

NHSGG and CLYDE NEWSLETTER

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Public Health Protection Unit (PHPU) 0141 201 4917 www.nhsggc.org.uk/phpu

Volume 6 Issue 7

August 2007

E coli O157 outbreak in Paisley

The Public Health Protection Unit (PHPU) at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is investigating an outbreak of *E coli* O157 in the Paisley area.

To date, there have been 9 confirmed cases. One elderly patient has died as a result of contracting the infection, 2 people are in hospital locally, 1 person hospitalised in Ireland (Paisley resident), and 5 people are recovering at home. A number of other suspected cases are being investigated.

The Public Health Protection Unit is working closely with Environmental Health colleagues from Renfrewshire Council, the Food Standards Agency and Health Protection Scotland to identify the source of this infection. There is no conclusive evidence yet, but initial investigations have indicated that there may possibly be a link to the consumption of some sliced cold meats bought locally from the delicatessen counters of two Morrison supermarkets in Paisley, the Lonend store and the Falside Road store. Further investigation is continuing but, as a precaution, sliced cold meats have been withdrawn from these 2 stores and anyone who bought sliced cold meat from these delicatessen counters is advised not to eat it.

There is no evidence to suggest that pre-packed cooked meats purchased from the stores or other food purchased from the delicatessen counters are implicated.

Anyone who has consumed sliced cold meats purchased from the delicatessen counters at either of these stores in the past couple of weeks and who is experiencing symptoms including stomach cramps, diarrhoea (often bloody), nausea and fever has been advised to contact their GP or NHS 24 in the first instance.

It is recommended that GPs, A&E staff etc have a high index of suspicion for any patient who presents with diarrhoea, in particular bloody diarrhoea, and who may have bought food from either of these stores and that **any such individuals should have a stool sample submitted. Please report any suspected cases to the Public Health Protection Unit (0141 201 4917).**

Patients should be made aware of the possibility of person-to-person spread and informed of the need for scrupulous hand hygiene as well as appropriate disinfecting procedures.

BCG 'school catch-up' 2007

The BCG school immunisation programme was terminated in September 2005 and replaced by a programme for 'at risk' groups only.

However, the Scottish Executive Health Department has asked all health boards to ensure that school age children who are 'at risk' are offered the vaccine. In light of this, the PHPU recently arranged for letters to be sent to parents of school-age children in the NHSGG&C area advising on how to identify the risk status of their child. Those who think their child/children fall into the risk groups are asked to call a NHSGG&C helpline number that will run for 4 weeks from 3rd September.

Children confirmed as 'at risk' will be appointed to one of a number of community-based BCG clinics set up specifically for this purpose.

Hand hygiene update

The hand hygiene campaign has been running since January 2007 and audits have been carried out on a selection of wards to achieve as wide a range of data as possible and identify trends within NHSGG&C.

The audit results are encouraging so far and serve to highlight areas of good practice as well as identifying areas that require further input.

The Royal Hospital for Sick Children in particular has consistently high compliance with current guidelines and staff practices there are being encouraged on other sites.

The Hand Hygiene stands at the Royal Highland Show and the 'Our Health Matters' event at the Royal Concert Hall were well received and feedback from staff and public was excellent. Despite the poor weather at Ingliston approximately 5000 people visited the Hand Hygiene stand to try the 'glow box' test and learn more about the campaign. Following the next national reporting period in early September the campaign's focus will include input to the CHCPs in terms of awareness and education sessions.

NB:HIV education day for GPs

GPs and healthcare professionals working in GP practices are reminded of the HIV education day on 29th August in Dalian House. Call 211 8639 to book this free event.

Salmonella outbreak

The PHPU at NHS GGC recently investigated and managed an outbreak of *Salmonella typhimurium* that was linked to a Chinese restaurant in Balloch. It now appears that the cases were exposed to salmonella in the restaurant between the last week in July and the first week in August (the majority of cases between 25th-27th July). At least 25 cases have so far been identified with a direct link to the restaurant. Only a small number of cases required admission to hospital and none gave cause for concern.

