EPI WATCH

Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter

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Division of Disease Control and Health Protection

Disease Reporting
To report diseases and clusters of illness:
Phone: (727) 824-6932
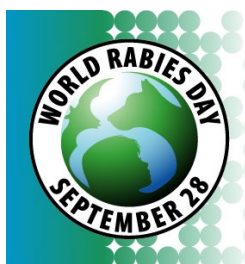Fax: (727) 484-3865
(excluding HIV/AIDS)

To report HIV/AIDS by mail:
Surveillance Room 3-138
205 Dr. MLK Jr St. N

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www.facebook.com/HealthyPinellas

COVID-19 Update— Food Safety

According to a recent update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the risk of getting COVID-19 from eating or handling food is considered very low. There have been no cases identified who were thought to have been infected from touching food, food packaging, or shopping bags.

It may be possible to become infected after touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching your own mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this is not the way most people contract COVID-19. The main way the virus is thought to spread is directly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets expelled when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks.

While the risk of contracting COVID-19 from food is low, it is still important to follow food safety practices. Kitchen surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected regularly. If someone in your home is sick, make sure to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces including handles, countertops, faucets, light switches, and door knobs. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after shopping or handling food packages or before preparing food or eating. All foods should be cooked to their recommended temperatures to avoid foodborne illnesses.

Eating nutritious food can also help you to cope with the stress of the pandemic. Make sure that you are consuming plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. Dietary supplements are not meant to treat or prevent COVID-19 and you should consult a healthcare provider before taking any supplement or vitamin.

For more information on COVID-19 and food safety please visit Food and Coronavirus Disease 2019.

World Rabies Day 2020

September 28 is World Rabies Day, an observance started in 2007 to raise awareness of rabies and to bring partners together to improve prevention and control efforts around the world. The 2020 theme is "End Rabies: Collaborate, Vaccinate." The goal is to end human deaths from dog rabies by 2030.

Though rabies is preventable, more than 59,000 people still die from the disease each year. Worldwide, exposure to rabid dogs is the cause of more than 90% of human rabies exposures and 99% of human rabies deaths. In the United States, canine rabies was declared eliminated in 2007. However, vaccination of dogs is still important as wildlife can transmit the virus to dogs or other pets. In Florida, bats, raccoons, and stray cats regularly test positive for rabies.

The elimination of canine rabies can be achieved through the dog vaccination and the control of stray dogs. The cost of these programs is often what prohibits their implementation in the developing world. In the United states, over $300 million is spent each year on rabies prevention, mostly for dog vaccinations.

Once 70% of the dog population is vaccinated, rabies can be controlled in an area and human deaths can be prevented. However, these efforts must be ongoing as there is an annual turnover of about 25% of the dog population.

For more information on rabies, please visit CDC Rabies.

1. CDC (2020). Rabies around the World. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/location/world/index.html

Does your hurricane plan include generator safety?

Having a plan and being prepared can minimize the health and safety impacts on your family in the event of a hurricane. There are many tools online to help you create a plan, like this one from the Florida Division of Emergency Management. These plans, however, do not cover one important aspect of safety– how to properly use a generator in the event of a power outage. Including a plan for the safe use of a generator can help to minimize your risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and death.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that is found in fumes produced from burning fuel, including coal, wood, charcoal, natural gas, propane, gasoline, diesel, kerosene, and heating oil. It can be produced by portable generators that many people use in the event of a power outage. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can include

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Chest pain
- Confusion
- Blurred vision

- Numbness and tingling
- Irritability
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Palpitations
- Seizures

If you inhale enough carbon monoxide, you can pass out or die within minutes.

In 2017, much of the state of Florida was impacted by Hurricane Irma and 59 of 67 counties had power outages due to the storm. Portable generator use was widespread due to these outages. In the days after the storm, 529 cases of carbon monoxide poisoning were reported, accounting for 64% of all cases reported in 2017. There were also 15 carbon monoxide-related deaths reported. Of these cases, 97.5% were related to generator use. It was found that 75% of cases had placed their generator inside or too close to their home and only 16% reported owning a carbon monoxide detector.

If you plan to use a generator in the event of a power outage, make sure to:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using the generator.
- Never use a generator indoors or even in partially enclosed spaces like a garage, as open doors and windows will not prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Generators should be placed at least 20 feet away from your home and away from doors, windows, vents, and air conditioners that could pull the carbon monoxide indoors.

Planning for generator use in advance will help you to identify a safe location to place to generator and avoid mistakenly placing it in unsafe location during or after a storm when conditions may not be ideal for taking the time needed to find a safe location.

