

Public Health Informer

Summer 2013

Fort Bend County

Health & Human Services



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



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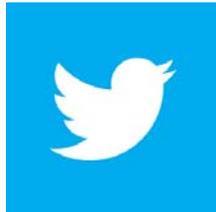
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FBC HHS & Social Media

Do you follow us on Twitter? Like us on Facebook? Subscribe to our YouTube channel? If the answer is no...what are you waiting for? Daily we use our social media accounts to promote events and important information. During an emergency, social media is one of the best places to get the most up-to-date information. Click the links below to join us on the world wide web!



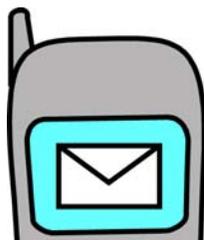
If you like FBC HHS on Facebook you will see photos of events past and present, get public health alerts, and general information about the daily activities of the public health department. [Find us on Facebook by clicking HERE](#); or by searching Fort Bend County Health & Human Services on Facebook.



Follow us on Twitter for quick updates and information. We use twitter regularly, but during an emergency, we will post accurate information as soon as it becomes available. Twitter is great for finding quick tips and learning about new public health issues. [Follow us on Twitter by clicking here](#); or searching @FortBendHealth on Twitter.



You Tube is used to share videos. FBC HHS shares videos about public health and information you may need in case of an emergency. [Subscribe to our YouTube channel by clicking HERE](#) ; or searching FortBendHHS on YouTube.



Register to receive texts from FBC HHS by [clicking here](#) or visiting www.fortbendcountyhhs.com. Choose "Contact Us" to join the "Community" mailing list. Standard text message rates apply.



Fort Bend Secure: A Bio-Defense Network, is a proactive initiative to establish **CLOSED Dispensing Sites** with businesses throughout the county.

CLOSED Dispensing Sites:

- Are locations that are operated by private businesses, that will provide free meds for their specific population (i.e., employees and their families)
- Minimize the impact of the emergency on businesses by maintaining continuity of operations, and on the community by saving lives.
- Are not open to the public
- Distribute medications that are free

If your organization chooses to become a CLOSED Dispensing Site, you will have a tremendous opportunity to combat the impact of a public health threat or emergency. Together with your local public health agency, you will be able to address an assortment of public health issues in a ground-breaking way.

By becoming a CLOSED Dispensing Site, your business will be better protected in the event of a public health emergency. You'll receive and dispense medications and medical supplies directly to your employees and their families. By providing the materials and support they need, your business will help to ensure the general health and well being of not just your employees, but all of those affected by the public health emergency. With your cooperation, you will also be helping your community and your Health Department concentrate their efforts on dispensing medications to the general public.

To learn more about this program and how to become a Closed Dispensing Site partner please contact:

David Aaron

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West Nile Virus Season is Here!

It's that time of year again! Time to take precautions against mosquitoes-especially those that carry West Nile Virus. To protect yourself always follow the 4D's for defense:

DUSK/DAWN are the times of day you should stay indoors. This is when mosquitoes are most active.

DRAIN standing water in your backyard and neighborhood such as old tires, flowerpots, and clogged gutters. These are mosquito breeding sites.

DRESS in long-sleeves and pants, and light colored clothing. Mosquitoes are more attracted to dark colors.

DEET is the ingredient to look for in your insect repellent. Follow label instructions and always apply repellent to those 6 months and older when outdoors. Reapply after swimming or sweating.



**FIGHT THE BITE
FORT BEND**

Remember the 4D's for Defense

Public Health News at a Glance

Changes in Bleach Concentration & Disinfecting

Household bleach can come in handy during a disaster. It can be used to sanitize containers for bottling water, sanitize food prep areas, disinfect water, and clean mold and mildew from damaged homes. Household bleach has started being sold in more concentrated forms and this changes the amounts you use for disinfecting. If you need emergency drinking water during a disaster, boiling is the most thorough way to disinfect, however household bleach can be used as well. If bleach has 4-6% chlorine, use 8 drops per gallon, if bleach is 7-10% concentration use 4 drop per gallon. Mix well, cover for at least 30 minutes or longer if smell or taste of chlorine is strong. Information and picture from www.totallyunprepared.com.

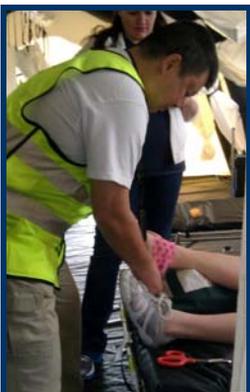


Coronavirus Update

The coronavirus identified earlier this year is now being called “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus” or MERS-CoV. This is a new strain that has not been seen in humans before. Common symptoms include acute, serious respiratory illness with fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. Most patients had pneumonia. The World Health Organization is reporting 49 cases and 24 deaths as of May 29, 2013, with most of these in Saudi Arabia. So far, there are no reports of anyone in the US getting infected and sick with MERS-CoV. For more information visit www.cdc.gov.

Fort Bend MRC Supports FBC Special Olympics

On April 13, 2013, Fort Bend Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) along with Fort Bend County Health & Human Services, set up the Mobile Medical Unit to support the Fort Bend County Special Olympics. The MMU served as a cooling area for athletes and a first aid station. Thanks to all who helped out! If you are interested in joining MRC (no medical experience necessary) contact Cornelia Jammer at 903-495-8190 or cornelij@homelandpreparedness.org.



