



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Princeton Health Department

Princeton Health Matters

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Stomach flu? It's actually norovirus

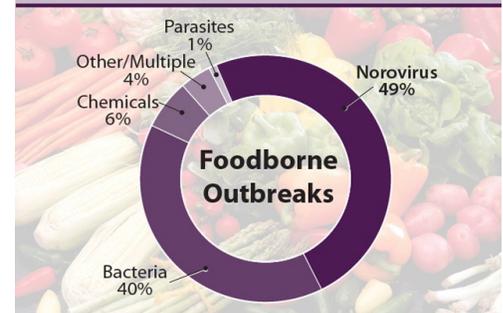
Authoried By: Randy Carter & Jeff Grosser

Causing between 19-21 million cases of acute gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and or intestines), norovirus leads to 1.7-1.9 million outpatient visits and 400,000 emergency department visits annually. Also called the Norwalk virus, named after Norwalk, Ohio, the location of the first confirmed outbreak in 1972, this virus often causes what most of us call food poisoning. People become infected with noroviruses when they eat food or drink liquids that have been contaminated; raw or undercooked oysters and raw fruits and vegetables. One can also be infected when a surface or object (contaminated with the virus) is touched, and then without washing hands with soap and warm water, touching one's nose, mouth, or eyes. Once infected, the virus can quickly pass from person to person through shared food or utensils, by shaking hands, or through other close contact. Noroviruses thrive in close quarters such as day-care centers, restaurants, nursing homes, and cruise ships. Compared to other viruses, noroviruses are surprisingly hardy and live for days on surfaces, and only a few particles are needed to cause an infection, which is why they spread easily.

This Winter, the Princeton Health Department investigated two separate gastrointestinal illness outbreaks. Both resulted in over 100 individuals affected with gastrointestinal (GI) illnesses. Investigation of both incidents were led by Health Department Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS), and a Public Health Nurse. Symptomatic persons were interviewed to acquire food consumption history and recent contact exposures. From there, the REHS ensured conditions within respective retail food establishments were sanitary and that all food service workers were healthy and haven't reported as being ill recently.

To protect yourself from norovirus, wash your hands with soap and water. Only use hand sanitizers when a sink or soap are not available. To protect those around you, avoid food prep if you're sick and try to avoid touching foods for up to three days after symptoms subside. Use bleach-based cleaner to kill virus particles on hard surfaces. To report GI related symptoms or illness after eating at a restaurant or catered event, contact your local health department.

Known Causes of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks, U.S., 2006-2010



Princeton welcomes new health educator

Authored By: Devangi Patel

Devangi Patel is the new Health Educator for the Princeton Health Department through a shared Public Health Services agreement with Montgomery Township Department of Health. Devangi earned her Bachelors in Psychology from Rutgers University, her Masters of Public Health in Health Education and Behavioral Science from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and she is also a Certified Health Education Specialist.

As Health Educator, Devangi will be responsible for a number of evidence-based programs sponsored through the Health Department to children, youth, adults, and seniors ranging from Hand Hygiene (GloGerm) to Chronic Disease Self-Management (Take Control of Your Health). Programs will focus mostly on general health, nutrition and physical activity, all aimed at helping Princeton residents lead healthy, happy, and safe lives.

Devangi will also work with individuals and organizations in Princeton to measure the effectiveness of programs and classes, perform research, and offer training programs for fellow health professionals and community health workers.

Devangi is an active member of the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Inc., Hunterdon/Mercer County Chronic Disease Coalition, Morris/Somerset Chronic Disease Coalition and The New Jersey Chapter of the Society for Public Health Education where she is also the Chair of the Technology Committee.

Devangi currently coordinates the Public Health Education program, in varying capacities, with Montgomery Township, and through Public Health Education shared service agreements with Princeton, Branchburg Township, Hopewell Borough, Pennington Borough, and West Windsor service areas.

The Princeton Health Department is proud to welcome Devangi to the team!

