

# Public Health Newsletter

## Spring Finally Arrives!

After a long and bitter cold winter with more snow than what most of us ever want to see again, spring is finally here! Although winter brought many health issues—H1N1 flu, seasonal flu, power outages and bitter cold temperatures—spring and summer also can bring health concerns that we need to keep in mind. In this issue, we will present some health concerns of the good old days of summer!

### Tips for Food Safety and Picnics

Submitted by Stanley Mills, Registered Sanitarian  
Cabell-Huntington Health Department

Warm weather brings out the backyard chefs and the smell of delicious food on the grill -- or picnics in the park. But food-borne illness can ruin a truly great cookout or picnic worse than a rainstorm in the forecast. How do you make sure you're grilling or picnicking safely?

Food-borne illness is very common in the summer because bacteria multiply rapidly when food is between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. And there are other factors that contribute to summertime food poisoning, such as the mistaken belief that grilling will kill off the bacteria.



### General Safe Grilling Tips

- When grilling, take out only what you will need immediately -- don't leave food out unnecessarily either before or after it is cooked.
- Never reuse marinades that have touched raw meat.
- Bring a fresh platter or clean foil pan to place cooked meat in -- not the one you used to bring the raw meat out to the grill.
- A cooler can be used to keep foods hot -- just line it with a towel and keep it closed.

**After touching raw meat, wash hands or use antibacterial wipes on your hands!!!!**

Along with  
Health Departments of:

- Boone County
- Cabell-Huntington
- Jackson County
- Lincoln County
- Logan County
- Mingo County
- Putnam County
- Wayne County

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**Make sure that you wash the outside of all fruits and vegetables before serving when on a picnic or at home. Even though you may peel the fruit or vegetable before eating, the knife can introduce bacteria from the outside of the skin into the fruit or vegetable and cause illnesses if not washed.**



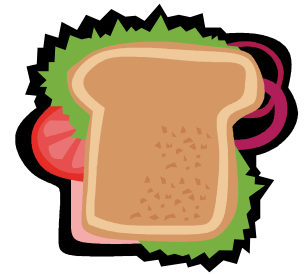
## Minimize the Risk of Food-borne Illnesses at Cookouts and Picnics

Safe cookouts and picnics start with planning, whether the meal is at home or away from home. But eating away from home takes a little more planning. The following cooler-packing tips and cleanup supplies help fight the spread of harmful bacteria:

- If grilling at a park or campsite, pack raw meat in the bottom of the cooler where it will stay colder.
- Thoroughly chill any foods cooked ahead of time, such as cold fried chicken -- just because it's cooked doesn't mean bacteria won't grow in it.
- Before cooking and/or eating, wash hands or use antibacterial wipes on your hands.

- When grilling or eating a picnic at a park, take along garbage bags, baby wipes or disinfecting wipes (or damp washcloths in plastic bags) and keep paper towels close at hand -- keeping your work area clean also reduces the risk of harmful bacteria.
- Keep drinks in a separate cooler.
- Keep raw meats in a separate cooler.
- Make sure coolers stay cool: keep them inside the car or place them in the shade instead of in direct sunlight.
- Pack condiments like ketchup, mustard and mayo in small containers.

Keep foods made with mayonnaise cold as much as possible -- perhaps even stick them in the freezer for a while before packing them in the cooler.



## You and Food-borne Illness

Knowing about illnesses that can be spread through contaminated food is very important. Food-borne illnesses are diseases that can be caused by germs such as bacteria and viruses that are found in the food itself or that come from the hands of the person preparing the food.

Bacteria and viruses are the most common germs that can make food unsafe. Some of the most common bacterial infections include Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli. It usually takes from 1-2 weeks to get over these bacterial infections, which can make people very sick and may require antibiotics to recover.

Salmonella can contaminate many different food, but is most often

found in raw chicken and eggs or in food made with these ingredients. Symptoms of salmonella infection include diarrhea and vomiting. The incubation period for salmonella is 12-36 hours.

**Campylobacter** germs can also infect raw chicken. Unpasteurized milk and raw clams can also cause this illness. Symptoms include fever, headache, nausea, diarrhea and abdominal pain. The incubation period is usually 2-5 days.

**E. coli infections** are usually spread by water or food that is contaminated by human waste. Eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water or by eating food washed in contaminated water are the usual sources of this illness. Ground beef and

even apple cider are some of the most common sources. Inadequate hand washing by the person preparing the food is another source. Symptoms include severe diarrhea and the incubation period is usually 12-60 hours.

**Viral infections** from food include Hepatitis A. This virus can be spread by contaminated food such as shellfish. It can also be spread from person to person by hands and foods that are eaten uncooked.

Food-borne illnesses can only be confirmed by collecting specimens from the person who is ill when they go to the doctor or emergency room. Local health departments follow up on all reports of food-borne illnesses.