If you are going to use a generator, you should also make sure to have battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors in your home:

- Install the detectors according to the instructions
- Test them regularly
- Make sure that you have extra batteries on hand to last through the storm and subsequent power outages.

If you are using a generator and you feel dizzy, weak, or sick, get fresh air immediately. For emergency medical assistance, call 911. For non-emergency questions about carbon monoxide poisoning, you can call the Florida Poison Information Center 24 hours a day at 1-800-222-1222.

For more information on carbon monoxide and generator safety, please visit FDOH Carbon Monoxide

WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT, KEEP YOUR GENERATOR OUTSIDE

Portable back-up generators produce the poison gas carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless gas that kills without warning. It claims the lives of hundreds of people every year and makes thousands more ill. Follow these steps to keep your family safe.

PORTABLE GENERATORS
✔ Never use a generator inside your home or garage, even if doors and windows are open.
✔ Only use generators outside, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors, and windows.

CO DETECTORS
✔ Install battery-operated or battery back-up CO detectors near every sleeping area in your home.
✔ Check CO detectors regularly to be sure they are functioning properly.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING

CAN'T BE SEEN | CAN'T BE SMELLED | CAN'T BE HEARD | CAN BE STOPPED

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC

1. Florida Department of Health (2017). Florida Morbidity Statistics Report. Retrieved from http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/disease-reporting-and-management/disease-reporting-and-surveillance/data-and-publications/_documents/2017-annual-morbidity-statistics-report.pdf

Select Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	Pinellas August 2020	Pinellas August 2019	YTD Total Pinellas 2020	YTD Total Florida 2020	Pinellas Annual Totals 2019	2018	2017
A. Vaccine Preventable							
Measles	0	0	0	1	1	7	0
Mumps	0	0	1	46	7	10	3
Pertussis	0	5	8	202	27	32	36
Varicella	1	1	15	257	33	67	24
B. CNS Diseases & Bacteremias							
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	0	0	9	3	1	2
Meningitis (Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic)	1	1	2	58	7	9	7
Meningococcal Disease	0	0	2	16	1	1	0
C. Enteric Infections							
Campylobacteriosis	25	23	158	2295	310	264	207
Cryptosporidiosis	5	5	23	194	64	34	40
Cyclosporiasis	5	12	6	80	28	4	6
E. coli Shiga Toxin (+)	1	3	6	300	24	15	22
Giardiasis	2	4	18	453	52	41	45
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Listeriosis	1	0	2	30	2	1	0
Salmonellosis	16	21	108	3636	201	233	279
Shigellosis	2	2	14	405	22	40	26
D. Viral Hepatittis							
Hepatitis A	0	17	4	768	377	113	1
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman	1	5	14	232	24	14	25
Hepatitis B, Acute	2	5	23	413	72	52	51
Hepatitis C, Acute	6	6	42	694	82	40	30
E. Vector Borne/ Zoonoses							
Animal Rabies	0	0	0	53	2	1	3
Rabies, possible exposure	10	11	78	2182	128	130	140
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dengue	0	0	1	83	3	0	0
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	5	4	6	91	22	14	19
Malaria	0	0	1	15	5	3	0
West Nile Virus	0	0	0	59	0	0	0
Zika Virus Disease	0	0	0	1	3	2	5
F. Others							
Chlamydia	362	460	2581	n/a	4588	4422	418
Gonorrhea	162	163	985	n/a	1537	1439	1574
Hansen's Disease	0	0	0	20	0	0	0
Legionellosis	1	6	20	556	43	37	28
Mercury Poisoning	0	0	0	7	1	1	1
Syphilis, Total	39	53	264	n/a	479	438	382
Syphilis, Primary and Secondary	21	25	118	n/a	213	190	160
Syphilis, Early Latent	16	16	93	n/a	191	158	128
Syphilis, Congenital	0	0	2	n/a	6	2	5
Syphilis, Late Syphilis	2	12	51	n/a	69	88	89
Tuberculosis	3	3	13	n/a	23	33	28
Vibrio Infections	2	2	9	121	18	6	11

*YTD up to August 1, 2020. n/a = not available at this time

Reportable diseases include confirmed and probable cases only. All case counts are current and provisional. Data is collected from the Merlin Reportable Disease database, surveillance systems maintained at the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County, and Florida CHARTS http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/default.aspx. STD data in STARS is continually updated. Please note, data from the previous month takes up to an additional month or more to be correctly updated.