

March/April/May
Volume 4, Issue 2

Lafayette County Health Department

Special Interest Articles:

- Public Health:
Cryptosporidium & Giardia
- Home Care:
Overweight & Obesity
- Hospice:
Upcoming Events
Regarding Aging

Public Health week is April 5-11 2004
"Public Health Shapes our World"



Public Health

Debbie Siegenthaler, RN,BSN Director



Cryptosporidium

What is cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis is an illness caused by the protozoan *Cryptosporidium*, a single-celled parasite, recognized as a cause of human disease in 1976.

What are the signs and symptoms of cryptosporidium?

By far, the most common symptom is diarrhea which is usually watery and profuse, and often accompanied by abdominal cramping. Nausea, vomiting, fever, headache and loss of appetite may also occur. Rarely, the parasite can cause an inflammation of the gall bladder or infect the lining of the respiratory tract causing pneumonia. Some persons infected with *Cryptosporidium* may not become ill.

Who is susceptible to cryptosporidium and how long does the illness last?

All persons are presumed susceptible to infection with *Cryptosporidium*. In most healthy persons with normal immune systems, signs and symptoms generally persist for two weeks or less, although they may improve and then worsen during that time period. However, immune compromised persons may be unable to clear the parasite and may have much more severe and long lasting illness. (Some examples of immune compromised persons include people receiving cancer chemotherapy, kidney dialysis patients, persons on steroid therapy, people infected with HIV, and patients with Crohn's disease.)

Communicable Disease Corner: 2002 Statistics

STDs -	12 Cases
Hepatitis A -	0 Cases
Hepatitis B -	1 Case
Hepatitis C -	2 Cases
E. coli -	2 Cases
Salmonella -	3 Cases
Giardia -	4 Cases
Camplobacter -	5 Cases
Cryptosporidium -	7 Cases
AIDS -	less than 5
Tuberculosis -	0 Cases
Pertussis -	0 Cases
Bact. Meningitis -	0 Cases
Viral Meningitis -	1 Case



How is the disease contracted?

Cryptosporidium is shed in the feces of infected humans, domestic animals, and wild animals. Infection occurs when the organism is subsequently ingested by a person. It may only require a few microscopic *Cryptosporidium* organisms to infect a person. Thus, cryptosporidiosis can be acquired by person to person or animal to person transmission and by drinking contaminated water. Person to person transmission can occur via direct contact or potentially by food handling if the infected person does not adequately wash his/her hands after using the toilet. Infected individuals can shed the organism in stool for several weeks after they recover from the illness.

Because cryptosporidiosis is transmitted by the fecal-oral route, persons with the greatest potential to transmit the organism include infected persons who have diarrhea, persons who are incontinent of stool, persons with poor personal hygiene, and diapered children.

How is cryptosporidium diagnosed?

The infection is diagnosed by identifying the parasite during a microscopic examination of the stool.

How is cryptosporidium treated?

There is no specific treatment for cryptosporidiosis. Fluid therapy is indicated if dehydration is a problem. Anti-diarrheal drugs reduce the motility of the intestines and may provide some temporary improvement.

How can I avoid getting and transmitting cryptosporidium?

One can minimize the chances of acquiring and spreading the infection by thorough hand washing after using the toilet or changing diapers and before handling food. Because cattle are a common source of *Cryptosporidium*, avoid drinking raw milk and wash hands thoroughly after contact with cattle. Avoid drinking untreated and inadequately filtered surface water when camping or when traveling in developing countries. Comply with any water advisory issued by local and state authorities. Water can be rendered free of *Cryptosporidium* by boiling. Because of the small size of the organism (about 4 microns), many water filters commercially available for home use are ineffective. However, the use of very fine filters with an absolute pore size of 1 micron or smaller, may be of value in eliminating *Cryptosporidium* from water.

Because cryptosporidiosis can be a life-threatening disease in immune compromised persons, such individuals should be extra careful to avoid exposure to *Cryptosporidium*. Anyone with impaired immune function should consult their physician if they suspect that they have cryptosporidiosis or if they have had a potential exposure to the organism.



Giardia

What is giardia?

Known also as Giardiasis is an intestinal illness caused by a microscopic parasite called *Giardia lamblia*. It is a very commonly reported cause of diarrheal illness in Wisconsin with an average of 1200-1300 cases reported in Wisconsin each year. Cases may occur sporadically or in outbreaks.

Who gets giardia?

Anyone can get giardiasis but it tends to occur more often in people in institutional settings, people in day care centers, foreign travelers and individuals who consume improperly treated surface water (lakes, rivers, streams, etc).

How is this parasite spread?

The giardia parasite is passed in the feces (stool) of an infected person or animal and may contaminate water or food. It can also be spread by direct or indirect contact with fecal material from an infected person or animal. This may occur in day care centers or in settings where handwashing practices are poor.

What are the symptoms of giardia?

Many people with giardiasis do not experience any symptoms. Those who become ill have symptoms that include mild to severe diarrhea, increased flatulence, abdominal cramps, weight loss and bloating. Fever is rarely present.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms may appear from 3 to 25 days after exposure but usually within 7-10 days.

How long can an infected person carry Giardia?

