

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER**

**INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Will County Health Department Environmental Health Division quarterly newsletter.

The Environmental Health (EH) Division provides inspections and investigates complaints of public food facilities, private water wells, private wastewater treatment systems, swimming pools and bathing beaches, tanning and body art facilities, and non-community public water supplies. The EH Division participates in two vector programs: West Nile Virus & Tick Surveillance and provides education materials on radon gas risks as well as radon test kits for sale to the public.

The majority of our programs run all year round, but a few of our programs are seasonal, such as Vector Surveillance, Outdoor Swimming Pools & Bathing Beaches. The intent of the quarterly newsletter is to highlight current topics and events in each of the Environmental Health Division's programs and provide education on those programs.



**Our Programs**

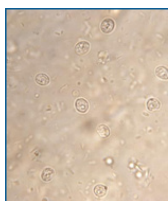
**FOOD PROGRAM**



**IDPH FOOD CODE AND 2022 FDA FOOD CODE**

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has adopted the 2022 FDA Food Code and completed the changes to the current IDPH 750 Food Code. The Will County Health Department (WCHD) will begin educating all permit holders on these changes throughout the rest of the year.

The summer season is upon us so that means outdoor grilling, picnics, and lots of outdoor fun. Outdoor picnic menus often have several different types of salads and cut melons, so let's keep it safe by following these basic food safety principals.



**PATHOGEN PROFILE - Cryptosporidium parvum**

Cryptosporidium parvum is an obligate, intracellular protozoan parasite first recognized as a human pathogen in 1976. The organism is transmitted via oocysts (i.e., the infectious stage in the organism's life cycle) and shed in feces. Cryptosporidium can cause extremely large amounts of diarrhea when it contaminates food, drinks, or "play" water, including swimming pool water or other outdoor water, if it's swallowed. The amount of body fluid lost from this illness can be dangerous for anyone, but people who have a weak immune system, such as those with HIV/AIDS or cancer, are at especially high risk.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

## FOOD PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

The illness usually starts a week or a little longer after a person eats or drinks *Cryptosporidium* in food or water. Beside large amounts of watery diarrhea, symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, cramps, and fever.

The life stage of *Cryptosporidium* that causes infection is called the oocyst. The oocysts can spread when they're passed in the bowel movements of infected people or animals and end up on hands, food, water, or other objects. Bowel movements can contain the oocysts for months after symptoms are gone. The spread of *Cryptosporidium* can be prevented by washing fresh fruits and vegetables and through good personal hygiene; for example, washing your hands well before handling food and after going to the bathroom and by following other basic food-safety tips. Oocysts are very resistant to chlorine (for example, bleach used for cleaning) and may not be killed but can be inactivated by boiling in water for several minutes.

- **Mortality:** Death from cryptosporidiosis is very rare. However, immunocompromised people have increased morbidity and mortality associated with cryptosporidiosis.
- **Infective dose:** As few as 10 to 100 oocysts. Oocysts are excreted in a fully infective form.
- **Onset:** Onset of illness follows an incubation period of 7 to 10 days.

**Sources - Food:** *Cryptosporidium* spp. contamination could occur, theoretically, with any food touched by an infected food handler or from contact with an environmental source of oocysts (e.g. animal manure). In addition to various foods, such as fresh produce, juices and milk may be contaminated.

**Sources - Water:** Large outbreaks also have been associated with contaminated water supplies. Irrigation water might be a potential source of food contamination, even if the water is chlorine-treated. Recreational water, such as swimming-pool water, continues to be a major vehicle for transmission of *Cryptosporidium* oocysts. The oocysts are notoriously hard to inactivate with disinfectants, like chlorine, and can remain infectious for up to a year in both freshwater and seawater. Treated human wastewater can contain oocysts and could contaminate recreational waters, as can direct contamination by a person with poor hygienic practices.

#### Food Safety In-Services Available

The EH Division is available to provide in-person food safety in-services on various topics for primary, middle & high school students and cafeteria staff. The in-service is typically 45 to 60 minutes in length and if school administrators are interested, please contact Sean M. Conners, Director of Environmental Health Services, at [sconners@willcountyhealth.org](mailto:sconners@willcountyhealth.org) or (815) 727-8846.

