

Summer 2014

## PASADENA HEALTHY TIMES

City of Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD) 1845 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena CA 91103

# **Greetings from our Environmental Health Division Manager!**

The Environmental Health Division of the Pasadena Public Health Department seeks to reduce exposures to environmental hazards and to educate the public on potential sources of disease and unsanitary conditions. Focus areas of our Environmental Health Specialists (also known in the community as "Health Inspectors") include food safety at restaurants, farmers' markets and community events, lead poisoning investigations, public pool water quality assessment and testing, vector control, lodging facilities, and more.

In this Summer 2014 Edition of *Pasadena Healthy Times*, our Environmental Health Division has compiled a few articles to keep your summer a healthy one.

Sincerely, Liza Frias

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## **Increased Pertussis Cases Throughout California**

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has reported that the number of pertussis (also known as whooping cough) cases has reached epidemic proportions. As of June 10 of this year, 3,458 cases of pertussis were reported to CDPH which is greater than the number reported in all of 2013. Pertussis is cyclical and peaks every 3 to 5 years, with the most recent state-wide peak occurring in 2010. Locally, the City of Pasadena Public Health Department has seen similar cyclical trends in pertussis cases since 1991.

Pertussis is easily spread from one person to another when someone with pertussis coughs and is in close contact with others. Symptoms include a runny nose and a cough that can last up to two weeks. The disease can progress into rapid coughing fits that end with a "whooping" sound. The spread of pertussis can be prevented by vaccines, either DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis), or Tdap booster.

CDPH recommends that the following populations be vaccinated against pertussis:

- Children should receive 5 doses of the DTaP vaccine prior to entering kindergarten, and a Tdap booster prior to entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade (after age 11 years).
- During EVERY pregnancy, women should receive the Tdap vaccine in the third trimester of pregnancy to protect newborns.
- Childcare providers and anyone who will be around infants or children should be vaccinated with Tdap.
- Adults age 19-64 may also receive a Tdap booster.

For more information on pertussis and vaccines, visit <a href="http://www.shotsforschool.org">http://www.shotsforschool.org</a>/ or speak to a healthcare provider.

This issue would not be possible without support from Dr. Ying-Ying Goh, Liza Frias, Kelly Kaufman, Erika Redke, and Leticia Saenz. For questions on this or previous editions of Pasadena Healthy Times, contact Adrienne Kung at (626) 744-6151.

## **Mercury Found in Skin Creams**

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has issued a health alert to increase awareness of imported skin creams found to contain high levels of mercury. Recently, several skin-lightening or acne creams from Mexico have resulted in multiple cases of mercury poisoning. Although babies and children did not use the creams, they were also identified as cases of poisoning. The mercury found in the creams is easily spread from the users to clothing, bedding and other surfaces of the home, therefore causing poisoning in family members. Mercury can even get into the air and be breathed in.

Symptoms of mercury poisoning include difficulty concentrating or memory loss; nervousness, irritability, or anxiety; depression; insomnia; headaches; fatigue; and tremors or tingling in hands, feet or around the mouth. See a healthcare provider if you think you may have these symptoms.

The products linked to mercury poisoning were sold in plastic containers that either have no label or a hand-made label. Consumers indicated that the creams were sold on the streets of California communities referred by friends, or were purchased when visiting Mexico (either in Jalisco or Michoacan) and carried into California. Samples of creams identified to contain mercury are shown below.



Stop using unlabeled and hand-made products immediately. Any products suspected to contain mercury should be disposed of according to hazardous waste practices. Place the product in a sealed plastic bag labeled, "contains mercury," and take to a household hazardous waste collection facility. To find a local collection site, visit the California Department of Toxic Substances Control at http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/UniversalWaste/HHW.cfm.

In our Spring 2014 Edition of *Pasadena Healthy Times*, we also introduced other imported creams linked to cause mercury poisoning. It's important to keep the following in mind when purchasing creams:

- Products sold legally in the US must have all information in English
- All ingredients must be listed and a label must be present
- Products that list mercury, mercurio, mercurous chloride, cinnabar, or calomel in the ingredients should not be purchased or used

Visit CDPH at <a href="http://www.ehib.org/paper.jsp?paper\_key=MSKC">http://www.ehib.org/paper.jsp?paper\_key=MSKC</a> for more information on mercury poisoning due to cosmetic products.

To view images of recent skin care products that have also been found to be associated with mercury poisoning, download our Spring 2014 newsletter at <a href="http://cityofpasadena.net/publichealth/disease prevention/">http://cityofpasadena.net/publichealth/disease prevention/</a>. The products include Monsepa Bleaching Express Peeling Cream and Jiaoli Miraculous Cream.