The carrier stage generally lasts from a few weeks to months. Treatment with specific antibiotics may shorten the carrier stage.

Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?

People with active diarrhea need to be excluded from settings where they may spread the illness such as school, day care centers or other group activities, until the diarrhea stops. In addition, some local health departments may require follow-up stool testing to confirm that the person can no longer spread the illness.

**What is the treatment for giardia?**

Specific antibiotics are often prescribed by doctors to treat giardiasis. However, some individuals may recover on their own without medication.

What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of giardia?

Three important preventive measures are:

- Wash hands thoroughly after toilet visits.
- Carefully dispose of sewage and disposable diaper wastes so as not to contaminate surface or groundwater.
- Avoid consuming improperly treated water. Emergency water supplies are best boiled or treated with hypochlorite or iodine (2 to 4 drops of household bleach or 0.5 ml of 2% tincture of iodine per quart for 20 minutes, or longer if the water is cold or turbid.)

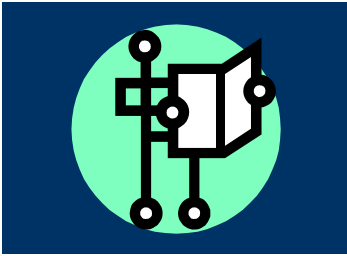
Hospice

Kristie Lueck RN, BSN

Upcoming Events Regarding Aging

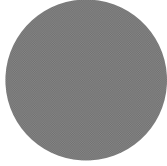
“Aging Well, Living Well” is the theme for several upcoming events related to aging:

- √ April 28, 2004: Hospice Foundation of America’s annual grief teleconference: “Living with Grief: Alzheimer’s Disease” 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. in the Lafayette County Boardroom contact Kristie Lueck at Lafayette County Hospice for more information phone (608) 776-4895.
- √ May 2 – 4, 2004: State Alzheimer’s Disease conference in Madison. Contact Carol Benson At Lafayette County Aging Resource Center, (608) 776-4888 for more information.
- √ May 10, 2004: Aging Resource Center Open House, 10:00a.m. – 2:00p.m. (formerly Commission on Aging) at new office located in Darlington Municipal Building in conjunction with May, Older Americans Month.



✓ June 22, 2024: "Use It or Lose It" seminar on remaining mentally sharp, more information to come.

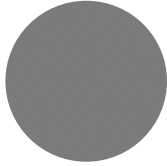
The public is invited to attend all of these educational opportunities; some require registration, so those interested should follow the contact information above for each event.



Home Care

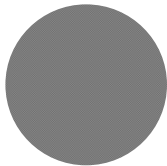
Jane O'Brien, RN

Overweight and Obesity: What You Can Do



OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

- 61% of adults in the United States were overweight or obese in 1999.
- Approximately 300,000 deaths each year in the United States may be attributable to obesity.
- Overweight and obesity are associated with heart disease, certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing problems, and psychological disorders, such as depression.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: WEIGHT CONTROL AND OTHER BENEFITS

- Physical activity contributes to weight loss, especially when it is combined with calorie reduction.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED STATES

- Many people live sedentary lives; in fact, 40% of adults in the United States do not participate in any leisure-time physical activity.

YOU CAN ACTIVATE YOURSELF

- You don't need special skills or training to be physically active. Walking is a great way to be active.
- Physical activity should be initiated slowly, and the intensity should be increased gradually (e.g., start with a 10-minute walk three times a week and work your way up to 30 minutes of brisk walking or other form of moderate activity five times a week).
- Activities can be split into several short periods (e.g., 10 minutes 3 times a day) instead of one longer period (e.g., 30 minutes once a day).
- You should select activities that you ENJOY and can fit into your daily life.

National Immunization Week

National immunization week is April 25th thru May 1st 2004.

Theme: Vaccination – An Act of Love. Love Them, Protect Them, Immunize them.

- Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals from developing potentially serious disease, they also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious agents.
- Immunizations are only one of the most important ways parents can protect their children against serious diseases.
- Each day 11,000 babies are born in the United States who will need to be immunized against twelve diseases before age two.
- We can now protect children from more vaccine preventable diseases, parents are often not aware what it takes to fully immunize a child.
- Infants and young children are particular vulnerable to infectious disease; that is why it is critical that they are protected through immunization.
- Children who are not immunized increase the chance that others will get a vaccine preventable disease.
- Immunizations are extremely safe thanks to advancement in medical research and ongoing review by doctors, researchers, and public health officials.
- Children are far more likely to be harmed by serious infectious diseases than by immunization.
- Parents and caregivers need to take responsibility for their child's vaccinations. They are encouraged to become informed consumers and keep a record of each immunization visit.
- Immunization protects families and communities. Children who are not immunized increase the chance that others will get the disease.

Health Day Schedule June/July

Monday, June 7 Shullsburg	Tuesday, July 6 Shullsburg
Friday, June 11 Darlington	Monday, July 12 Argyle
Monday, June 14 Argyle/Blanchardville	Monday, July 19 Benton/Belmont
Monday, June 21 Benton/Belmont	Monday, July 26 Gratiot
Monday, June 28 South Wayne/Woodford	