#### RECENT EVENTS IN THE NEWS



The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) issued a joint statement regarding the monitoring of H5N1 Influenza in dairy cattle. While no cases have been reported in Illinois, federal agencies confirmed the detection of H5N1 influenza virus in dairy herds in eight states across the U.S. The IDOA and IDPH are working closely to monitor the situation and are jointly coordinating prevention and response measures. This includes working with producer groups and partner organizations to promote education to veterinarians and cattle farmers on the clinical signs of H5N1 influenza so that potential infections can be quickly identified and contained. Effective

April 29, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has implemented mandatory testing for interstate movement of dairy cattle as well as mandatory reporting of positive results to limit the spread of the disease. Currently, there are no confirmed cases in Illinois. Dr. Sameer Vohra, IDPH Director, stated "Please note that pasteurized milk is safe, but we strongly recommend that Illinoisans avoid any unpasteurized raw milk products at this time based on the potential risk of infection." Illinois is home to more than 600 dairy farms with 73,000 cows or calves, based on USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service estimates.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

**POOLS & BEACHES PROGRAM**

On April 18, 2024, the Will County Board approved changes to the WCHD Swimming Facility Ordinance. These changes have given the WCHD the licensing authority for all existing swimming facilities. Previously all swimming facilities paid to hold a license with IDPH as well as paying a licensure inspection fee to the WCHD.

For the 2025 season, facilities will be licensed by the WCHD. Any new facilities or facilities making major changes that require engineering will still need to go through IDPH. The WCHD has always been the inspection entity for public swimming facilities and beaches, this ordinance change allows us to now be the licensing agency as well.

Each summer our department hires three interns, to manage, under the guidance of WCHD sanitarians, our swimming program. They inspect public roughly 150 pools, spa, water slides, and splash pads every two weeks. They also inspect and collect water samples from the eleven public beaches in Will County. Those water sample results are reported to IDPH who publishes them on the [Illinois BeachGuard System website](#)

**PRIVATE SEWAGE PROGRAM****Meeting Health Department Requirements for "Sign Off"**

Zoning and building permit reviews require a **Will County Health Department "Sign Off"** (permits including but not limited to pools, sheds, garages, irrigation systems, additions, decks, porches, patios, pole barns). **A site plan** is required before this department can sign off on any proposal. The site plan is a drawing, usually to scale, that indicates exact location of all existing and proposed structures, parking area, decks, pools, etc. The following distances are the minimum allowed to any portion of a private sewage disposal system. **There is a \$20.00 fee for all sign offs.**

- **Structures (house, garage, shed, above ground pool, deck, parking areas, etc.) must be 10 feet away from any part of the septic system.**
- **In ground pool, must be 25 feet away from any part of the septic system.**

The WCHD may have a copy of the layout of your septic system to assist you in providing a scaled site plan. The owner can call the Health Department with the Parcel Identification Number (PIN) located on a tax bill and submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

**Case #1: A septic installation permit is on file at Environmental Health**

1. A copy of the final inspection drawing will be provided to the homeowner by email, mail or can be picked-up when requested. NOTE: This drawing is not to scale.
2. The final inspection septic drawing needs to be transferred to scale and drawn on the homeowner's site plan by the homeowners or contractor.
3. WCHD will verify that the scaled site plan is in compliance with the Will County Sewage Treatment and Disposal Ordinance.
4. There is a \$20.00 fee for all sign offs.

**Case #2: No record of a septic permit exists.**

1. Homeowner must locate all components of the private sewage system. This may require the assistance of a licensed private sewage contractor. WCHD cannot be responsible for locating undocumented systems.
2. The homeowner must overlay the septic information onto a scaled site plan and submit it to the Health Department, Environmental Health Department.
3. Once located, the system must be physically marked on-site with (spray paint or similar markings). WCHD will verify septic location via a service request. There is a \$65.00 fee for all septic verifications.
4. WCHD will verify site plan compliance with the Will County Sewage Treatment and Disposal Ordinance.



## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

### VECTOR SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM



**Tick Surveillance Program:** Will County Health Department Environmental Health Division staff completed their fourth tick drag on May 15, 2024. The staff collected sixteen ticks. There were twelve males and four females. The ticks were sent to the IDPH lab for species identification and potential presence of pathogens. Results are still pending.

**West Nile Virus Program:** The Will County Health Department provides education, larvicide, and vector control/surveillance. Staff trap and test mosquitos for West Nile Virus and collect dead birds to be tested for West Nile Virus.



Staff members from the Will County Health Department's Environmental Health Division conduct a recent tick drag.

### DID YOU FIND A DEAD BIRD ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Call our West Nile Surveillance Hotline at:

# 815-740-7631

Our Environmental Health Division will contact you to determine if the bird can be sent for testing.



The **MOST** common birds to carry the virus:



CROWS



ROBINS



BLUE JAYS