



Public Health



FOCUS

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM SOMERSET COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Volume 1, Issue 3

July/August 2013

Summer Time Food Safety



It's summer time, and that means it's time to go outside and enjoy the weather!

The return of warmer temperatures brings thoughts of freedom, relaxation, exploration, and being closer to nature. Whether you're relaxing in the backyard, turning up your garden, enjoying the pool, or exploring the great outdoors, here are some ways to help keep you and your family healthy this spring and summer.

Nothing says summer like the smoky flavor of foods cooked out on the grill. When grilling, use a meat thermometer to ensure that you cook meat and poultry thoroughly. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F (165°F for poultry). Also, put cooked meat on a clean platter, rather than back on the one that held the raw meat, to avoid cross-contamination.

Whether you're cooking out in the backyard or on a picnic, always keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Refrigerate raw and cooked meat and poultry within 2 hours after purchase (1 hour if temperatures exceed 90°F). Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within 2 hours after cooking. Refrigerators should be set to maintain a temperature of 40°F or below. When you're finished eating, refrigerate leftovers promptly.

The most common foodborne infections from the 2011 Estimates of Foodborne Illness and from those tracked by FoodNet* include those caused by:

Campylobacter: A bacterial pathogen that causes fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. It is the most commonly identified bacterial cause of diarrheal illness in the world. These bacteria live in the intestines of healthy birds, and most raw poultry meat has Campylobacter on it. Eating undercooked chicken, or other food that has been contaminated with juices dripping from raw chicken is the most frequent source of this infection.

Clostridium perfringens: (*C. perfringens*) A spore-forming bacterium that is found in many environmental sources as well as in the intestines of humans and animals. *C. perfringens* is commonly found on raw meat and poultry. It can survive in conditions with very little or no oxygen. *C. perfringens* produces a toxin that causes illness.

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Summer Time Food Safety...continued

Escherichia coli (abbreviated as *E. coli*): These are a large and diverse group of bacteria. Although most strains of *E. coli* are harmless, others can make you sick. Some kinds of *E. coli* can cause diarrhea, while others cause urinary tract infections, respiratory illness and pneumonia, and other illnesses. Some kinds of *E. coli* cause disease by making a toxin called Shiga toxin. The bacteria that make these toxins are called “Shiga toxin-producing” *E. coli*, or STEC for short.

Infections start when you swallow STEC—in other words, when you get tiny (usually invisible) amounts of human or animal feces in your mouth. Unfortunately, this happens more often than we would like to think about. Exposures that result in illness include consumption of contaminated food, consumption of unpasteurized (raw) milk consumption of water that has not been disinfected, contact with cattle, or contact with the feces of infected people.

Some foods are considered to carry such a high risk of infection with *E. coli* O157 or another germ that health officials recommend that people avoid them completely. These foods include unpasteurized (raw) milk, unpasteurized apple cider, and soft cheeses made from raw milk.

Norovirus is an extremely common cause of foodborne illness, though it is rarely diagnosed, because the laboratory test is not widely available. It causes an acute gastrointestinal illness, usually with more vomiting than diarrhea, that generally resolves within three days. Unlike many foodborne pathogens that have animal reservoirs, norovirus spreads primarily from one infected person to another, often through contaminated food, water, or environmental surfaces. Infected kitchen workers can contaminate a salad or sandwich as they prepare it, if they have the virus on their hands. Sewage discharge into coastal growing waters have contaminated oysters before they are harvested.

Salmonella is a bacterium that is widespread in the intestines of birds, reptiles and mammals. It can spread to humans via a variety of different foods of animal origin. The illness it causes, salmonellosis, typically includes fever, diarrhea and abdominal cramps. In persons with poor underlying health or weakened immune systems, it can invade the bloodstream and cause life-threatening infections.

Because foods of animal origin may be contaminated with *Salmonella*, people should not eat raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, or meat. Raw eggs may be unrecognized in some foods, such as homemade Hollandaise sauce, Caesar and other homemade salad dressings, tiramisu, homemade ice cream, homemade mayonnaise, cookie dough, and frostings. Poultry and meat, including hamburgers, should be well-cooked, not pink in the middle. Persons also should not consume raw or unpasteurized milk or other dairy products. Produce should be thoroughly washed.

