

MAVERICK HEALTH

A newsletter devoted to student health at Minnesota State University, Mankato

Spring 2006

Mumps Epidemic in Iowa

As of April 13, 2006, the Iowa Department of Public Health had reported 605 cases of confirmed, probable or suspect mumps. In a state that typically sees an average of five cases of mumps each year, this outbreak represents a significant increase in cases and is the largest mumps epidemic in the U.S. since 1988. Of the cases in Iowa, 48% of the patients were aged 15 to 25 years and 30% were known to be college students. A mumps vaccine (one of the M's in the MMR vaccination) was introduced in 1957 so most people born in 1957 or later have been vaccinated. Most students attending Minnesota State Mankato have received the required two MMR doses. It is unclear at this time why the vaccine, considered to be 95% effective, is not providing protection to some.

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, symptoms associated with the mumps are usually limited to fever, tenderness and swelling of the glands in front of and below the ears on one or both sides of the face, headache, and earache. About 20% of all infected people don't have symptoms. Mumps can normally be spread 3 days before symptoms appear through about 4 days after, but is most contagious 48 hours before the illness begins. The virus that causes mumps is spread when an infected person sneezes or coughs the virus into the air and another person breathes in the virus. Properly covering coughs or sneezes and frequent hand washing can decrease the spread of mumps. Those diagnosed with mumps are asked to stay home for 5 days to avoid spreading it to others. Students attending MSU who suspect they may have mumps can make an appointment to be seen by a health care provider at Student Health Services Medical Clinic by calling 507-389-6276. Additional information about mumps can be found at: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_mumps.htm



Fact or Myth? A website can help you decide...www.snopes.com

Remember the Seinfeld episode where Elaine repeatedly fails her drug tests at work? She finally determines that her morning poppy seed muffin is to blame. The truth is that consuming products that contain poppy seeds may result in a false positive during a urine drug test. Poppy seeds are considered opiates (morphine and codeine) and can be detected in the urine for at least 48 hours after consumption. Think that this is something that only happens on television shows? Think again. In 1990 a veteran St. Louis police officer was suspended after testing positive for morphine, in 1999 a New Jersey prison guard was fired for the same reason, in 1997 a woman in Florida won a lawsuit against a would-be future employer because she failed her drug screening, and in 1994 a Baltimore woman lost her potential job because of her love with poppy seed bagels. What do all of the above cases have in common? Each person tested a false positive on their drug test due to consuming poppy seeds prior to testing. So before you enjoy your next poppy seed muffin, ask yourself if you have a drug test in the near future.




The internet has become a medium of distributing information in a manner that spreads fast and may not always be accurate. An example of such inaccurate information is the false claim that the artificial sweetener aspartame has been proven to cause cancer, brain tumors, and multiple sclerosis. To date, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has not determined any consistent pattern of symptoms that can be attributed to the use of aspartame. Analysis of the National Cancer Institute's public data base on cancer incidence does not support an association between the use of aspartame and increased incidence of brain tumors. You may have received an e-mail that claims that aspartame is linked to Alzheimer's, brain cancer, diabetes, lupus, and several other disorders. Just remember, no single chemical CURES everything and no single chemical CAUSES everything.

You know the disposable water bottle that you may be drinking out of right now, the water bottle that you have re-filled maybe a few too many times...well there is no risk of getting cancer from that bottle. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) regulates bottled water and has determined that the plastic used is safe. The only reason you should be concerned about continually re-filling your disposable water bottle is the potential for spreading or ingesting bacteria if you do not properly wash the bottle and allow adequate time for drying.

If you have heard a claim that you want to determine as fact or myth check out www.snopes.com

Snack Time Pizza

- 1 whole wheat English muffin, split
- 1/4 cup prepared pizza sauce (like Ragu)
- 2 oz. smoked deli ham 
- 1/4 cup part-skim milk mozzarella cheese

1. Toast the muffin halves in the toaster.
2. Top each with sauce, ham and cheese.
3. Microwave or broil for 30-60 seconds or until the cheese is melted. Enjoy!