No single food source was identified and the most likely explanation is that the outbreak was caused by cross contamination within the kitchen. The restaurant closed voluntarily after visits from environmental health officers.

Investigation measures included case interviews, food sampling, and obtaining faecal specimens from restaurant staff for screening purposes. Control measures included infection-control advice for cases and their contacts, and deep cleaning of the restaurant.

Summer eating

In the summer months, the number of food-poisoning cases rises so whether you're having a barbecue, picnic or summer buffet, it's important to take care when preparing, storing and cooking food. Please note the following food-safety tips.

Barbecues

- Always keep raw food separate from any ready-to-eat foods
- Make sure the charcoal is hot enough before you start to cook
- Always cook meat dishes until they are piping hot all the way through and the juices run clear
- Don't assume that if meat is charred on the outside it's cooked inside
- Always wash your hands after handling raw meat
- Use separate utensils for raw and cooked foods
- Keep food covered to prevent insects getting to it
- Consider pre-cooking poultry, burgers and sausages in the oven and finishing them off on the barbecue when cooking for a large number of people
- Remember that left-over marinade has been in contact with raw meat and therefore must not be used as a sauce

Picnics

- Use a cool-bag with ice packs to keep food cool during the journey
- Don't take food from the 'fridge until the last moment
- Wash your hands or use antiseptic wipes before eating
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before eating
- If taking pets or visiting a farm etc. make sure that you keep them away from the food and wash your hands or use antiseptic wipes after petting animals
- Make sure your 'fridge is at the right temperature i.e. below 5° C. It's advisable to purchase a 'fridge-thermometer from your local supermarket

If you would like more information on this or other food-safety matters, please contact your local environmental health department.

Syphilis outbreak

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. Until 2001 diagnosed cases in Scotland were limited to 2-3 a year, but since then the number of new diagnoses has increased dramatically. By the end of 2006, 217 new cases had been reported in Scotland. Most cases are diagnosed at GUM clinics in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and since the second quarter of 2006, Glasgow has had consistently more cases than Edinburgh. In 2006 over 90 cases were diagnosed in Glasgow compared with approximately 70 in Edinburgh. This trend continues into 2007 with 63 cases diagnosed in Glasgow clinics* by the middle of August. *Attendees are not necessarily resident in the GGC Health Board area.

Nationally, the majority of these infections are amongst men who have sex with men (MSM) - 84% in 2006 - and this is mirrored in the local situation, with 57 of the 63 cases diagnosed so far in 2007, found amongst MSM. While the main burden of infection is amongst the MSM population group, heterosexual transmission exists but remains low and steady.

Most infections are acquired locally and approximately 60% are contracted through oral sex. HIV infection is apparent in a significant minority of cases, which is especially concerning given the rise in HIV cases amongst MSM. It is therefore critical that if HIV status is not known, an HIV test is also offered to those found to have syphilis infection.

Many of the signs and symptoms of syphilis are indistinguishable from other diseases and many individuals are unaware of their infection. GUM consultants report that they continue to see acute medical presentations and encourage GPs and other medical specialists to consider syphilis as a differential diagnosis where there is presentation of unexplained diffuse rash, proctitis, visual disturbance or hearing loss. Of the 63 cases diagnosed in Glasgow so far this year, 3 presented with acute eye involvement and 1 with acute rash and deafness. Clinicians are asked to be aware that not all MSM identify as gay and therefore practitioners should avoid making assumptions about lifestyle or behaviours based on observation or circumstances.

The Primary Care "shared care" initiative helpline can be accessed for further information, help and advice with diagnosis and management, as well as referral (211 8639). Alternatively, call the Sexual Health Advisors on 211 8634. For urgent cases, page the on-call GUM doctor through Gartnavel General switchboard 211 3000.

If syphilis is suspected, referral to GUM is indicated. GUM has a walk-in clinic at the main Sandyford site from 8.30am each weekday (no appointment is necessary). The locality hubs are also available for sexual health screening as is the Steve Retson Project. For further advice and information on local services and opening times, please call the Sandyford Initiative professional helpline on 211 8646

<http://www.sandyford.org/>