



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Princeton Health Department

Princeton Health Matters

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

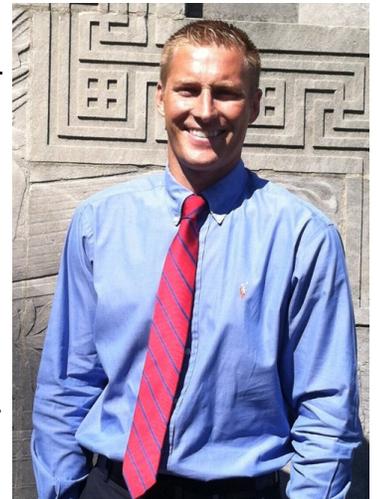
SUMMER 2014

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New Health Officer Jeff Grosser Joins Princeton Health Department

Grosser previously worked through the ranks of the Burlington County Health Department for the past six years. Starting off as an Environmental Health Specialist, he worked as a HAZMAT responder and environmental inspector. Covering over forty municipalities and two major highways, there were no shortages of emergency responses to fuel spills or chemical leaks due to motor vehicle accidents. Grosser then was promoted to oversee the Housing Program which incorporated enforcing the State Housing Code for thirty-three municipalities. Grosser also led environmental childhood lead poisoning inspections for the county with a key focus on geographic information systems (GIS) and pinpointing high risk areas prior to receiving elevated childhood blood lead levels. Soon after passing his NJ Health Officer's exam in January 2013, Grosser was promoted as Program Manager, Disease Prevention and Control which included overseeing the County Animal Shelter, Mosquito Control, and Communicable Disease/STD/HIV Clinic. Grosser also served as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy Reserves stationed out of Fort Dix. He served with a Marine Surgical Detachment acting as the Environmental Health Officer. He transitioned into his new role as Health Officer of the Princeton Health Department on April 7, 2014. Although a new Health Officer, Jeff has worked effectively and successfully across the public health continuum with an array of disciplines. Understanding communication is integral to any organization, Jeff has implemented a new practice of bi-weekly / monthly "hotwash" meetings. This practice allows for timely dissemination of information as well as providing updates within the various sections of the health department. "Though our department consists of four full-time and two-part time employees, there are many projects happening at any given time. Regular updates from each employee allows everyone to stay informed of what the health department is up to" says Grosser. "Regular hotwash meetings are a way of ensuring we remain cohesive because the work of the health department is very diverse." Jeff grew up in Hopewell, NJ before moving to Fairfax, VA and then eventually making his way back to NJ, going to Shawnee High School in Medford, NJ. Jeff discovered his passion for public health through his interest in science and sociology. He studied public health at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and received his masters in environmental health sciences from the Bloomberg School of Public Health at JHU. Grosser was a four-year starter and captain of the JHU Men's Soccer team and served as the assistant coach for two years. Currently, Jeff lives in Tabernacle, NJ with his wife, and two daughters ages 18 months and 3 years. When he is not at the Health Department, he can often be found fishing off the coast of LBI or playing soccer with his girls.



Pool Safety

Swimming pools provide an environment to enjoy the summer months in a residential setting or in a public pool. Public pools are inspected by the Princeton Health Department under a strict set of [rules and guidelines](#) established by the New Jersey Department of Health . Residential pools are private and therefore require owner/operator oversight for safety concerns. The following list includes several factors to keep in mind to keep your home pool safe.

- 1) Never leave a child unattended and never swim alone.
- 2) Learn to swim and teach children how to swim as early as possible.
- 3) Have the proper safety equipment available, mainly an assist hook and a life buoy.
- 4) Keep the shallow end separated from the deep end with a floating rope.
- 5) Keep pool chemicals in a locked safe place.
- 6) Maintain safe pH levels. pH measures how basic or acidic a solution is. 7 is neutral, below 7 is acidic and above 7 is basic. Pools should have a pH of 7.2-7.4.
- 7) Chlorine levels should be 3.0-5.0 ppm to control bacterial growth.
- 8) Serious head and neck injuries can be caused by diving in deep or shallow waters.
- 9) Teach diving skills especially to younger children.
- 10) Leave the pool area immediately during thunder and lightning storms

Staying safe and enjoying your pool and recreational activities is your responsibility. In the event of any emergency that appears to be life threatening call 911. The police and emergency squads are equipped to handle pool related emergencies.