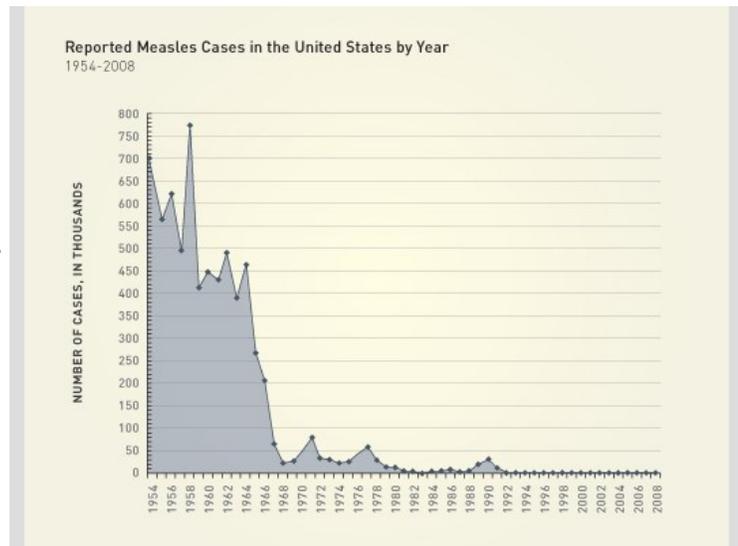


Health Officer's Message: Measles, vaccines, and our health

The recent “resurgence” of measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases serves as a reminder of the importance of knowing one’s immunization status, as well as understanding the importance of vaccines in our lives. Vaccine hesitancy by individuals and parents has led to lower immunization rates, with individuals at higher risk of disease and populations at higher risk of outbreaks. This trend has been alarming, particularly with the possibility of infecting susceptible populations, such as children and those that are immunocompromised.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently announced that the United States is experiencing a large multi-state measles outbreak.

Starting in California in December 2014, the outbreak has spread to seven additional states and Mexico. The initial confirmed case reported visiting Disneyland Resort Theme Parks in Orange County, CA the week of December 28, 2014. Thus far, 142 confirmed cases of measles linked to this outbreak have been reported to CDC. No source case has been identified for the outbreak, but it is likely a traveler (or more than one traveler) who was infected with measles overseas and visited one or both of the Disney parks in December during their infectious period. This outbreak highlights the importance of ensuring high immunization percentages in our community, the importance of a prompt and appropriate public health response to measles cases and outbreak, and the risk of importation of measles into the United States.



The first measles vaccine was developed in 1963, and is now part of a combination vaccine that protects against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). As a result of vaccination, ongoing measles transmission was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, as shown in the graph above. Yet, cases of measles continue to be imported, and the transmission of the virus continues to occur, especially within unvaccinated populations. Between 2000 and 2013, U.S. measles case rates have ranged from 37 to 220 people per year, but in 2014, the United States saw a significant resurgence in measles cases with 23 confirmed outbreaks involving 644 cases. As of March 6, 2015 there have been 173 cases and 4 outbreaks, covering 17 states.

To better understand the importance of vaccines, think of them as progressive new technology. Often, when a new technology becomes part of our daily routine, we think, how did I ever live without that? Some would argue a cell phone or even GPS would fit in this category. But for those that have suffered from diseases that are now preventable by vaccine, I would imagine a majority of that group would choose to be vaccinated. During one of the worst epidemics of polio in the U.S. in 1949, nearly 42,173 cases were identified along with 2,720 deaths. My Grandfather was one of those cases, diagnosed at the age of 37. Very fortunate to have survived the infection, he suffered from significant muscle loss in one of his legs which resulted in an unavoidable limp for the next fifty years of his life. If the polio vaccine was available prior to being infected, I can speak confidently he would have preferred the vaccine.

Vaccines have been taken for granted recently. Vaccine preventable diseases have not affected the most recent generations because those diseases have been almost non-existent due to high levels of population immunity. This has created in some ways a lack of understanding of how bad outbreaks of such diseases can become. Speaking for the future of public health, the importance of ensuring high vaccine percentages will likely be magnified by the importance of educating the public on the roles vaccines play, not only in protecting our own personal health, but the health of the population, and the community which we live.

Princeton WIC continues services in 2015

Authored By: Elisa Neira

Earlier this year, Jeff Grosser, Health Officer, and Elisa Neira, Executive Director, Human Services, were happy to announce to the Princeton community that WIC services in Princeton will continue in 2015. Last year, the clinic in Princeton was at risk of closing due to decreasing enrollment levels in recent years. As a result, the departments of Health and Human Services teamed up with the Children's Home Society of NJ to increase WIC participation and implemented a number of strategies to maintain the clinic's operation. We increased our outreach efforts and ensured WIC information was available in various forms of media, and also being displayed in highly visible locations throughout the area. By the end of 2014, WIC attendance at the Princeton clinic had significantly improved, and we are optimistic for 2015.

The collaboration and partnership between the Health Department and Human Services has been tremendous. Our efforts last year to continue WIC services in Princeton paid off and we will continue to work and advocate for Princeton families in most need of these services. We want our residents to continue to have the benefits of the WIC clinic locally and encourage organizations that work with eligible individuals to promote the WIC clinic to their families.



WIC provides vital services and support to at-risk moms and children. Its nutrition education program helps families, primarily women and young children up to the age of five years old and expectant mothers, identify healthy and nutritious choices. It also provides families with nutritious assessments and education, breastfeeding education and support, and checks for the purchase of nutritious food.

For 2015, we are hopeful for continued increase of participation in the Princeton WIC program. We are also looking for ways to collaborate and partner with other local services to provide other support and resources to WIC families. The Mercer County WIC Program in Princeton is located in the Municipal Building Community Room at 400 Witherspoon Street on the third Friday of every month from 8:30 a.m.— 4 p.m.

PHD: Did You Know?

