



Special Interest Articles:

- Volunteers help fill ranks.
- Special tips for pets.

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Lessons learned from infection control

Every infection is a race between the invading microbes and the host. The microbe, following the rules of evolution, tries to survive and reproduce, while the host's immune system mounts a warlike defense designed to find, destroy, and eliminate it. A microbe that kills its host quickly cannot be expected to survive long enough to reproduce. Thus excessive virulence is not selected for in evolution. Germs, which can reproduce and be passed from one host to another, are favored.

History shows many examples of outbreaks of infectious, deadly diseases that have decimated human populations since we first began to congregate. One of the causes of the Fall of Rome is thought to have been Bubonic Plague.

As medical knowledge grew, it was discovered that there are two major types of infectious diseases which can develop into epidemics: common source and host-to-host. Common source epidemics arise from a contaminated source,

such as water or food, while host-to-host infections are transmitted from one infected individual to another via various, perhaps indirect, routes

Infection control and health care epidemiology are the disciplines concerned with preventing the spread of infections within the health-care setting.

Infection control programs started to spring up in hospitals in the US during **Continued on Page 2**

Infection control should begin in your own home

Germs and bacteria are everywhere. They are on our bodies, clothes, and all our everyday household items and appliances. Simple lifestyle changes can greatly reduce the spread of these unwelcome agents.

Your body: Daily bathing is essential. Take showers, not baths. A shower will get your body cleaner than a bath.

Your clothes: A clean body means nothing if your clothes are ridden with bacteria and germs.

Clean and dry clothes.

Your bathroom: Use bleach-based toilet and bathroom cleaners. Bleach kills bacteria. Be sure to spray and wipe down all surfaces.

Your kitchen: Get rid of wood cutting boards as they can have bacteria embedded in them. A synthetic vinyl or plastic one is easier to clean.

Household surfaces: Besides the obvious cleaning of tables, counters, night stands and other surfaces, you should

regularly clean your computer keyboard, door knobs, toilet handles, the television remote and the microwave control panel. These are all commonly touched by more than one family member and germs are easily transferred from one person to another.

Clean these surfaces with a bleach-based cleaner and/or spray.

Wash Your Hands! Hand washing remains the best way of preventing the number one cause of the spread of bacteria and other germs.



Uncovered sneezes help spread influenza viruses. Ocean County participates in a state program tracking the spread of Influenza Like Illnesses.

System tracks Influenza Like Illnesses in state

Tracking of Influenza Like Illnesses (ILI) in Ocean County and throughout the state has been a cooperative effort since 2000.

Voluntary participation among schools, along with long term care facilities and acute care hospitals helps make the program a success.

These agencies report their ILI cases to the Ocean County Health

Department Epidemiologist who then forwards the results to the N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services.

The state will compile the data submitted from around the counties and determine an Influenza Activity level for New Jersey as well as breaking down the information into five regional areas. The weekly state report also includes the type of

influenzas specimens tested.

Epidemiologists and other health care professionals use the data in promoting infection control programs that can assist the public in maintaining a healthier lifestyle. As seasonal influenza cases increase, it also gives public health care workers time to react and prepare for increasing cases.

The federal government has officially recognized the Ocean County Medical Reserve Corps as part of the White House's USA Freedom Corps and the Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps.

The Sneeze

Sneezes are capable of spreading disease through the potentially infectious aerosol droplets they can expel. About 40,000 droplets are released each sneeze, at speeds between 95 mph to 650 mph.

Volunteers make the difference in fighting disease

During a public health emergency, response time is critical in fighting the spread of any disease.

Helping to meet the need for trained, professional public health workers are the men and women of the Ocean County Medical Reserve Corps.

These volunteers undergo a background check and receive extensive training from qualified instructors in eight core training competencies before receiving a certificate of achievement, which acknowledges that he or she is fully-trained to

participate in Health Department responses to any public health emergency.

"Volunteering for and being a part of the Medical Reserve Corps is a great way to help your friends and families in times of need right here in Ocean County," said Ocean County Freeholder Gerry P. Little, liaison to the Board of Health.

"Volunteers play a key role in helping to provide essential services including staffing of vaccination and antibiotic distribution clinics and other emergency care."

More than 200 volunteers have completed training and are certified to assist the Health Department during public health emergencies.