KNOW YOUR SWIMMING POOL SAFETY

Statistics and Safety guidelines are from the Center For Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationsafety/water-safety/

First aid kits should include bandages, tape, scissors, as well as a flotation device. Call 911 in the event of an emergency

20% OF DROWNING DEATHS ARE CHILDREN UNDER 14

80% OF DROWNING VICTIMS ARE MALE

CHILDREN AGES 1-4 ARE AT THE GREATEST RISK

Safety Tips:

- *Formal swimming lessons reduce the risk of drowning in children aged 1 to 4 years old.
- *Barriers around the pool prevent children from getting into the pool intentionally or accidentally
- *Children should always be supervised when swimming to reduce the risk of accidents and improve reaction time.
- *Use safety devices properly; Air-filled or foam toys like noodles are not life saving devices.
- *Know CPR and have a First Aid Kit

70% OF OF ADULT DROWNINGS INVOLVE ALCOHOL



Lyme Disease

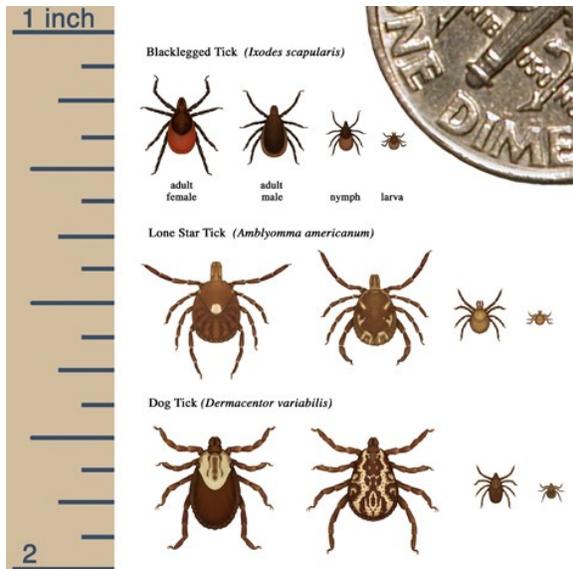
Since 1982, Lyme Disease has been reported to the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for data tracking purposes. New Jersey is one of several states with a high incidence of Lyme Disease and continues to be a problem for Princeton residents.

People acquire Lyme disease after being bitten by certain types of ticks that carry the bacterium (*Borrelia burgdorferi*). In the Princeton area the deer tick is the prime culprit. Peak activity is between mid-October through early December.

The tick has to be attached and feeding for 24 hours. Since diagnosis can sometimes be difficult, be aware of the following early symptoms: a slowly expanding red rash; fatigue, headache, neck stiffness, jaw discomfort, pain or stiffness in muscles or joints, slight fever, swollen glands, or conjunctivitis. Occasionally, patients may have swelling or just pain in several joints. Not all of these symptoms, including the rash, may occur together. The Mercer County Rutgers Extension office located at 930 Spruce Street, Trenton, NJ can identify the deer tick as well as many other insects and pests. Contact the Princeton Health Department (609)497-7608 for more information on testing.

Prevention of Lyme Disease can be accomplished by:

- Avoiding tick habitat areas such as tall grass, bushes, and woods. Stay on a clear path as much as possible.
- Wearing appropriate clothing such as long pants tucked into your socks and a tucked-in shirt with a snug collar and cuffs when out in tick areas
- Checking yourself and other family members for ticks immediately after coming inside.
- Checking infants and children for ticks before bath time
- Application of insect repellents containing DEET to clothes and exposed skin, and permethrin (which kills ticks on contact) to clothes, should also help reduce the likelihood of exposure to ticks



Backyard BBQ & Summer Picnic Safety

Backyard BBQ and Summer Picnic Safety

When you think of summer you may think of deliciously grilled foods, nice hearty salads and various cuts of fresh fruit, all waiting to be devoured by a hungry crowd! That's not a bad thought provided all the proper food safety precautions are followed when preparing and cooking your summer foods. Due to warmer temperatures and outside eating, summer is a time of increased risk for spreading food-borne illness. The two greatest causes of foodborne illness are temperature abused foods and poor food handling. Both are easily avoidable by following a handful of important rules. By taking the time to prepare and cook your foods safely you will ensure none of your family or guests become ill with an uncomfortable foodborne illness. Take a few minutes to read and digest (no pun intended) the pointers below for a safe BBQ or picnic:

1) **Wash Your Hands**: Yup, mom was right! Vigorously washing your hands with good old fashioned soap and water for 20 seconds (that's roughly the happy birthday song twice...but no cheating, sing it slow), will adequately remove germs from your hands and prevent them from spreading. And there's no need for the anti-bacterial stuff either as studies show anti-bacterial products are only serving to create germs with more resistant capabilities known as "superbugs". While washing, don't forget to interlock your fingers and scrub between those digits where germs like to hide. It is especially important to wash thoroughly after handling raw food product. And when out picnicking it is sensible to bring along soap and plenty of extra water for rinsing your hands and utensils should they touch the ground. If you'd rather not lug around a couple extra jugs of water and soap then at least consider using moist towelettes. The scrubbing action with these wet wipes is usually adequate enough to remove germs from your hands and can be used on your utensils as well but make sure your dry them prior to serving food.

