Our Mission

“To assure the highest possible level of health for the people of the communities we serve.”

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Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response: Planning for a Mass Influenza Vaccination Clinic

(By Sheila McNulty, EP Coordinator)

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is currently working with the Iron County Community Hospital to plan a mass influenza vaccination clinic and health fair. The purpose of the clinic is to exercise and test the health department’s ability to organize a clinic to mass vaccinate a large number of residents in a short time period using the seasonal influenza vaccine. Other important public health emergency response functions that will be tested include our ability to disseminate health and safety information to the public via risk communication protocols, test redundant systems of communication, and exercise the local health department’s first responder dispensing plan.

The health department’s dispensing plan includes major components of our mass vaccination plan. Our objectives are to evaluate the coordination between the health department, community partners and volunteers to vaccinate the public during an emergency involving a communicable disease. We have chosen to exercise all of these responsibilities through an organized mass vaccination clinic where influenza vaccine will be administered.

Subject to the availability of flu vaccine, the clinic is scheduled for October 26 from 9am-3pm at the Iron River Armory to vaccinate approximately 800 people in a six hour period. To ensure that there is an adequate supply of the vaccine, the health department will be scheduling appointments for clinic participants in October. The health department will inform area health care providers of this plan and ask that they support this effort by referring interested vaccine recipients to the scheduled event.

During the exercise, volunteers will be needed to assist in the mass vaccination clinic setting. Various clinic positions are available for both medical and non-medical volunteers. Training will be provided for each clinic position.

Additional detailed information will be released in the near future. If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Sheila McNulty, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, at 906-779-7205 or 906-265-9913 or at samcnulty@hline.org.

“Public Health: Prepared to respond in any emergency to protect the people.”
This year’s theme, “Don’t Compromise – Clean and Sanitize” focuses on the important procedures necessary for proper hand washing.

This annual food safety campaign strives to: build awareness of the restaurant and foodservice industry’s commitment to serving safe food, heighten awareness about the importance of food safety education, and encourage additional food safety training for all industry employees.

But what is the first rule of safe food preparation in the home?

Keep It Clean

The first cardinal rule of safe food preparation in the home is: Keep everything clean.

The cleanliness rule applies to the areas where food is prepared and, most importantly, to the cook. Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before starting to prepare a meal and after handling raw meat or poultry. Cover long hair with a net or scarf, and be sure that any open sores or cuts on the hands are completely covered. If the sore or cut is infected, stay out of the kitchen.

Keep the work area clean and uncluttered. Wash countertops with a solution of 5 milliliters (1 teaspoon) of chlorine bleach to about 1 liter (1 quart) of water or with a commercial kitchen cleaning agent diluted according to product directions. They're the most effective at getting rid of bacteria.

Also, be sure to keep dishcloths and sponges clean because, when wet, these materials harbor bacteria and may promote their growth. Wash dishcloths and sponges weekly in hot water in the washing machine.

While you’re at it, sanitize the kitchen sink drain periodically by pouring down the sink a solution of 5 milliliters of bleach to 1 liter of water or a commercial kitchen cleaning agent. Food particles get trapped in the drain and disposal and, along with moistness, create an ideal environment for bacterial growth.

Use smooth cutting boards made of hard maple or plastic and free of cracks and crevices. Avoid boards made of soft, porous materials. Wash cutting boards with hot water, soap, and a scrub brush. Then, sanitize them in an automatic dishwasher or by rinsing with a solution of 5 milliliters of chlorine bleach to about 1 liter of water.

Always wash and sanitize cutting boards after using them for raw foods, such as seafood or chicken, and before using them for ready-to-eat foods. Consider using one cutting board only for foods that will be cooked, such as raw fish, and another only for ready-to-eat foods, such as bread, fresh fruit, and cooked fish.

Always use clean utensils and wash them between cutting different foods.

Wash the lids of canned foods before opening to keep dirt from getting into the food. Also, clean the blade of the can opener after each use. Food processors and meat grinders should be taken apart and cleaned as soon as possible after they are used.

Do not put cooked meat on an unwashed plate or platter that has held raw meat.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly, rinsing in warm water. Don't use soap or other detergents. If necessary--and appropriate--use a small scrub brush to remove surface dirt.

Source: Excerpted from FDA Consumer - The Unwelcome Dinner Guest: Preventing Foodborne Illness
New Surgeon General’s Report Focuses on the Effects of Secondhand Smoke

U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona issued a comprehensive scientific report on June 27, 2006 which concludes that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25 to 30 percent and lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent. The finding is of major public health concern due to the fact that nearly half of all nonsmoking Americans are still regularly exposed to secondhand smoke.

The report, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke*, finds that even brief secondhand smoke exposure can cause immediate harm. The report says the only way to protect nonsmokers from the dangerous chemicals in secondhand smoke is to eliminate smoking indoors.

“The report is a crucial warning sign to nonsmokers and smokers alike,” HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt said. “Smoking can sicken and kill, and even people who do not smoke can be harmed by smoke from those who do.”

Secondhand smoke exposure can cause heart disease and lung cancer in nonsmoking adults and is a known cause of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), respiratory problems, ear infections, and asthma attacks in infants and children, the report finds.

“The health effects of secondhand smoke exposure are more pervasive than we previously thought,” said Surgeon General Carmona, vice admiral of the U.S. Public Health Service. “The scientific evidence is now indisputable: secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance. It is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death in children and nonsmoking adults.” Secondhand smoke contains more than 50 cancer-causing chemicals, and is itself a known human carcinogen. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke inhale many of the same toxins as smokers. Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and increases risk for heart disease and lung cancer, the report says. In addition, the report notes that because the bodies of infants and children are still developing, they are especially vulnerable to the poisons in secondhand smoke.

“The good news is that, unlike some public health hazards, secondhand smoke exposure is easily prevented,” Surgeon General Carmona said. “Smoke-free indoor environments are proven, simple approaches that prevent exposure and harm.” The report finds that even the most sophisticated ventilation systems cannot completely eliminate secondhand smoke exposure and that only smoke-free environments afford full protection.

Surgeon General Carmona noted that levels of cotinine -- a biological marker for secondhand smoke exposure -- measured in nonsmokers have fallen by 70 percent since the late 1980s, and the proportion of nonsmokers with detectable cotinine levels has been halved from 88 percent in 1988-91 to 43 percent in 2001-02.

“Our progress over the past 20 years in clearing the air of tobacco smoke is a major public health success story,” Surgeon General Carmona said. “We have averted many thousands of cases of disease and early death and saved millions of dollars in health care costs.” He emphasized, however, that sustained efforts are required to protect the more than 126 million Americans who continue to be regularly exposed to secondhand smoke in the home, at work, and in enclosed public spaces.

To help communicate the report findings as widely as possible, the Surgeon General unveiled an easy-to-read guide with practical information on the dangers of secondhand smoke and steps people can take to protect themselves.


“Public Health: Prepared to respond in any emergency to protect the people.”
October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Each year, October is designated as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women.

According to the American Cancer Society, one in every eight women in the U.S. will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. A woman is diagnosed every two minutes with breast cancer.

There is no sure way to prevent breast cancer but a woman can take measures to catch it early when it is easier to treat. Having a clinical breast exam along with a yearly mammogram is one of the best methods for early detection. If caught early enough the survival rate is 95%.

The health department has a Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) for income eligible women between the ages of 40-64.

For more information on this program contact the health department at 779-7237 or 265-4166.