The **Shigella** germ is actually a family of bacteria that can cause diarrhea in humans. They are microscopic living creatures that can pass from person to person. Most people who are infected with *Shigella* develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps starting a day or two after they are exposed to the bacteria. The diarrhea is often bloody. Shigellosis usually resolves in 5 to 7 days. Persons with shigellosis in the United States rarely require hospitalization. A severe infection with high fever may be associated with seizures in children less than 2 years old.

* *The Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet) is the principal foodborne disease component of CDC's Emerging Infections Program (EIP).*

For downloadable tips, visit FightBAC.org “Safe Food Handling: Seven Super Steps to Safe Food In the Summer” - <http://bit.ly/g8NKnU>



AUGUST

National Immunization Awareness Month

National Immunization Awareness Month highlights the need for improving national immunization coverage levels and encourages all people to protect their health by being immunized against infectious diseases.

National Immunization Awareness Month presents a great opportunity to educate county residents on the importance of disease control and prevention through immunization.



Vaccine-preventable disease levels are at or near record lows. Many adults remain under-immunized, thus missing opportunities to protect themselves against diseases such as hepatitis B, seasonal

influenza, and pneumococcal disease.

Although essential for everyone vaccines are even more important for people with chronic health conditions. An underlying health condition can make a person more susceptible to contracting a disease or have a more serious outcome if they do contract a disease.

Unless we can eliminate the diseases, it is important to keep immunizing. Even if there are only a few cases of a disease today, if we take away the protection given by vaccination, more and more people will be infected and will spread disease to others. Soon we will undo the progress we have made over the years.

For more information visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

Psoriasis Awareness Month

Psoriasis Q & A

Q: Is Psoriasis just a skin condition?

A: It's a chronic disease that activates white blood cells, which causes inflammation and rapid skin cell growth. This produces excess skin cells, which pile up and form lesions.

Q: Is there a cure?

A: There is no cure for Psoriasis, but there are a number of treatment options.

Q: Can Psoriasis affect all parts of the body?

A: It can develop anywhere. The most common areas are the scalp, knees, elbows and torso; however, it may also appear on the nails, palms, soles, genitals, and everywhere and very infrequently, on the face.

Q: What causes Psoriasis:

A: The exact cause is unknown, but researchers agree that the immune system is mistakenly triggered, which causes inflammation and speeds up the growth of new skin cells and causes them to form in days versus weeks.

Q: Is Psoriasis Contagious:

A: No it is not

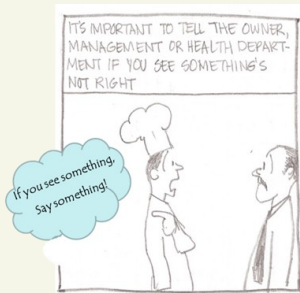
Q: Who can I talk to about my Psoriasis?

A: A dermatologist, a doctor who specializes in skin care. They receive three additional years of training to become an expert in treating skin problems.

Go to www.psoriasis.org to find out more.



Food Defense in Somerset County



Everyone loves to eat. Somerset County is fortunate to have a wide variety of food types available, and assuring safe food is a primary public health task for Somerset County Department of Health (SCDOH). SCDOH staff protects the food supply and prevents foodborne illness through licensing, inspecting and training programs for food establishments.

Food defense, along with traditional food safety, is an important part of protecting our food. Food safety includes means of protecting people from illness due to naturally occurring things in food – such as bacteria and viruses. Food defense contributes to a safer food supply by preventing intentional contamination of food and establishes plans to appropriately respond if such an event does occur.

SCDOH received a grant from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to create simple training materials to help local food establishments and their employees better understand some ways to keep food safe, and to know when to call the health department for assistance.

It is the responsibility of retail food establishments to assure the food they are serving is safe to eat, and the responsibility of the health department to help food workers know, understand and implement plans to reduce the risk of food contamination. Here, prevention is the key.