Disease Spotlight: Anthrax

What is anthrax?

Anthrax is a serious disease caused by a bacterium called *Bacillus anthracis*, which can be found naturally in certain types of soil. Spores of the anthrax bacterium may remain in nature for many years. Anthrax most commonly occurs in warm-blooded animals but also can occur in people.

How do you get it?

B. anthracis is not known to spread from one person to another. People usually get naturally occurring skin or cutaneous anthrax by handling infected animals or their products, especially hides, hair, wool, bones or bone products. People also may be infected with inhalation anthrax by breathing in anthrax spores, or get gastrointestinal anthrax by eating undercooked meat from infected animals.

Can anthrax be used as a bioterrorism threat?

In the United States in 2001 and 2002, anthrax spores were mailed through the U.S. Postal Service system, causing 18 confirmed cases of both inhalation and cutaneous anthrax. Five people with inhalation anthrax died, none of the cutaneous cases resulted in death. In other instances, threats of anthrax have been hoaxes.



What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of anthrax vary depending on how the person became infected but usually occur within seven days of exposure.

- Skin or cutaneous. First symptom is a small sore that forms a blister. The blister then turns into a skin ulcer with a black area in the center. The sore, blister and ulcer do not hurt. Infection may spread to the bloodstream.
- Inhalation. Cold- and flu-like symptoms such as sore throat, mild fever and muscle aches are first. Later symptoms include cough, chest discomfort, shortness of breath, tiredness and muscle aches. Symptoms may appear within a week or can take up to 60 days to appear. Inhalation anthrax may cause a severe form of meningitis, chest infection, shock and death.
- Gastrointestinal. First symptoms are nausea, loss of appetite, bloody diarrhea and fever followed by bad stomach pain.

How is anthrax treated?

All three types of anthrax can be prevented with the use of antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin, doxycycline or penicillin. Early treatment is necessary, as a delay in treatment lowers a person's chances for survival. These antibiotics must be taken according to directions for as many days as directed, generally up to 60 days. All the medication must be taken.

Would enough medication be available in the event of a bioterrorism attack?

Public health officials have access to large supplies of drugs, including antibiotics needed in the event of a bioterrorism attack.

As we prepare for hurricane season, it is important to remember to have a plan in place for emergency medication and medical supplies for people and animals. Below are some important precautions to follow in storing and taking care of medications and devices during a storm. And don't forget to register on Enable Fort Bend for assistance during an emergency if applicable (information on the following page).

DRUGS EXPOSED TO WATER

- For lifesaving drugs exposed to water, when replacements may not be readily available, if the container is contaminated but the contents appear unaffected—if the pills are dry—the pills may be used until a replacement can be obtained. However, if the pill is wet it is contaminated and should be discarded.
- Other drug products (pills, oral liquids, drugs for injections, inhalers, skin medications) — even those in their original containers—should be discarded if they have come into contact with flood or contaminated water. In addition, medications that have been placed in any alternative storage containers should be discarded if they have come in contact with flood or contaminated water.

INSULIN STORAGE AND SWITCHING BETWEEN PRODUCTS IN AN EMERGENCY

- As a general rule, insulin loses its potency according to the temperature it is exposed to and length of that exposure. Under emergency conditions, you might still need to use insulin that has been stored above 86 °F. Such extreme temperatures may cause insulin to lose potency, which could result in loss of blood glucose control over time.
- You should try to keep insulin as cool as possible. Try to keep insulin away from direct heat and out of direct sunlight, but if you are using ice, also avoid freezing the insulin.
- When properly stored insulin becomes available, discard and replace the insulin vials that have been exposed to these extreme conditions.

MEDICAL DEVICES

- If you have a "life-supporting" or "life-sustaining" device that depends on electricity, you should contact your healthcare provider for information on how to maintain function in the event of a loss of power. Also plan for a secondary source of power if possible.
- Keep your device and supplies clean and dry.

More information can be found at www.fda.gov.



Although hurricane season is months away, it's not too early to get prepared! One way to prepare is by registering with Enable Fort Bend. Enable Fort Bend is a system that allows emergency management personnel to be aware of those with medical and functional needs in Fort Bend County.

Who should register ?

Anyone who needs medical assistance including:

- Persons with a disability
- Persons with hearing and vision impairment
- Persons requiring medical equipment
- Persons who anticipate needing assistance in an emergency

Why should I register?

During a disaster or an emergency, people with special needs may require assistance if they experience power outages, need medications or need medical support.

This survey will help identify people who may need assistance during an emergency and assist in planning for such an event.

How do I register?

Go to

www.enablefortbend.com

OR

Call [281-238-3514](tel:281-238-3514) to have a survey sent to you.

Don't forget to be prepared! Make a Kit, Have a Plan, Stay Informed!



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Health & Human Services is Fort Bend County's principal agency responsible for protecting the health of county residents and providing essential human services, especially for those least able to help themselves.

The Public Health team works to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of Fort Bend County through disease prevention and intervention, and through the promotion of a healthy community environment.