## **Fight the West Nile Virus Bite!**

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a disease carried by infected mosquitoes and spread to humans and other animals when the mosquitoes bite. Severe symptoms of WNV occur in less than 1% of infected individuals and include fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, muscle weakness, and body numbness. Milder symptoms include fever, body aches, nausea and vomiting, and skin rashes. About 80% of infected people will not show any symptoms of WNV. There are no specific treatments for the disease, but there are many ways to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes and precautions you can take to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

To control the presence of mosquitoes, Environmental Health staff of the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD) travel throughout the City at least once a week to treat gutters, puddles, pools, and other free-standing water sources that serve as prime breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Additionally, for more than a decade, the PPHD has collaborated with the Pasadena Police Department to operate the bi-annual Green Pool Initiative, whereby police helicopters use aerial observations to look for stagnant pools and green standing water sources.

You can help eliminate breeding of all mosquito species, including those that carry WNV by:

- Removing or draining anything that has stagnant water
- Keeping roof gutters, ponds, swimming pools and spas clean
- Changing water in fountains, bird baths, and wading pools weekly
- Stocking ponds with mosquito-eating fish

WNV can also infect other animals. If you find a dead bird or squirrel on your property, please report it to the West Nile Virus and Dead Bird Hotline at (877) 968-2473 or online at http://westnile.ca.gov.

For more information on vector control, to receive free mosquito fish to prevent breeding, or to report a green pool or still water source, please call the Environmental Health Division at (626) 744-6004.

You can also protect yourself by taking precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, including:

- Wearing repellants containing DEET
- Limiting outdoor activities from dusk until dawn
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors
- Checking your window and door mesh screens for holes



## **Summer Food Safety**

As the temperatures heat up, it's perfect weather for camping, picnics, barbeques and other activities that can promote foodborne illnesses. Take these quick tips from <a href="http://www.fightbac.org/">http://www.fightbac.org/</a> for food practices to stay safe this summer:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food (sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" two times)
- Marinate raw meats in the refrigerator and don't use left-over marinade on cooked meat
- If using charcoal to grill foods, preheat the coals for 20-30 minutes or until the coals are ashy
- Use a thermometer to ensure that internal temperatures of the foods are reached to kill bacteria that could make
  you sick (or <a href="http://www.fightbac.org/safe-food-handling/safety-in-all-seasons/127-cook-heat-it-up-chart">http://www.fightbac.org/safe-food-handling/safety-in-all-seasons/127-cook-heat-it-up-chart</a> for more
  on safe internal temperatures):
  - Hamburgers cooked to 160°F
  - Roasts and steaks cooked to 145°F for medium rare or 160°F for medium
  - Poultry cooked to 165°F
- Do not eat food that has been out of the refrigerator for more than one hour
- Use different coolers to separate foods from beverages; the beverage cooler is usually opened more frequently, therefore allowing the food to stay colder longer



## this summer

#### A Sweet Message About Sugar

- ☐ The average American consumes over 100 pounds of added sugar each year.
- □ Calcium is important for building strong bones and teeth. Drinking sugary beverages instead of milk can decrease your calcium intake.
- □ Plaque (or bacteria) on your teeth and gums interacts with sugars in drinks, and can result in tooth decay.
- High-calorie sweeteners come in many forms; be cautious of sugar-sweetened drinks containing the following listed on the ingredients label—fructose, syrup, corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, dextrose, and fruit juice concentrates.



#### **Summer Hydration Tips**

Staying hydrated is essential, especially in the summer when the temperatures are hot and we're spending more time outdoors. Water is essential to the healthy functioning of our bodies, including temperature and blood pressure regulation. The Nutrition and Physical Education Program of the Pasadena Public Health Department recommends drinking water rather than sugar-sweetened beverages, especially before, during and after periods of physical activity. Here are other tips from the *Rethink Your Drink* campaign:

- Be careful when consuming energy or sports drinks, soda, and caffeinated beverages, which are higher in calories and lower in nutritional value.
- ♦ Healthier beverage alternatives include low-fat milk, non-fat milk, 100% juice (in limited amounts) and unsweetened iced tea.
- ◆ Take water to go. Fill a clean, reusable water bottle and take it with you to quench your thirst throughout the day (this is also an eco-friendly way to go!).
- It's okay to indulge every now and then—choose smaller cans, cups, or glasses instead of large or supersized options.
- Read the Nutrition Facts label. Remember to check the serving size and the number of servings in the container to stay within calorie recommendations. To calculate the number of teaspoons of sugar in a serving, look for the Sugars category on the label and use this formula:

#### Grams of Sugar ÷ 4 = Teaspoons of Sugar\*

\*This calculates the sugar amount **per serving**. To calculate the total amount of sugar in the container, multiply the number of teaspoons of sugar by the number of servings in the container.

Flavor your water by adding fresh fruit and herbs. Try combining cucumber and mint, strawberry and kiwi, or our recipes on the next page—the possibilities are endless!

For more information regarding the Nutrition and Physical Activity Program, please contact Margarita Aguilar at <a href="maguilar@cityofpasadena.net">maguilar@cityofpasadena.net</a> or call (626) 744-6134. The Nutrition and Physical Activity Program is funded by the Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Branch of the USDA.



