



PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

AUGUST 2008

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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A Day In The Life Of An Environmental Health Specialist: Food-Borne Illness Investigation

Picture this...

The phone rings at the Scott County Health Department. Karen, an environmental health specialist, picks up the phone and a caller complains that they have food poisoning. The symptoms include vomiting and diarrhea. Karen asks the caller if they have a stool sample or vomit specimen that can be submitted to the lab for analysis.

Next, the environmental health specialist collects a 72-hour food history from the caller. This history included a potluck with twenty-five members of the local swim team. The caller had eaten a ham and cheese sandwich, pasta salad, chips, apple, and had drank milk. In the meantime, a second phone call comes in from another one of the teammates who had attended the potluck. The symptoms were the same and a 72-hour food history was recorded.

The environmental health specialist collects the names and phone numbers of the other team members at the potluck and places a call to each of them. Six of the team-

mates also have the same symptoms as the two callers and the other eighteen have no symptoms. The environmental health specialist completes a 72-hour food history from everyone at the potluck.

Next, the environmental health specialist examines which foods the people who have symptoms have in common. It was determined that all seven of them had eaten pasta salad prepared by one of the teammates' father. The environmental health specialist asked for a sample of the pasta salad which the person was able to provide. The sample was sent to the lab to be compared to the vomit and stool samples.

The father who had prepared the pasta salad told the

environmental health specialist that they were babysitting their one year-old grandson who had diarrhea. He had changed a diaper prior to preparing the pasta salad and had forgotten to wash his hands. It was suspected that this was the source of the contamination.

In the meantime, the analysis of the samples came back from the lab. It was determined that the teammates had gotten shigella from the pasta salad.

Rarely is a case this simple. It is usually very difficult to determine the exact source of the contamination due to the fact that foods get thrown away and are often not available for testing or it may not be possible to obtain a vomit or stool sample.



TAKE THE FIRST STEP!

NOTE FROM PUBLIC HEALTH SAFETY SERVICE AREA

Public health emergencies can come in many natural forms such as floods, tornadoes, storms/power outages, or even man-made threats such as bioterrorism. These public health emergencies may occur without any warning or very little warning which is why the Scott County Health Department encourages every resident of Scott County to do what they can to prepare for these

emergencies before they occur.

The first thing to do is **develop a communications plan**. It is important to designate a place to meet as well as a backup location.

Also, a person should be designated as an emergency contact. This person should not live in the same neighborhood.

Next, **make an emergency supply kit**. There may not be

time to search for supplies during or after an emergency and stores may not be open to buy the supplies you need. Be sure to inform members of your household where this kit is located.

Visit the Scott County Health Department's Web site at www.scottcountyiowa.com/health to find out what items to include in your kit and to learn more about public health preparedness.



Take the First Step in Preparing for Public Health Emergencies

MOSQUITO SEASON HAS ARRIVED

NOTE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE AREA

Two mosquito samples recently collected in Scott County have tested positive for West Nile Virus. This is a virus carried by mosquitoes and that can cause an infection called West Nile Encephalitis. "Encephalitis" is a swelling of the brain which can be caused by bacteria or viruses.

A mosquito becomes infected after feeding on infected birds. Humans can get West

Nile Virus from being bitten by an infected mosquito.

The Scott County Health Department encourages everyone to take measures to protect themselves from mosquitoes by following these tips:

- ▶ **Use Bug Spray!**
Always read and follow the instructions before putting it on.
- ▶ **Wear the Right Clothing!**

Wear light colored clothing with long sleeves, pants, & socks.

- ▶ **Mosquito-Proof Your Home!**
Repair tears in window/door screens.
- ▶ **Know Peak Mosquito Hours!**
Limit time outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most likely to bite.
- ▶ **Use Mosquito Netting!**
Use netting over infant carriers instead of bug spray.

Protect Yourself From Mosquitoes

LEAD MANDATE

NOTE FROM CLINICAL HEALTH SERVICE AREA

Starting in the fall of 2008, all children in Iowa entering kindergarten must have proof of a blood lead test.

The Iowa Department of Public Health and the schools will work together to determine which students are in need of a blood lead test and will notify the caregivers of these children.

The good news is that Medicaid, *hawk-i*, and most insurance companies will cover the cost of a blood lead test. If your insurance company will not cover the blood lead test, you can contact the Scott County Health Department at 563-326-8618.