Using fun, colorful, easy-to-follow comics, SCDOH is teaching food employees the types of things to look out for, and helping people working with food to identify who to notify in case of unusual or suspicious events.

By providing food defense training and common sense approaches, Somerset County is helping to educate food workers in topics such as prevention, detection and response to food contamination. This program also strives to provide periodic reminders and encourage staff support of measures that further protect the food they prepare and serve.

Building on the successful “if you see something, say something” campaign, food managers and environmental health staff are encouraged to include the short-duration trainings and simple, informative materials during inspections, staff meetings, and similar teaching opportunities.

This project is ongoing, and SCDOH looks forward to sharing program successes with our many foodservice establishments and public health partners.



For more information contact

Somerset County Department of Health - 908-231-7155



Reducing Idling for Better Health

Ever observe a car or truck running its engine while parked? This is known as engine idling, a situation that can affect the health of people and the environment.

Of particular concern is the exhaust of vehicles with diesel engines. Diesel exhaust from excessive idling can affect human health. Diesel exhaust contains significant levels of particles, known as fine particulate matter or “soot”, which are so small that several thousand of them could fit on the period at the end of this sentence.

These fine particles pose a significant health risk because they can pass through the nose and throat and lodge in the lungs, causing lung damage and premature death.

Particulate matter is responsible for thousands of premature deaths across the nation every year.

The US Environmental Protection Agency determined that diesel exhaust is a likely human carcinogen and can contribute to other acute and chronic health conditions. People with existing heart or lung disease, asthma, bronchitis or other respiratory problems are most sensitive to the health effects of fine particles. The elderly and children are also at risk. Children are more susceptible to air pollution than healthy adults because their respiratory systems are still developing and they have a faster breathing rate.

While emissions from individual cars are relatively low, there are millions of diesel and gasoline vehicles travelling in and through New Jersey every day emitting thousands of tons of pollutants including particulate matter, oxides of nitrogen, air toxics and greenhouse gases.

Idling cars, trucks, school buses, public and private transportation buses, and off-road construction vehicles/equipment all contribute to the degradation of local air quality. Current New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) regulations limit engine idling for both diesel and gasoline vehicles to three minutes with limited exceptions.

Somerset County Department of Health inspectors (under an NJDEP grant) conduct routine surveillance and issue violations to those who do not follow the state’s protective anti-idling laws. Some of the benefits

of this program:

- Encourages idle reduction to protect the health of children and the community, as well as to improve air quality.
- Promotes idle reduction as a simple way to save money by saving fuel and reducing wear and tear on engines.

- Provides materials to help businesses, school districts, transportation managers, bus drivers, students and the public learn about air quality and diesel emissions.
- It helps make Somerset County more environmentally friendly or “green”

Unnecessary idling affects human health, pollutes the air, wastes fuel, and causes excess engine wear.

Fortunately, it's easy to implement practices that reduce idling. You can find out more by exploring the resources at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/stopthesoot>, by calling the New Jersey Bureau of Mobile Sources at 609-292-7953 or contacting Somerset County Department of Health CEHA program at 908-231-7155.





Petting Zoos, Fairs and Festivals

It's the time of year when lots of community events include the fun of interacting with farm and other animals. Exhibits such as petting zoos and agriculture fairs allow children of all ages to have the thrilling experience of coming face to face with animals. This interaction allows people to learn more about animals and helps to build an important human-animal bond.

While enjoying a visit with the animals, it is important to remember that animals sometimes carry germs that are harmful to humans. Farm animals including cows, sheep, pigs, chickens and goats can pass diseases to people. Farm animals are not like house pets and do not have places to rest or eat that are away from where they pass manure.

Unfortunately, many people become sick every year because of a visit to an animal exhibit. When people forget to wash their hands after petting an animal or bring food into an area where animals are being housed, they are at risk for becoming ill.

However, there are a few simple precautions that you can take to ensure a safe and healthy experience. If you are visiting an animal exhibit follow these easy guidelines:

Food and drinks:

- ◆ Keep food and drinks out of animal areas.
- ◆ Do not share your food with animals.
- ◆ Do not eat or drink raw (unpasteurized) dairy products.
- ◆ Visitors should not kiss or otherwise allow their mouths to come into contact with animals or their enclosures.