#### Rethink Your Drink this summer by trying one of our recipes!

#### **Basil Lemonade**

Lemons are high in vitamin C and promote alkalinity and cleansing in the body. The basil adds a refreshing flavor to this naturally-sweetened lemonade.

- 1/2 cup of freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 4 cups of cold water
- 1 cup of fresh basil leaves
- Agave syrup, honey, or stevia to taste
- 1. Place basil in the bottom of a pitcher and muddle it by slightly crushing the leaves.
- Combine lemon juice and water and pour over basil leaves.
- 3. Add agave syrup, honey, or stevia to taste.
- 4. Chill and serve over ice.



#### Agua Fresca

This popular Mexican drink infuses water with your favorite fresh fruit.

- 4 cups of cold water
- 2 cups of your favorite fresh fruit (e.g. berries, watermelon, mango)
- Agave syrup, honey or stevia to taste
- 2 teaspoons of fresh squeezed lime juice
- Lime wedges
- 1. Place fruit and water in a blender and puree.
- 2. Place a small sieve over a pitcher and pour mixture into it, straining the liquid into the pitcher. Discard solids.
- 3. Add lime juice and agave syrup, honey, or stevia.
- 4. Garnish with lime wedges.

#### **PPHD Soda**

Our Nutrition & Physical Activity Program makes this refreshing drink for meetings and events. To make, just add 1 quart of sparkling water and 11.4-ounce frozen can of 100% juice concentrate in a large pitcher. Cover and chill, and serve over ice. It's that easy, tasty, and refreshing!

#### PM 160 Form Reminder for CHDP Providers

Yellow copies of the PM 160 form must be sent to the Pasadena Public Health Department Child Health & Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program within 30 days of the health assessment. This allows for timely follow-up on referrals for patients in the CHDP Gateway Program while they have full-scope Medi-Cal.

Remember, patients who receive temporary Medi-Cal through CHDP Gateway receive Medi-Cal benefits for up to 2 months only.

Pink copies must be given to the parent/legal guardian at the time of the examination with a complete explanation of the results of the assessment and discussion about referrals.

If you have any questions regarding PM 160 forms, please call Kelly Kaufman, CHDP Nurse Liaison at (626) 744-6168.

### Save the Dates!

Find us throughout the city! We partner with community agencies to bring health education and services to the Greater Pasadena Area.

- 07/26 Chris Holden Annual Block Party, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at <u>Jackson St (between El Molino and Los Robles)</u>
- 08/05 Foothill Unity Annual Back-to-School Distribution, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at <u>Santa Anita Race Track</u>, 285 W. Huntington Drive in Arcadia
- 08/05 National Night Out, 4:00 to 9:00 pm at Kings Villages, 1141 N. Fair Oaks Ave

- 08/16 Levitt Pavillion Summer Music Concert, 6:30 pm at Memorial Park, 85 E. Holly St
- 09/13 Fiestas Patrias, noon to 4:00 pm at <u>Villa Parke</u> <u>Community Center, 363 E. Villa St</u>
- 09/27 Community Health and Resource Fair, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, at <u>Jackie Robinson Community</u> Center, 1020 N. Fair Oaks Ave
- 10/25 Latino History Parade and Jamaica, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at <u>La Pintoresca Park, 45 E. Washington</u> Blvd
- 10/31 Southern California Women's Conference and Green Expo, 7:30 am to 3:00 pm at Pasadena Convention Center, 300 E. Green St

## **Beware of Illegal Food Vending**

Illegal food vending on the streets of Pasadena communities poses a serious public health threat. The goal of the food safety program at the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD) is to ensure that the food sold and served throughout the city is safe, wholesome, properly labeled, and produced under sanitary conditions. Environmental Health Specialists at PPHD are responsible for inspecting food facilities, including mobile food carts and trucks.

Approved food vendors will receive a sticker to be affixed on the cart or truck following inspection to operate. See samples, effective after August 31, 2014.

Street vendors selling food without a sticker or valid health permit are selling food illegally and may make consumers sick due to unsanitary conditions including the following:





- No restroom for food handlers and no running water to wash hands or utensils
- Food from unapproved sources and unapproved cooking/storage equipment
- Potentially hazardous food\* held at unsafe temperatures
- Lack of proper equipment to maintain food at appropriate temperatures
- Food not protected from contamination
- Garbage in close proximity to food preparation/cooking areas

\*Potentially hazardous foods are those that must be held at certain temperatures because they can rapidly grow infectious bacteria. These foods include raw eggs, cut melons, milk and other dairy products, meats, cut leafy greens and more.

Additionally, a foodborne outbreak due to food sold by illegal vendors may not be adequately investigated or traced back to the original owner to prevent further sickness in the community. If you see a vendor without a sticker issued by PPHD, there is no way to tell if the food is safe.

Environmental Health Specialists work with food vendors to ensure that the food sold meets minimum requirements as outlined in the California Health and Safety Code and local municipal ordinances. For more information on the dangers associated with illegal food vendors or to report illegal street vending, call the Environmental Health Division at (626) 744-6004.