



Epi Watch

A Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter



Division of Disease Control
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(Mon-Fri, 8-5, Area code 727):
Epidemiology 824-6932
Hepatitis 824-6932
HIV/AIDS 824-6964
Immunizations 824-6936
STD 824-6911
Tuberculosis 824-6953
Non-business hours 824-6900

Epi Watch is a monthly newsletter produced and distributed by the Pinellas County Health Department Epidemiology Program. For more information, or to add your e-mail address to the distribution list, please contact Andrea Dopico: andreadopico@doh.state.fl.us

Summer Safety

Suzanne DeKay, MSPH and Andrea Dopico, MPH

Summertime in Florida is all about water, picnics and the sun. However, dangers lurk in each of these pastimes. Below are some of the most common conditions associated with summer months and how you can stay safe while having fun!

Healthy Beaches

When temperatures get warm, people flock to the ocean for boating, water skiing, sunbathing, jet skiing and other water activities. It is important to ensure that these waters are safe for the public to enjoy. The Florida Department of Health has a Healthy Beaches program that regularly monitors water quality in Florida's beaches. Every week, water samples are taken from 14 beaches in Pinellas County. This water is tested for levels of indicator bacteria, specifically *Enterococcus* and fecal coliforms. Both types of bacteria are enteric microorganisms that are found in the intestines of humans and other animals. Occurrences of these bacteria indicate the possibility of the existence of pathogens that can cause gastrointestinal illness. For more information about Beach Water Sampling and to review the bacterial sampling results for Pinellas County, please visit: www.doh.state.fl.us. Select 'Beach Water Quality' from the drop-down menu, and then click on 'Pinellas County'.

Red Tide

Red tide is a phenomenon caused by blooming dinoflagellates. Contrary to popular opinion, this event does not always turn marine water red or brown. The species responsible for red tide in the Gulf of Mexico is *Karenia brevis*. This organism produces a toxin that can cause respiratory irritation in humans; particularly in individuals with severe or persistent respiratory conditions such as chronic lung disease or asthma. When *Karenia brevis* cells that lie near the surface of the ocean water become broken up by surf at the shore or by breaking waves offshore, the toxin becomes airborne, potentially causing eye and respiratory irritation (coughing, sneezing, tearing, and itching) to beachgoers. Respiratory irritation in humans is significantly reduced when the winds are blowing offshore. Any effects usually decline when a person is no longer exposed. Wearing a particle mask can reduce irritation for some people. (This information was taken from the NOAA Coastal Services Center: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/>)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) coordinates a year-round statewide comprehensive red tide monitoring program. The FWRI established the new red tide status line to provide the public with an easy way to obtain current red tide status information. Florida residents and visitors can call 1-866-300-9399 at anytime, from anywhere in Florida, to hear a recording that details red tide conditions throughout the state. Callers outside of Florida can dial 727-553-2448 to hear this recording. Please note that standard calling charges will apply when dialing this number.

Picnics and Food Safety

Picnics pose another hazard in the summertime. Food should remain at the proper temperature to prevent bacterial growth, which can result in a foodborne illness. The most common symptoms of foodborne illnesses are diarrhea, nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, and fever.

The following food safety tips will help keep your picnic safe:

- Use a food thermometer to be sure that grilled meats are cooked thoroughly and rinse all fruits and vegetables at home before packing them.
- Food should not sit out for more than 1 hour in temperatures above 90F and cold food should be kept cold with ice packs until ready to serve.
- Washing hands before eating or preparing food is the best way to stay safe. In an area where no handwashing facilities are in place, the use of hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol is recommended.

Sun Exposure and Protection

The sun is at its strongest in the summer and with the high number of tourists to the area, many people are not aware of the sun's effects even during a short exposure. Using sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher is essential for skin protection from UV rays. However, the intense heat can also play a major role in summer health. Heat-induced disorders include transient heat fatigue, heat rash, fainting, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. According to the CDC, approximately 400 people die each year from excessive heat exposure, and many more people die from health conditions that are exacerbated by such exposure. The elderly, very young and people with chronic health problems are most at risk.

Warning signs of heat stress include headache, dizziness, confusion, rapid pulse, nausea, skin that is red and hot, lack of sweating and possible progression to unconsciousness. A car left in the sun can reach an interior temperature of 120°F within 15 minutes and cracking the windows has been shown by NOAA to make little difference. To prevent serious heat related illness or death, children and pets should never be left unattended in a vehicle.

Being aware of the hazards of summer can help protect you and your family. Remember to stay safe while having fun!

"The reason for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information on a disease is to control that disease. Collection and analysis should not be allowed to consume resources if action does not follow." Foege, W.H. et al. (1976). Int. J of Epidemiology, 5:29-37.

NA = Not Available

Selected Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	2006 June	2006 Year-to-Date	2005 Year-to-Date	2005 Total
AIDS	25	117	105	160
Animal Bite, PEP Recommended	2	18	21	48
Animal Rabies			3	5
Arboviral Illness (Human):				
Dengue		2		3
EEE				
SLE				
WNV				18
CA/LaCrosse				
Botulism				
Campylobacteriosis	2	12	25	39
Chlamydia	252	1324	1134	2505
Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD)			2	2
Cryptosporidiosis		2	2	15
Cyclosporiasis			56	57
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7				1
Giardiasis	1	13	9	30
Gonorrhea	148	795	659	1436
<i>H. influenzae</i> :				
Meningitis				
Pneumonia		1	1	1
Primary bacteremia		4	2	6
Epiglottitis				
Hansen Disease			1	1
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)		1	1	1
Hepatitis, Acute Viral:				
A		2	5	9
B	2	6	18	36
C	3	6	3	7
Non-A, Non-B			1	1
Hepatitis B: Pregnant woman +HBsAg	2	14	19	33
HIV	27	90	144	238
Legionellosis	1	8	3	8
Listeriosis			1	1
Lyme Disease			1	4
Malaria		1		1
Meningitis:				
Group B Strep				
<i>S. pneumoniae</i>		1	4	6
Other bacterial	1	5	3	5
Meningococcal Disease		5	4	7
Mercury Poisoning				
Mumps			1	1
Pertussis	3	12	4	13
Plague (Bubonic & Pneumonic)				
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever		2		0
Salmonellosis	9	53	67	212
Shigellosis	2	13	57	169
Smallpox				
<i>Streptococcal</i> disease, Inv. Group A		7	7	11
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. disease (DR)		8	17	27
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. disease (Suscept)	2	15	19	29
Syphilis:				
Total	14	87	37	95
Infectious (P and S)	4	20	19	41
Early Latent	7	49	12	32
Late Syphilis(Late Latent; Neurosyphilis)	3	18	6	22
Congenital				
Tuberculosis	1	17	14	27
<i>Vibrio</i> infections (vulnificus)		1		2

Provisional cases reported by the Pinellas County Health Department. Blank cells indicate no cases reported.

For a complete list of reportable diseases and guidelines for reporting please visit:

http://www.myflorida.com/disease_ctrl/epi/surv/lor8_4.pdf