## H1N1 Influenza Update

### Information from West Virginia Epi-Log; Fourth Quarter 2009

The 2009-2010 H1N1 pandemic influenza vaccination campaign began on October 5, 2009. The WV Bureau of Public Health, private providers and local health departments partnered to assure that anyone seeking the H1N1 influenza vaccination had easy access to be protected. To date, nearly 650,000 doses of 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine have been ordered through the WV Bureau of Public Health and distributed to over 600 providers in WV. Local health departments received 57% of the doses and played a key role in vaccine distribution by not only vaccinating the community, but transferring over 180,000 doses of H1N1 from their inventories to providers within their community. As of February 6, 2010, more than 320,000 H1N1 vaccinations have been reported into the WVSIS program.

The current campaign is still ongoing, as influenza season persists through late spring and active protection through immunization is still recommended. You may contact your local health department, participating health care provider or pharmacy for a H1N1 vaccine if you have not already received the H1N1 vaccination.

### NOTES FROM DIRECTOR OF CDC

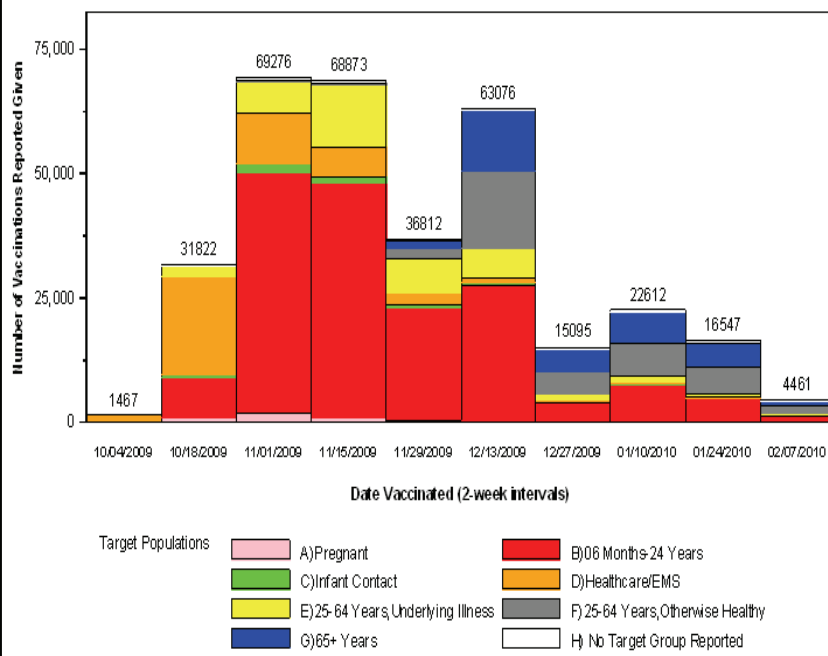
Thomas R. Frieden, M.D. M.P.H.

“Since the beginning of the New Year, flu activity has been relatively low, with the vast majority of circulating influenza viruses continuing to be 2009 H1N1.

The 2009 H1N1 vaccination initiative has been a remarkable success. Approximately 37% of children age 18 years old and younger and 23% of adults over 18 years of age have been vaccinated. Since mid-January, there has been a decline in public interest in 2009 H1N1 vaccination. As supply has surpassed demand, the number of doses ordered and shipped has declined, from 11.6 million during the first week of January, to 68,000 during the last week of February. Claims for H1N1 vaccine administration in private providers’ offices increased after the winter holidays, peaked in mid-January, and have subsequently declined.

Despite current lower levels of disease and increased vaccination coverage, we encourage you to remain vigilant to detect changes in influenza activity. Vaccine should continue to be made available through private settings and local health departments.”

WV 2009-10 H1N1 Vaccination Campaign: Reported Doses Administered by Date Given and Population Group





## Dead Bird

## Reporting

Dead Birds serve as an indicator that WNV is present in the community. If a dead bird with WNV is found in the county, the health department will inform people in the county and tell them how to protect themselves.

If you see a dead bird, make note where you saw it. Call the health department. If the health department does not need the bird for testing, they will ask you to place it in the garbage. The health department may ask you to place the bird in a plastic bag. Never handle birds without gloves. The health department maintains a log of the number, location and date of dead birds. This log is reported weekly to the state epidemiology program. If a cluster is noted, a sample will be taken from the birds and sent to determine if WNV is present.

## ILLNESSES CAUSED BY MOSQUITOES

### West Nile Virus

Can cause serious illness in people due to inflammation in the brain, spinal cord and nerves. Since 1999, WNV has been present in the US. WNV is carried by mosquitoes which have bitten WNV-infected birds. An infected mosquito can spread WNV to birds, humans, horses and other animals. WNV cannot be spread from one person to another.

