



PUBLIC HEALTH Preparedness Update



DCHHS Investigating Cases of Crypto in Area Spray Parks

Dallas County Health and Human Services is investigating cases of Cryptosporidiosis, or "crypto", linked to area spray and water parks in Dallas County. DCHHS Environmental Health, Communicable Disease, and Public Health Preparedness divisions are working with municipalities and private operators to implement mitigation measures, such as hyperchlorination of pools, and public education to reduce the risk to the public's health.



"DCHHS is actively involved in the investigation of several cases of diarrheal illnesses that may be associated with spray parks in Dallas County," said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. "Our Environmental Health team is conducting site visits at the request of our municipal partners. Our epidemiologists are also conducting investigations of reported cases. Currently, there are no regulations specifically for stand-alone interactive water features."

DCHHS has met with area cities to discuss proper sanitation methods for spray parks to protect the health of residents. DCHHS has also distributed informational signs and flyers to area water

recreational facilities to better inform the public of precautions to avoid contracting crypto and other water-borne illnesses.

Crypto is a diarrheal illness caused by microscopic parasites called Cryptosporidium. Its symptoms include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (which can last 1-2 weeks). There have been 65 cases of crypto reported in Dallas County since June 2008.

"We are now seeing an increase in the number of crypto cases occurring in our county in comparison to the same time last year," said Dr. Wendy Chung, DCHHS Chief Epidemiologist. "We are currently investigating several outbreaks

of infections occurring from water facilities and are working to make certain that the appropriate precautions are being put into place."

DCHHS offers the following safeguards to prevent Recreational Water Illness:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- Don't swallow the pool water.
- Practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands.

Pool staff with diarrhea should not enter the pool, while experiencing symptoms, and for 2 weeks after resolution of diarrhea. If a suspected case of diarrheal illness is associated with your pools, consider initiation of hyperchlorination protocols outlined by the Centers for Disease Control. Pool operators are asked to report cases of diarrheal illness possibly linked to use of their recreational water facility to DCHHS.

Anyone experiencing symptoms should seek medical attention and report the information to DCHHS at (214) 819-2004.

DCHHS and City of Dallas Work Together on Preparedness

Over the past several months, the DCHHS Public Health Preparedness Division has been working with the City of Dallas Department of Environmental & Health Services (EHS) to enhance readiness efforts for certain types of public health emergencies. If a release of a biological agent were to occur in Dallas County, or in the event of a large infectious disease outbreak, it might become necessary to open a large number of mass dispensing clinics throughout the County. These clinics, known as PODs (Points of Dispensing), would provide antibiotics or vaccinations to our citizens in order to reduce the number of people becoming ill.

Of all of the potential POD sites identified within the County, over half of them are located in the City of Dallas and would require over 5,000 staff and volunteers to

operate. Training staff to open and operate a POD is a crucial element in planning and readiness. Dr. Madge Barnes, Medical Director of the City of Dallas Department of Environmental & Health Services, has been working closely with DCHHS to organize multiple training sessions for a variety of functions within a POD. To date, 187 City employees have completed training in eleven different classes, including classes on medication screening and dispensing, patient education, inventory management, administration and documentation, leadership, and support roles.

In order to give City employees an opportunity to practice what they have learned, a POD drill was facilitated on Tuesday, July 15, 2008 at P.C. Cobb Stadium. Employees who had already completed training operated the POD while

other EHS employees acted as patients. Ongoing collaboration between Dallas County and the City of Dallas in organizing staff trainings and exercises is a major factor in achieving an increased level of disaster awareness and readiness.

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DCHHS Asks Each One to Reach One during Triple Digit Temps

Weather forecasts continue to predict triple digit temperatures for Dallas County, continuing what is traditionally the hottest period of the year. The combination of daytime highs above 100 degrees, nighttime lows over 75, and high levels of humidity during extended periods of time places everyone at increased risk of heat-related illnesses, injuries and death. The elderly, the very young and persons with pre-existing health conditions are at higher risk for these heat-related illnesses.

DCHHS is asking for the community's help to ensure the safety of every resident of Dallas County. Start an "Each One Reach One" group in your community and check on your neighbors. This is especially important for elderly persons and those who live alone. Daily welfare checks can identify issues, such as lack of air conditioning, that can cause serious injury or even death. If you notice someone suddenly experiencing sudden high temperature (but less than 104 degrees), hot and flushed skin that might be clammy to the touch, muscle or stomach cramps, nausea and/or vomiting, headache, profuse sweating, rapid pulse, or dizziness, cool the person's body with fans, cool towels, or



sprays and give them plenty of water or sports drinks. **Seek Medical attention IMMEDIATELY if symptoms do not improve!**

DCHHS officials also urge the public to remember to **look before you leave** in order to avoid leaving a child in a car. **Remember to NEVER leave a child in a**

closed, parked car. In Texas, leaving a child in a car is not only dangerous, it's also illegal. According to Texas law, anyone who leaves a child younger than the age of 7 unsupervised in a motor vehicle faces a Class C misdemeanor. If the child is hurt, the person could be charged with child endangerment, a felony. DCHHS officials ask that if you see a child left unattended in a parked car, **to call 9-1-1 immediately and stay with the car until help arrives.**

So far this year, DCHHS has detected 116 cases of heat-related illnesses, and six possible heat-related deaths are under investigation. During 2007, The DCHHS Heat-Related Illness Surveillance Program received reports of 155 heat-related incidences; 130 cases of heat exhaustion, 12 cases of heat cramps, and 13 cases of heat stroke. There were no deaths related to heat reported in the County last year.

