and disease reporting made capable by electronic disease surveillance systems offers the potential to greatly enhance surveillance efforts. A new system, called Maven, will be made available to North Dakota laboratories and reporting facilities in the near future.

In North Dakota, more than 60 diseases are reportable by law to the NDDoH. An updated list of reportable conditions can be found at [www.ndhealth.gov/Disease/Disease%20Reporting/Report.htm](http://www.ndhealth.gov/Disease/Disease%20Reporting/Report.htm).

*Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include Michelle Feist, Julie Wagendorf, Kirby Kruger, Tracy Miller, and Sarah Weninger. 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 email at [sweninger@nd.gov](mailto:sweninger@nd.gov).*

*The pump handle picture in the title was obtained from the website [www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html](http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html).*



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