- 1) **Ebola in NJ and the U.S.:** The Princeton Health Department enforced the first quarantine of Ebola suspected individuals in New Jersey's history. Did you also know that local health departments are tasked with actively monitoring any individual returning from an Ebola affected country that has any type of risk of transmission. Active monitoring includes obtaining temperature and symptom evaluations from individuals on a daily basis. To date, nearly 500 individuals in New Jersey have been actively monitored by local health departments and over 800,000 nationwide.



- 2) **National Public Health Accreditation:** In January, the Princeton Health Department began taking strides towards national public health accreditation. This process seeks to advance quality and performance within public health departments. Never before have a set of standards and measures been established to gauge performance of health departments nationwide. The Health Department is working on finalizing its first ever strategic plan (a prerequisite for accreditation) and will be officially applying for accreditation in April. The Princeton Health Department is hopeful to become one of the first accredited health departments in New Jersey. Stay tuned for more exciting accreditation news!



*Helping raise the standard
for public health.*

- 3) **Lyme Disease Watch :** As old man winter departs, outdoor activities will once again be at the forefront of our daily routine. Outside activities unfortunately can include increased exposure to tickborne diseases. Did you know that 95% of Lyme disease cases occur in only 14 states? In 2014 alone, there were 50 cases of Lyme disease in Princeton that were investigated by the Princeton Health Department, constituting one of the most prevalent illnesses in our community. Remember to check yourself and loved ones regularly for ticks and try wearing light colored clothing in order to spot them quickly.

LYME DISEASE ALERT

DO A THOROUGH BODY CHECK FOR TICKS AFTER BEING OUTDOORS.

How To Remove A Tick



- Using tweezers, grasp tick near the mouth parts, as close to skin as possible.
- Pull tick in a steady, upward motion away from skin.
- DO NOT use kerosene, matches, or petroleum jelly to remove tick.
- Disinfect site with soap and water, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
- Record date and location of tick bite. If rash or flu-like symptoms appear contact your health care provider immediately.



Deer tick size (left to right)
larva, nymph, adult

DISEASE RISK IS REDUCED IF TICK IS REMOVED WITHIN 36 HOURS.

Princeton Health Department

Princeton turns RED

On Friday, February 6 Princeton employees honored the American Heart Association's "National Wear Red Day." According to the American Heart Association: Heart disease is the number 1 killer in women. Yet, only 1 in 5 American women believe that heart disease is their greatest health threat. Heart disease causes 1 in 3 women's deaths each year and 90% of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease. Since 1984, more women than men have died each year from heart disease and the gap between men and women's survival continues to widen.

How can heart disease be prevented? Many things can put you at risk for heart disease. However, with the right information, education and care, heart disease in women can be treated, prevented, and even ended.

Here are a few lifestyle changes to lower the risk of heart disease:

- Quit smoking
- Manage your blood sugar
- Check your blood pressure often
- Lower your cholesterol
- Know your family's cardiovascular system history
- Stay active, keep moving!
- Lose weight
- Eat healthy

Thanks to everyone for participating and for more information about "National Wear Red Day" or heart disease in women, visit www.goredforwomen.org



Photo: Courtesy of Christina Rothman-Liff & Access Princeton



Announcements and Upcoming Events

National Public Health Week
April 6-12, 2015



www.nphw.org

April 6th-April 12th is National Public Health Week. Championed by the American Public Health Association, the first full week of April is a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving our nation. 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of APHA coordinating National Public Health Week, and the accomplishments of the public health community over the last two decades are significant, such as a 25-year improvement in the average lifespan for Americans and a 70 percent reduction in HIV/AIDS-related deaths. Princeton Health Department is an active member of the APHA and will be participating in NPHW through a series of community health screenings and educational events.

Princeton WIC clinic operates on the 3rd Friday of every month and is located in the Community Room of the Princeton Municipal Building (Witherspoon Hall), 400 Witherspoon Street. Upcoming WIC Clinic is scheduled for March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19. WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods to pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up the age of five. For appointments and to see if you are eligible, please call (609)498-7755.



All employees of the Princeton Health Department are now certified in CPR thanks to Bob Gregory and the Office of Emergency Management. On February 11th the Princeton Health Department participated in CPR training provided by the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad, and the Princeton Office of Emergency Management. A big thank you to both groups for making our staff better prepared.

Princeton Health Department and Princeton Police Department will be hosting a free rabies vaccination clinic on **Saturday, March 28—9 a.m.-12 p.m.** The rabies clinic will be held at the Mercer Engine Company No. 3, located at 363 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08540.



The Princeton Health Department will be represented at the Living Local Expo on Saturday, March 28-11 a.m.-4 p.m. which is hosted by Sustainable Lawrence, and being held at the National Guard Armory on Eggert's Crossing Road in Lawrence. The Health Department will be educating the public on how to safely perform spring cleaning while promoting National Poison Control Prevention Week. Allergens and asthma will also be discussed at the Princeton table!

Public Health Matters...in Princeton!

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