Children:

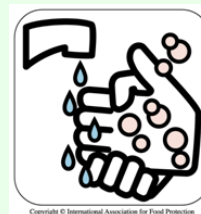
- ◆ Children younger than 5 years old need supervision
- ◆ Do not bring strollers, toys, pacifiers or baby bottles into the animal area.
- ◆ Never allow children to put their hands or objects (for example: toys or pacifiers) in their mouth while interacting with animals.
- ◆ Adults should carefully watch children who are visiting animals and help them wash their hands well with soap and water immediately after exiting the animal area.

Find out where hand-washing stations are located.

- ◆ Look for portable hand-washing stations with soap and water at the exit to the animal exhibit. Hand-washing facilities should also be available in the public rest rooms.
- ◆ Always wash your hands with soap and running water after petting animals or touching the animal cages/fences and items within the animal area such as buckets, feed and straw bedding.
- ◆ Also be sure to wash your hands with soap and water before eating or drinking.
- ◆ Avoid touching your face or mouth before you are able to wash your hands.

About Hand Sanitizers:

- ◆ Hand sanitizers may be better than nothing at all, but a good soap and water hand washing is advised. Just be sure to wash your hands with soap and water as soon as a sink is available.
- ◆ Hand sanitizers are most effective on clean, dry hands. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- ◆ Remember, alcohol based hand sanitizers are effective against many – but not all – harmful bacteria and viruses.
- ◆ Baby wipes and cleaning wipes ARE NOT the same as hand sanitizers.
- ◆ Before eating, hands should be scrubbed with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.



Hand washing is the single most important prevention step for reducing disease transmission.

With these tips and precautions in mind, you can have healthier interactions with our farm friends. Enjoy your time at the fair!

Want more information? Contact Somerset County Department of Health at 908-231-7155 or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/healthypets



Summer Safety Tips - Keeping the Kids Safe

The National Safe Kids Campaign estimates that every year, one in four kids ages 14 and younger will sustain an injury that requires medical attention. Forty percent of all injury-related emergency room visits and forty-two percent of all injury deaths happen between May and August, they report.

There is good news, we can keep kids free from about ninety percent of these accidents by educating ourselves and our kids on how to stay safe while still enjoying summer vacation.

Playground Safety

More than 205,000 kids visit emergency rooms with playground-related injuries every year, estimates the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Many of these injuries could be prevented with a little precaution and adult supervision:



Check the playground equipment before letting kids play on it. For example, surfaces that are too hot can cause burns, and loose ropes -- ropes that aren't secured on both ends -- can cause accidental strangulation.

The ground should be covered in a protective surface such as rubber mats, wood or rubber mulch or wood chips, never grass, asphalt or concrete. The right surface materials could reduce the risk of head injury or other severe injury in the event of a fall.

Also, be sure that your child's clothing is playground-friendly: Remove any strings, such as those on hoodies, only let them wear closed-toed shoes at play and avoid clothing that is loose enough to catch on equipment.

Safe Rides

Whether or not you wore a helmet while riding your bike as a child, it's a must for kids these days. Nearly 300,000 kids make a visit to the emergency room every year with bike-related injuries, some resulting in death or severe brain injury. Wearing a helmet can

help reduce your child's risk of making such a visit. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) sets standards for helmets, so be sure to choose one with its safety seal on it. Keeping kids safe on their bikes also means sending them out on bikes that fit. Checking that your child hasn't outgrown last year's ride is easy: Have your child straddle the top bar of his or her bike with both feet flat on the ground. A 1 to 3-inch gap between the bar and your child's body means it's still the correct size.

Hydration

Did you know that if you're feeling thirsty, you're already mildly dehydrated? Relying on thirst as a reminder to take a drink leaves you at risk for dehydration. So to be sure your kids are OK, look for these other signs, instead, which can indicate that a child is dehydrated:

- *Dizziness
- *Dry mouth
- *Cessation of sweating
- *Irritability
- *Lethargy
- *Fatigue
- *Dark yellow urine
- *Anuria (lack of urine) for 12 hours (or 6 hours for infants)
- *Tearless crying
- *Sunken eyes

Help kids avoid becoming dehydrated by reminding them to drink often throughout the day. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends drinking about every 20 minutes if kids are active in sports, about five ounces is right for a kid weighing 88 pounds.