Defrosting/Thawing Foods: To prevent the growth of harmful bacteria always be sure to defrost foods **INSIDE** the refrigerator as opposed to on a countertop. This allows the food to defrost under a controlled temperature that most bacteria will not thrive in.

If your foods need to be defrosted more rapidly, the safest ways to do so are:

- Under 70F or cooler running water at a fairly strong pressure, or
- In a microwave on the defrost setting. However, only use a microwave if the food is going to be cooked soon after being defrosted, otherwise spore-forming/toxin producing bacteria may have a chance to grow and contaminate your food. Once contaminated with a toxin the food cannot be rendered safe by any process such as cooking or refreezing. In addition, a food may not smell or taste any different just because it is contaminated. When foods smell or taste bad this is a sign of a spoilage organism and **NOT** a pathogen. Spoilage organisms usually will not make you ill, think milk to yogurt, this process is done by introducing friendly bacteria that are essentially spoilage organisms which happen to be healthy for your body.

Backyard BBQ & Summer Picnic Safety (continued...)

Always Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot; General Rules of Thumb Are:

Foods needing to be kept cold should remain at 41F or below to prevent bacterial growth. This can be done by putting the food on ice or in a cooler with ice. The exception to this rule would be if the food is going to be eaten within two hours of coming out of a 41F refrigerator. Foods needing to be kept hot should first be cooked to the proper temperature and then can be held at a temperature of 135F or higher to prevent bacterial growth. If the hot foods are going to be consumed within 2 hours of being cooked then it is not necessary to keep those foods at a specific temperature.

***Please see the chart below for safe minimal internal cooking temperatures.**

Poultry/Stuffed Meats, Fish or Pasta/Casseroles/Leftovers----- 165F for 15 seconds

Fish/Meat/Pork----- 145F for 15 seconds

Beef Roasts/Pork Roasts----- 145F for 3min (rare) 160F (medium)

***Roasts can be cooked at a lower temperature if preferred as long as they are cooked for an adequate length of time. For example, cooking at 130F for 112min would render the food safe.**

Vegetables----- 135F

Hamburgers should be cooked to an internal temperature of 155F to be rendered safe. However, if you like your burgers on the rare side like I do, you can eat them that way but just remember it is more risky to eat them undercooked than it is overcooked.

For those who doubt the power of pathogens in undercooked meat keep in mind the once beloved NJ based manufacturer Topps Meat Company. In 2007 they closed their doors after 67 years of business due to a 21.7million pound frozen ground beef recall because the product contained the potentially deadly pathogen Escherichia coli O157:H7 (E.coli). At the time they closed, Topps was one of the largest meat packing companies in the United States. A USDA investigation revealed the cause of the contamination to be “inadequate process controls”, or in other words, they either temperature abused the product, mishandled the product, did not adequately clean AND sanitize their equipment, or a combination of all three. As a result, the public who consumed the E.coli tainted meat in an undercooked state became extremely ill and were hospitalized. At the time, it was the second largest beef recall in the U.S. right behind a 25,000,000 pound ground beef recall in 1997 that put Nebraska based Hudson Foods out of business. The moral of the story folks...if you want to be certain you are safe, cook your burgers to 155F!



Prevent Cross-Contamination: A significant portion of foodborne illness cases come simply from poor food handling. Be mindful of separating raw foods from finished foods both in and out of the refrigerator. To prevent cross-contamination, raw foods should always be stored on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator and with an adequate cover such a plastic wrap or in a sealable container. Marinating should always be done INSIDE the refrigerator and not on a countertop. However, it is perfectly acceptable to take foods out of the refrigerator to come up to room temperature just prior to cooking, but not longer than two hours before. Remember to always use separate dishes, cutting boards and utensils for handling raw foods vs. finished foods. If you are limited on counter space in your home a good method of preparation would be to prepare all your raw foods first. Then clean up your workspace and sanitize the area with sanitizer wipes or a sanitizer solution before then preparing your ready-to-eat foods. To make your own sanitizer solution at home

Backyard BBQ & Summer Picnic Safety (continued...)

simply combine ½ capful of household bleach (chlorine) with ½ gallon of warm water, that's a 50 part per million (ppm) ratio, then fill a spray bottle with it. This solution will effectively kill all bacteria and virus that may be lingering on your countertop after prepping raw foods. Also sanitize in and around your sink. Studies have shown that there are more bacteria & virus, as well as a greater variety of bacteria & virus around your sink than there is anywhere else in your house! Yes, that includes the toilet seat.