*Try adding cup drained pineapple tidbits to your pizza for extra flavor & nutrition.

**Add a tossed green salad and a glass of milk to make a quick and satisfying meal!

Nutrition information per serving (1 recipe):

290 calories, 7g fat, 3.5g saturated fat, 45mg cholesterol, 1250mg sodium, 33g carbohydrate, 4g dietary fiber, 24g protein.

Like this recipe? Check out "Beyond Mac and Cheese", a web site featuring easy, cheap & tasty recipes for busy college students at www.mnsu.edu/shs/bmc/

Outsmarting Poison Ivy, Oak & Sumac

Those nasty weeds! Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are the most popular cause of allergic reactions in the United States. The cause of this infamous itch is the chemical urushiol (pronounced oo-roo-shee-oh!) is found in the sap of poison ivy, oak, and sumac plants. Urushiol is inside the plant, so brushing up against the plant will not cause a reaction, but undamaged plants are rare. Stems or leaves that are broken (and even tiny holes made by chewing insects) can release urushiol.

Preventive measures, reactions and treatments are the same for all three plants. Avoid direct contact as much as possible, although this does not guarantee against an adverse response. Urushiol can stick to clothes, pets, garden tools, balls or anything that comes in contact with it. Almost all parts of the body are vulnerable to the sappy substance, producing a rash.

Because urushiol can penetrate skin within minutes after exposure, there is no time to waste. The earlier skin is cleansed, there is a better chance the chemical can be removed before it becomes attached to the skin. Cleansing may not stop the initial rash but it may stop it from spreading.

If you've been exposed to poison ivy, oak or sumac, follow these steps to prevent spreading:

1. Cleanse exposed skin with generous amounts of rubbing alcohol (isopropyl).
2. Wash skin with water.
3. Take a regular shower with soap and water (do not use before this because soap will pick up some of the urushiol from the surface of the skin and move it around).
4. Clothing, tools, shoes, and anything that has come in contact with the urushiol should be wiped off with alcohol and water.

If the area is not cleansed almost immediately after exposure, redness and swelling will appear in about 12-48 hours. Blisters and itching will come next. The blisters are not contagious and cannot spread the rash around. Most people cannot take the constant irritation and over-the-counter topical corticosteroids may help produce temporary relief. Calamine lotion and oatmeal baths can dry up blisters. If itching and blisters persist longer than 2-3 weeks, a physician should be consulted.

Here are some helpful hints to differentiate between these three famous plants:

Poison Ivy:

- Grows in and around streams in the Midwest and the East
- Woody, ropelike vine, a trailing shrub on the ground, or a free-standing shrub
- Normally three leaflets, but may vary from groups of three to nine
- Leaves are green in the summer and red in the fall

Poison Oak:

- Eastern grows as a low shrub; western grows to 6-foot tall clumps or vines
- Oak-like clusters
- Clusters of yellow berries

Poison Sumac:

- Grows in boggy areas, especially in the Southeast
- Glossy pale yellow or cream colored berries
- Lanky shrub up to 15 feet tall

MSU STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

APPOINTMENT & INFORMATION

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Nip and Tuck for the College Crowd

A recent article released by WebMD Medical News provided results from a study involving 559 college students aged 17 to 24. Only 5% (30 women) in the study said they had undergone a cosmetic surgery or procedure. The most common procedures (in order of frequency) were:

- Chemical peels
- Breast Augmentation
- Nose reshaping (rhinoplasty)
- Breast Reduction
- Liposuction
- Tummy Tuck (abdominoplasty)
- Eyelids (blepharoplasty)
- Botox
- Cellulite



40% of the survey respondents said they would consider cosmetic surgery in the near future, nearly half (48%) would consider it by middle age, and 33% said they would think about it in their sixties.

This document is available in alternate format for individuals with disabilities by calling the MSU Health Education office at 389-5689.

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