Water and sports drinks (drinks that contain electrolytes) are the best options for hydrating kids -- avoid sodas, juice and other fruit drinks. The National Alliance for Youth Sports recommends choosing beverages that contain 100 mg (or more) of sodium and 28 mg (or more) of potassium in an 8-ounce serving (if choosing sports drinks, watch out for high sugar content).



Summer Safety Tips - Keeping the Kids Safe



Drowning is one of the leading causes of child deaths each year.

Keep your kids safe around water by following these simple guidelines:

- Never leave a child unattended around water.
- Teach your child to swim at an early age – always have an ADULT supervising.
- Flotation devices or inflatable toys are not substitutes for supervision.
- Don't mix alcohol and supervision of children near water.
- Enclose pools completely with a self-locking, self-closing fence, and don't leave furniture around that children can use to climb over the fence.
- Never leave toys in the pool – children may be tempted to reach for them later.
- Be sure that the adult watching your child knows how to swim, get emergency help and perform CPR.
- Keep rescue equipment (such as life preserver or shepherd's hook) and a telephone near the pool.
- Be sure to remove pool covers completely to reduce the risk of children getting caught underneath.
- Always drain and store in an upright position all plastic or blow-up wading pools after use.
- Secure the pool so that children cannot get back in after they are finished swimming.

Source: www.nj.gov/dcf

Upcoming Events:

Community Mobile Health Services

For more information about screenings and educational programs, please call 732-745-8600, x8903.

◆ **Diabetes Education: Children's Insulin Pump Group**

JULY 9, 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Donna Dziedzic, RN, MSN, CDE

732-745-8600, x8751. Call for more information.

◆ **Blood Pressure/Blood Sugar Screenings**

JULY 12, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen, New Brunswick

JULY 31, NOON – 1:30 PM:

SHIPS @ St. John's Episcopal Church, Somerville

◆ **Blood Pressure/Blood Sugar & Cholesterol Screenings**

JULY 20, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

New Creation Apostolic Faith Church, Somerset

◆ **Osteoporosis Screening**

JULY 19, 10:30 AM – 11:45 AM

Quailbrook Senior Center, Somerset, Franklin

◆ **Free Eye, Blood Pressure and Foot Screenings**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

For those with diabetes who do not have insurance. Sponsored in conjunction with the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services. Call **732-745-8600, x6392, 6394** for more information.

Source: www.saintpetershcs.com/newsandevents/

Wishing You all a Safe & Enjoyable Summer!

Bulletin Board:

Free Family Fun!



SOMERSET COUNTY, NJ 4-H FAIR

August 7-8-9, 2013

North Branch Park, Milltown Road, Bridgewater, N.J.

*Do not forget to stop by the Somerset County
Department of Health's information booth*

We are here to Help!
FREE SERVICE:

Please contact the Health Department and inquire about Health Education programs/presentations available for your staff, community groups or members of your faith-based organizations.

We also provide relevant health Information/resources.

**** Our Community Education Programs are tailored to fit your needs. Programs can be conducted on site ****

239,000

New cases of prostate cancer in the U.S. in 2013

30,000

U.S. men will die from prostate cancer in 2013



People of all ages can protect their health with timely vaccination. Many people remain under-immunized, missing opportunities to protect themselves against diseases such as hepatitis B. Speak with your Physician Today!

Talk to your doctor, and get screened!

JUNE 1 - NOV 1: HURRICANE SEASON
Are You Prepared?



Build An Emergency Kit

<http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

Make A Family Communications Plan

<http://www.ready.gov/family-communications>

For Current Schedule of Basic Foodhandler Courses

Visit

<http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health/FoodPR.htm>

**LINEA EN ESPAÑOL
DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE
SALUD**
Llame al: 908-541-5798



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