The MRC is composed of medical and non-medical volunteers.

Anyone wishing to apply as a volunteer may obtain more information and enrollment forms by visiting the Ocean County Health Department at www.ochd.org/mrc or by calling Mary Gibson, MRC Coordinator, at 732-341-9700, ext. 7280."

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the 1960s with a Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) recommendation that hospitals appoint

infection control commissions, which in turn, ultimately brought about the Infection Control Professionals (ICP), who are responsible for assisting healthcare

institutions in providing a high level of patient care by preventing and reducing infectious diseases occurring in hospitals through constant day-to-day surveillance.

Food Safety hints can prevent many infections

Many of us recall the massive recall of ground beef patties during 2007. This was a case of government in action to protect the public from a possible tainted food item.

More common are food safety issues at home due to either power failures or lack of proper handling by the homeowner.

During a power failure, perishable food is safe at room temperature for two hours when the temperature is below 80 degrees. Above that temperature, bacteria can start to grow on

unrefrigerated food in one hour.

During power outages, keep your refrigerator and freezer closed. An unopened refrigerator should keep food cold for up to four hours. A half-full freezer will keep foods frozen for 24 hours; 48 hours if the freezer is full.

If a power outage lasts more than four hours, pack your milk, meat and dairy products in an ice chest.

Having an instant read food thermometer is a wise investment. If refrigerated items are

below 40 degrees, they should be safe.

Once power resumes, all items should be carefully checked to assure it is safe for consuming. If in doubt, throw it out.

To keep your kitchen cooler during a loss of power, cook outdoors on a grill.

Other tips include checking sell-by dates, quickly bringing groceries home and refrigerate as needed, thaw foods in the refrigerator and bring all canned goods to a full boil before using.



Refrigerators should be set no higher than 40 degrees and freezers should be set at 0 degrees for safe food storage.

Pets have a role in your infection control plans

Americans love pets. Approximately 70 percent of households have at least one dog or a cat. While these pets are truly family members and can give you years of unqualified love, they can also give you up to 30 human illnesses.

Fortunately, despite the frequency of contacts between pet and owner, pet associated illnesses are infrequent. Pet owners are often poorly informed about measures to prevent transmission and health care providers may not be aware of all patterns of transmission.

You can help your pet by keeping your animal in as

clean condition as possible. If your animal roams the outdoors, he or she can bring in unwanted pests, such as fleas and ticks. Flea collars, frequent brushing and routinely inspecting the pet where the fur meets the skin will greatly reduce the chance of the pests coming into contact with a human host.

Frequent vacuuming and cleaning of rugs and carpets where pets play or rest can further reduce contact.

Some parasitic infections carried by pets are passed in feces. If the feces are allowed to remain undisturbed, over time,

parasites may emerge and find their way onto barefoot children who come into contact with it. It is estimated by the World Health Organization that approximately 700 million people, worldwide, are infested with hookworms, passed through animal feces.

It is important to pick up after your animal, in your yard or during a "walk" along a public pathway.

Responsibilities for pets begin with proper immunization, disease prevention, hygiene and treatment of diseases. The results are years of loyal friendship and love.



Healthy pets will give you a lifetime of love.

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EIS Conference to feature many presentations

The Northeast Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Conference on Thursday, March 6, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the West Lecture Hall of the UMDNJ-RWJ Medical School in Piscataway, will showcase presentations of outbreak investigations and epidemiologic studies with local, national and international interest. The EIS conference is free to

attend.

Students can learn more about the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's EIS program, the premier epidemiology training fellowship.

EIS officers are stationed at the CDC and at state health departments throughout the country for two-year appointments in

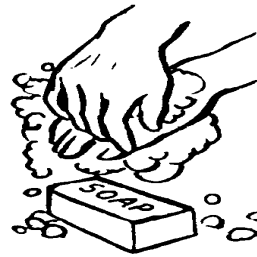
various public health settings.

EIS alumni are some of the nation's leading medical and public health leaders.

For more information, contact Laura Taylor at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services at 609-588-7500/

Hand washing materials found at Health Department

Hand washing is a proven way to control the spread of infections. The Ocean County Health Department has hand washing resources that are available to the public.



There is no charge for the

brochures or other available items. For information, please call Health Education at 732-341-9700, ext. 7224 or 800-342-9738, ext. 7224.

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