Childhood lead poisoning is a serious problem in Iowa. It

can cause learning disabilities and can affect children's school performance. A blood lead test is a simple way to determine if your child has been lead poisoned.

Visit the Scott County Health Department's Web site at www.scottcountyiowa.com/health to learn more about the new mandate.



Kindergarteners in Iowa Must Have a Blood Lead Test

SCOTT COUNTY EXTENSION: EXPANDED FOOD NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:
SCOTT COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE

If you have a family with children ten years old and under, you may benefit from Scott County Extension Office's Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). If you participate in WIC, food stamps, Head Start, or free lunch at school, you automatically qualify for EFNEP.

This program is a FREE in-home course designed to meet your needs. You will

also receive a FREE gift at each lesson. If you have a picky eater at home, want some new food ideas, get confused by food labels, want to reduce fat in meals, ever run out of food, or want your family to eat healthier, then EFNEP is for you.

EFNEP can help save you time and money, as well as help you make your meal time a family time. It can also help you improve your

meals and give you more confidence. When you complete the program, you will receive a certificate and a \$10 gift card.

For more information on the EFNEP program, contact:

Scott County Extension
875 Tanglefoot Lane, Ste. B
Bettendorf, IA 52722
563-359-7577



Scott County Extension's Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program Helps Families

DENTAL MANDATE

NOTE FROM COMMUNITY RELATIONS,
INFORMATION AND PLANNING SERVICES

The school dental screening mandate became effective July 1, 2008 with the purpose of helping to improve the oral health of Iowa's children.

Parents of children entering kindergarten, 9th grade, and transfer students must show that their children have received a dental screening.

Dental screenings will be

provided by a large network of health care professionals to help supplement Iowa's dental workforce.

The dental screenings will help in the early detection and referral of dental disease; reduce the frequency, impact and cost of dental disease; inform parents and guardians of their children's dental problems; promote oral

health as a necessary practice early in life; and contribute to the overall surveillance of Iowa's oral health.

For more information on the new dental screening mandate visit www.scottcountyiowa.com/health.

Has Your Child Received a Dental Screening?

FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS... HOW LONG BEFORE SYMPTOMS?

COMMON CONFUSIONS:
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

True or False: If you are food poisoned, you will experience symptoms within one hour of eating contaminated food. **The answer is false.**

If you have a food-borne illness, it can take up to 72-hours before any symptoms occur. This is why many

people assume that they have the stomach flu when it may actually be a case of eating unsafe food.

Health professionals will ask for a 72-hour food history, as well as collect stool, vomit, and samples of the food eaten if possible. These samples are taken to a lab to

determine why the individual is sick. The health professional will also interview others who ate the same foods to find out if anyone else is experiencing the same symptoms.



What You Eat Now Could Affect You 72-Hours Later

SCOTT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Scott County Administrative Center, 4th Floor
600 West 4th Street
Davenport, Iowa 52801-1030

Phone: 563-326-8618

Fax: 563-326-8774

E-mail: health@scottcountyiowa.com

Web site: www.scottcountyiowa.com/health

OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department is committed to promoting, protecting and preserving the health of the community by providing leadership and direction as advocates for the individual, the family, the community and the environment we serve.

OUR VISION:

As recognized and respected leaders in serving and protecting our citizens, we at the Scott County Health Department are committed to a safer, healthier community and environment. In so doing, we provide a multitude of services with Professionalism, Responsiveness, Involvement, Dedication, and Excellence.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Saturday, August 16, 2008; 8:30-Noon; Xstream Cleanup
Quad City-Wide Cleanup of Creeks, Drainage Ways, and Sections of the Mississippi and Rock Rivers.
Visit www.xstreamcleanup.org for more information.
- Thursday, August 21, 2008; 12:00-1:00 p.m.; Scott County Board of Health Meeting
Open to the Public; Location: Scott County Administrative Center, Board Room-1st Floor
- Wednesday, September 10, 2008; United Way 2008 Day of Caring
Community-Wide Day of Hands-On Volunteering in Which United Way Connects Volunteers With Local Non-Profit Organization to Work on Projects That Would Not Otherwise Be Completed. Visit <http://www.unitedwayqc.org/html/DOC.html> for more information.



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.