In 2006 there were 21 deaths; in 2005 there were no deaths; in 2004 there was 1 death; in 2001 there were 15 deaths, and in 1998 there were 35 deaths.

For more information on summer heat precautions, visit our website at www.dallascounty.org

Salmonella Investigation Now Linked to Jalapenos

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U. S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) have announced the strain of salmonella bacteria responsible for the nationwide outbreak of salmonellosis has been linked to jalapeno peppers collected from a produce importer/distributor in McAllen, Texas. The jalapenos are being recalled. Federal officials have determined that tomatoes, originally suspected as the source of the outbreak, are now safe to consume.

The peppers, which were grown in Mexico, were collected by FDA from the importer/distributor Agricola Zaragoza. This recall is limited to jalapenos from Agricola Zaragoza and does not apply to any other jalapenos on the market or to any other produce. The company is doing a voluntary recall of jalapenos it has shipped since June 30. Wholesalers, retailers, and other suppliers that have received the recalled peppers, are in-



structed to remove them from the market.

Salmonella saintpaul was detected in tests by a U.S. Food and Drug Administration laboratory in Denver. Authorities said it is the first detection of the outbreak strain in a food item since the outbreak was announced in early June. Previous detections of salmonella saintpaul were in lab testing of samples

from people who were ill.

Investigators have not yet determined where or how the jalapenos from Agricola Zaragoza were contaminated. The FDA is overseeing the recall.

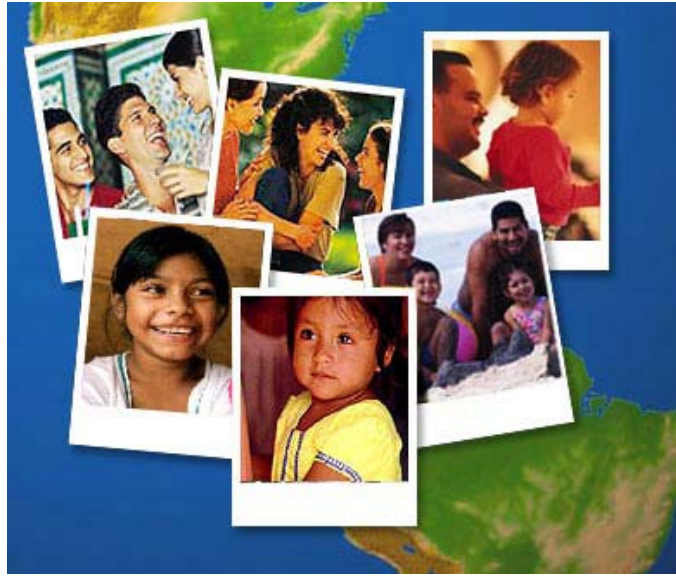
The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) advises consumers and food services personnel to thoroughly wash any fresh fruits and vegetables before eating or serving.

According to the CDC, some 1,251 cases of salmonellosis caused by the saintpaul strain have been confirmed in the United States and Canada, including 475 in Texas and 14 in Dallas County. Dallas County Health and Human Services continues to work with federal, state and local public health and food safety agencies from across the nation on this investigation. For up-to-date information on the investigation, visit either www.cdc.gov or www.fda.gov

HIV and AIDS on the Rise Among Hispanics in Dallas Metroplex

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is reporting that the number of Hispanics living with HIV/AIDS in the Dallas Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) rose from 1,497 cases in 2002 to 2,342 cases in 2006 representing a 57% increase over the four year time span. The Dallas EMA includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties. Even more troubling is the rapid rate of the progression of the disease from positive HIV status to a diagnosis of AIDS. Between 2002 and 2006, nearly 33% of Hispanics had both diagnoses within one month compared to 25% and 22% of diagnoses among blacks and whites respectively. This disparity was maintained at the one year mark, with 42% of Hispanics receiving an AIDS diagnosis within one year of initial HIV diagnosis. This is attributed to late diagnosis of the disease in the Hispanic community.

“Since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the rate of AIDS diagnosis for Hispanics/Latinos has continuously increased at disproportionate



rates,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. “The rate of progression of the disease among our own Hispanic community underscores the need for early testing. We encourage everyone to know your status by getting tested, getting treated, and getting educated about HIV/AIDS in order to stop the devastation to our communities,” Thompson continued.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hispan-

ics represented approximately 18% of the people living with HIV/AIDS nationwide. Of that 18% of Hispanic/Latinos living with HIV/AIDS, 23.6% were Hispanic/Latino female adults and adolescents, and 74.8% were Hispanic/Latino male adults and adolescents. Of the reported AIDS cases for Hispanic/Latino male adults and adolescents, male-to-male sexual contact was the highest transmission category at 43%. Injection drug use came in second at 32%. For Hispanic/Latino women adults and adolescents, the reported AIDS cases indicated that high-risk heterosexual contact (sexual intercourse) was the highest transmission category at 49%, followed by injection drug use at 36%.