Fruit & Veggie Safety: Don't forget to wash all your fruits and vegetables to remove any soil and/or contaminants, such as pesticides and herbicides. Lightly scrubbing fruits and vegetables with a scrub brush under running water is an effective method of removing soil, contaminants and pathogens. However, not all fruits and veggies can tolerate this type of handling so for the more delicate items it is a good idea to briefly soak them in a fruit/vegetable sanitizer solution to kill or remove any pathogens that may be on the produce. Then give them a quick rinse to remove any remaining residue. Another effective method is to rinse them in a colander and use a salad spinner to remove the water. Not only will your leafy greens come out dry and crisp but the centrifugal force from the spinner can also remove pathogens from the product.

For the naysayers of properly cleaning fruits and veggies I offer some more food for thought. In recent years there has been an upward trend in foodborne illness outbreaks associated with produce. Some of the more recent and memorable ones are the Taco Bell scare of 2006 where lettuce was found to be the source of e.coli contamination and the 2008 salmonella outbreak associated with tomatoes, cilantro and two varieties of pepper which caused hundreds of people throughout the US to fall ill. In 2013 nearly 400 people in the US fell ill due to bagged salad mix containing iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce, carrots and red cabbage. The parasite responsible for the outbreak is known as Cyclospora and it is typically spread through feces in contaminated food or water...pre-washed salad anyone? Folks, just remember when it comes to produce pre-washed or triple washed does not necessarily mean sanitized! And for those of you who know what irradiation is, rest assure it is a perfectly safe and effective way of sanitizing certain produce. So if you see the irradiation logo on a food package at your local store do not fear that your next child will be born with an extra arm, leg or third eye, it's not going to happen! A final point to note is that with proper sanitization of all the produce involved in these outbreaks all of the illnesses could have prevented. Remember the homemade sanitizer solution recipe from earlier in this article?...Chlorine is your friend!

Protecting Your Hard Work: Ok, so now you've followed all the proper food safety precautions that the seemingly crazy Health people tell you to follow and you're ready to serve your guests. Placing the food outdoors in the open air for people to sneeze on and flies to land on would be contradictory to all your hard work. Covering the food when it is put out for serving will minimize any chance of contamination and validate all your diligent attention to detail while preparing food.

Backyard BBQ & Summer Picnic Safety (continued...)

After landing, flies regurgitate their last meal and stomp it into their soon to be meal to soften it, then they suck it up through their straw-like mouth. I know that's a horrifying thought so don't let their next meal be YOUR burger! Flies and many other insects and rodents are vectors of disease and this is one way they can spread them. By using a fly tent, pot covers or even other dishes to cover your food you can ensure no uninvited vermin crash your backyard BBQ!

Closing Points & Recap

Time is of the Essence: Just remember that the longer food sits out of proper temperature the more bacteria will grow on it. For cold foods you don't want to keep them out of temperature in a hot summer sun for more than 2 hours and the clock starts when that food is at 41F. For hot food that has already been cooked to the proper temperature you don't want to leave it out for more than 2 hours. The clock starts when that food hits 135F. On cooler days you may have a little more leeway with leaving foods out longer but I wouldn't push it too much. Don't underestimate that summer sun and make sure to protect your food, by doing so you will protect your family and friends also.

After reading this article you must be asking yourself, "Should I now be afraid of eating food rather than enjoying it?" The answer...absolutely not! Knowing how to prevent cases of foodborne illness is 90% of the battle and following through with good practices is the other 10%. So be mindful of how you handle your food and surely don't forget to wash those hands and you will eat well this summer!

"Knowing how to prevent foodborne illness is 90% of the battle and following good practices is the other 10%."

Sources

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<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6243a5.htm>

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV)

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) is a viral respiratory illness first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. It is caused by a coronavirus (CoV) that can infect people and animals, similar to SARS. Those confirmed as having MERS-CoV infection develop severe acute respiratory illness including: fever, cough, and shortness of breath. What has the international public health community most alarmed about this disease is that nearly 30% of people confirmed to have MERS-CoV infection have died.

All of the cases of MERS-CoV have been linked to countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula. The virus has spread from ill people to others through close contact, such as caring for or living with an infected person. However, there is no evidence of sustained spreading in community settings.