Most people who get West Nile virus infection never have any symptoms at all. A few people have mild symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches. These people recover without any treatment. Very few people with WNV are sick enough to go to the hospital. People over the age of 50 are most at risk as well as people who go out-of-doors in summer without taking precautions against mosquitoes.

### La Crosse Encephalitis

Encephalitis means "inflammation of the brain." A virus causes La Crosse and

it spreads through the bite of infected mosquitoes. WV reports around 15-50 cases of La Crosse per year. La Crosse is spread by the tree hole mosquito and Asian tiger mosquito. These mosquitoes live in the woods and lays eggs only in tree holes and containers that hold water. Tires, cans, bottles, buckets, tire swings, toys and any other containers can allow the treehole mosquito to breed near your home.

Children under the age of 16 are most at risk. Most people who have La Crosse do not get sick. Some people have headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness and confusion. In severe cases, people may have seizures or can go into a coma. La Crosse is rarely fatal.

### Prevent Mosquito Breeding

Remove standing water to get rid of mosquitoes:

- Get rid of old tires and trash around your home.
- Punch holes in the bottoms of trash barrels so they don't hold water.

-At least once or twice a week, clean and empty water from flowerpots, birdbaths, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels and cans.

-Check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out so they can drain properly.

-Maintain swimming pools or drain them completely.

### Prevent Mosquito Bites

Protect your family by preventing mosquito bites:

-Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus (follow package directions carefully) on bare skin.

-Apply insect repellent sparingly to children and wash them with soap and water when they come indoors. Avoid application to the hands and face of young children.

-Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.

-Avoid activities when mosquitoes are active.

-Make sure doors and screens are bug tight.

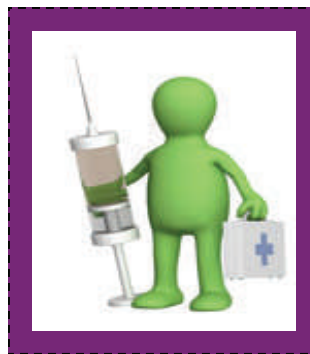
## TETANUS BOOSTERS NEEDED FOR SUMMER SAFETY

Tetanus develops from a spore forming bacteria which can enter the skin by way of an animal bite, a surgical incision, a burn, a rusty nail, sores, or by means of any other object that is contaminated by the tetanus bacteria and punctures the skin. Any break in the protective layer of your skin could allow the tetanus toxin to enter. This bacteria is commonly found in cultivated soil, animal excrement, house dust and in the human colon. The incubation period varies from 3-21 days with an average of about a week. Tetanus is not spread from person to person.

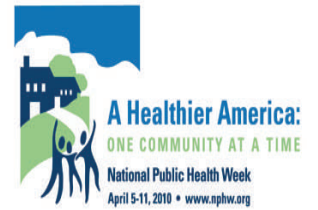
The two major ways of preventing tetanus are immunization and wound care and it is important to remember that even a tiny scratch or puncture wound can possibly cause tetanus.

Tetanus immunizations are given as children with boosters to children given at the ages of 11-12. Adults should receive tetanus boosters every ten years. If you would have a dirty wound prior to the ten years, another tetanus immunization would be required if more than five years have passed. The tetanus booster now contains a booster for pertussis as well. This com-

bined tetanus/pertussis booster is recommended once for persons age 10-64 and then you would receive the plain tetanus booster after that. If you are over the age of 65, you would not need the pertussis component and would receive plain tetanus.



## Public Health Week



The 2010 theme is “A Healthier America: One Community at a Time.”

We are asking everyone to champion public health by making health changes big and small in their families, individual neighborhoods, workplaces and schools.

These changes could be as simple as choosing fruits and vegetables instead of sugary sweets at the grocery store, plant a fruit tree in your backyard, quit smoking, and create a clean and safe recreation area in your community.

Public Health is up to everyone in our community.

Thank You!!!

## CELEBRATE PUBLIC HEALTH EVERY MONTH



APRIL

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Autism Spectrum Disorders are a group of developmental disabilities that cause significant social, communication or behavioral challenges. CDC estimates that an average of 1 in 110 children in US have ASD or Autism.



MAY

HEPATITIS AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that West Virginia is one of the states with the highest rates of Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C? Stop by your health department to learn the differences between A, B, and C and how you can protect yourself!



JUNE

SAFETY MONTH

It is up to every one in the community to make sure we have a safe environment for all of our citizens. Practice safety measures every day in your personal life and community!

# Alvin and the Chipmunks - The Squeakquel



## Picnic & Family Movie Night in the Park

Ravenswood Riverfront Park

Saturday, April 24th

Dinner at 6:00 pm

Movie at Dark

Bring your family, your lawn chair and your

favorite dessert!

## Volunteer Appreciation Month

RSVP to (304) 372-2634 or

Wendy.M.Crawford@wv.gov