As of May 2008, there are 5,775 Dallas County residents living with HIV, of these 874 are Hispanic. Approximately 7,666 Dallas County residents are currently living with AIDS; 1374 of these persons Hispanic. January-June 2008, Hispanics represent 16% of cases in Dallas County with HIV diagnosis and 28% of cases with AIDS.

Time to Update Kids' Immunizations

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) encourages parents to come in early and update their children's immunizations so they will be ready to start the school year. State law requires all children enrolling in school to provide proof that their immunizations are current. DCHHS will kick off the back-to-school immunization season with a special Shot Clinic, Saturday, August 2, 2008 from 8 a.m. – 12 noon. Parents should bring their children's immunizations records to ensure their children's vaccinations are current.

This year, DCHHS has also partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Greater North Texas for the “Immunize for Healthy Lives” Campaign. The education and awareness campaign focuses on the importance of proper and timely vaccinations of school-aged children. The campaign also encourages parents to not wait until the start of the school year to get their child vaccinated.

This marks the fourth year the cam-



campaign has been conducted in North Texas. Other local partners include Immunize Kids! Dallas Area Partnership, Collin County Health Care Services, Denton County Health Department, Tarrant County Public Health, Denton County Immunization Coalition and the Immunization Collaboration of Tarrant County.

The campaign will include distribution of more than 650,000 trayliners in local McDonald's restaurants. The trayliners will promote each of the seven health partner's back-to-school immunization efforts, and will include the immunization schedule and contact information for the local healthcare part-

ners.

DCHHS' goal is to provide barrier-free vaccines year round to help protect the health and welfare of all infants and children in Dallas County. The CDC National Immunization Survey shows that Dallas County's immunization rates have increased from 67.1% to 73.9% over the past two years. The National Immunization Survey, conducted annually by the CDC, assesses immunization levels among preschool children.

DCHHS offers childhood immunizations from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 8 a.m.—6 p.m. on Wednesdays on the first floor of the DCHHS building, 2377 N. Stemmons Freeway. While the cost is \$10 for children on their first visit and \$5 for children who have previously visited the clinic, no one will be refused service due to their inability to pay. No appointment is necessary. For more information, call (214) 819-2163 or visit www.dallascounty.org

DCHHS Receives Grant to Expand STD Testing at Dallas County Jails

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) has received a grant in the amount of \$65,153 from the Texas Department of State Health Services to provide screening of all inmates for syphilis and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) at the Dallas County Jail.

“Identifying and treating cases of these STDs in the jail environment is a critical component of limiting the spread of disease in the community,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. “Studies have shown high rates of STDs within jails nationwide. Since the average person booked into the County correctional facility is incarcerated for a short period of time, we have a limited window of opportunity to test for and treat these diseases and educate persons on the effects of sexually transmitted diseases. Our ultimate goal is to decrease the numbers of inmates re-entering the outside community testing positive for these diseases.”



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, persons entering county-level correctional facilities traditionally have a history of high-risk sexual behaviors, substance abuse, or both. As a result, high rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases have been documented in this population. The DCHHS STD Division will provide free syphilis and HIV testing to all jail inmates as they are presented at intake. Test results will be available within 24-72 hours. The DCHHS STD Disease Intervention Team will conduct follow-up and provide treatment and contact trac-

ing for inmates who test positive. If an inmate is released prior to treatment, DCHHS conducts aggressive case management and follow-up to assure appropriate treatment and counseling is received. The DCHHS program is expected to screen over 15,000 inmates in the first year.

The DCHHS STD Program offers rapid testing, treatment, and partner notification at its clinics located at 2377 North Stemmons Freeway, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call (214) 819-1819. The DCHHS Mobile Medical Clinic travels to various locations around the County and offers free testing for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia. HIV and syphilis results are available within the hour. Treatment for syphilis and other STDs may be available on site. For more information on the Mobile Medical Clinic, or for its schedule and locations, call (214) 819-2136.

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Dallas County Health and Human Services
2377 North Stemmons Freeway
Dallas, TX 75207
(214) 819-2100
www.dallascounty.org

Zachary S. Thompson, M.A., Director

John T. Carlo, M.D., M.S.E., Medical Director/Health Authority

For more information on articles published in DCHHS' *Public Health Preparedness Update*, contact: Jacqueline M. Bell, M.S., DCHHS Public Information Officer at (214) 819-6329 or jbelle@dallascounty.org



Dallas County Health and Human Services
Public Health Preparedness and Response Division
2377 North Stemmons Freeway
Dallas, TX 75207

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