On May 2, 2014, the first U.S. imported case was confirmed in a traveler from Saudi Arabia, who flew into Chicago and then traveled by bus to Indiana. On May 11, 2014, a second U.S. imported case of MERS was confirmed in a traveler also from Saudi Arabia. The second traveler came to the U.S. (Orlando, Florida) via London, Boston, and Atlanta. Both U.S. cases were healthcare workers however, their cases were not linked.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), State, and Local Health Departments continue to monitor this situation very closely and are working with doctors and local hospitals to ensure those with travel to the Saudi Arabian peninsula along with respiratory like illness are being tested as appropriate. The CDC is still trying to determine exactly where this virus originated as well as how it spreads, and how new infections can be prevented. The Princeton Health Department, NJ Department of Health, and the University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro are working together to ensure our area is prepared for increased incidence of this infection. The CDC currently has an “Alert” status, Level 2, with respect to traveling to the Arabian Peninsula recommended those to practice enhanced precautions. If you are planning on traveling to this area, please visit the following CDC webpage for more information: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/coronavirus-saudi-arabia-qatar>

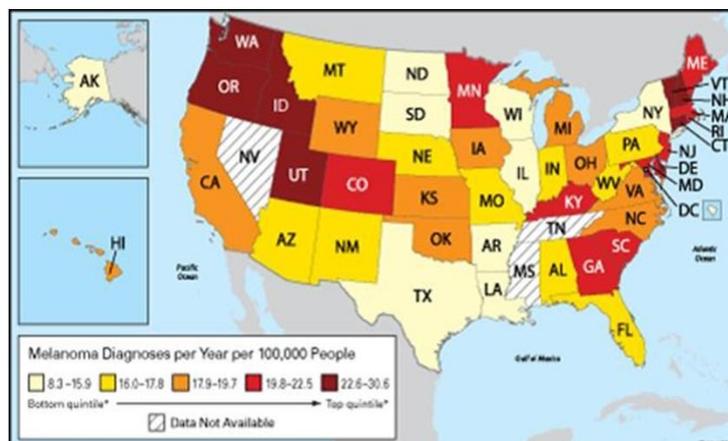


Health Officer's Message: Protect Your Skin this Summer

In 2014, the American Cancer Society estimates that 76,100 cases of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, will be diagnosed nationwide in 2014. An estimated 2,590 of those diagnoses will be in New Jersey. Scientists believe that reducing exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can decrease the risk of skin cancer. More and more studies are showing that each sunburn endured, increases one's risk for skin cancer. In fact, a person's risk for melanoma doubles if he or she has had five or more sunburns...in their lifetime. Unfortunately, getting sunburned is far more common than it ought to be and can lead to potentially dangerous health conditions down the road.

Three health conditions are typically linked to sun exposure. The two most common nonmelanoma skin cancers are basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). Both are directly correlated with sun accumulation over the course of many years. The most common locations for BCC and SCC tumors are sun-exposed areas: face, ears, hands, shoulders, etc. Melanoma, the third and the most serious form of skin cancer, is believed to result from brief, intense exposure -a blistering sunburn- rather than years of tanning. Other risk factors are also associated with melanoma such as family history, skin types, and having a large number of sizable moles on the body.

The good news? Skin cancer can be prevented by avoiding overexposure to the sun's UV rays. This is especially true when the sun's intensity is highest during the day between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. Make sure you apply sunscreen per the manufacturer's recommendations and use SPF of 30 or higher with both UVA and UVB protection (or Broad Spectrum). Wearing a hat and sunglasses protects your head, face, and eyes. Self examinations to watch for discoloration of moles or other abnormal spots as well as yearly skin examinations by a physician annually aide in the secondary prevention of skin cancer. Skin cancer remains the number one most common cancer diagnosis as well as the most preventable form of cancer. Prevention starts with our own choices. Choose to wear sunscreen, wear a hat, and or use shade whenever possible to avoid overexposure to the sun.





Announcements and Upcoming Events



August is National Breastfeeding month. Breastfeeding provides nutrition and health benefits for both mom and baby. If someone in your family or a friend has a newborn, encourage them to speak with their OBGYN or a lactation consultant about the benefits of breastfeeding!

Princeton WIC clinic operates the 3rd Friday of every month and is located in the Community Room of the Princeton Municipal Building, 400 Witherspoon Street. Upcoming WIC Clinics are scheduled for August 15 and September 19. WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods to pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up the age of five. For appointments and to see if you are eligible, please call (609) 498-7755.



The Princeton Health Department is participating in the Human Services Youth Employment Program over the summer. Coordinated through Princeton Human Services, the Summer Youth Employment Program gives high school students a look into the world of small government operations and management. The Health Department is excited to welcome our Princeton High School student to the team this summer!

Public Health Matters...in Princeton!

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