

# EpiNews

**Palm Beach County Health Department**  
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**July 2002**

## **RABID ANIMAL NUMBERS CONTINUE TO GROW**

By Timothy O'Connor  
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PALM BEACH COUNTY—Two more animals were confirmed with rabies bringing the yearly total to 18, four more than all of 2001.

The latest incident occurred on Wednesday, July 10, 2002 when a male was attacked by a red fox west of Military Trail in western Lake Worth. The man was able to defend himself by killing the fox but not before being bitten. He has been put on preventive rabies shots and will be completing the five shot series over the next few weeks. According to Dr. Jean M. Malecki, Palm Beach County Health Department Director, "In spite of these increased findings the latest case is only the third human to be exposed thus far this year." Dr. Malecki went on to warn residents about feeding wildlife and other stray animals, in addition to avoiding any contact. Securing garbage cans and other containers around the house can also help eliminate food sources and reduce the risk of non-domestic animals being around humans.

The other animal, a raccoon, was captured by Animal Care and Control off of Glades road in Boca Raton, also on Wednesday, and confirmed to be rabid from the Florida State Lab along with the fox on Friday.

The 18 confirmed animal rabies cases have been found from Boca Raton to Jupiter but have not been concentrated in any one area. Thus, no specific area alerts have been issued.

Domestic animals, dogs and cats, over four months of age are required to be vaccinated against rabies and wear a current rabies license tag. Shots can be obtained through a veterinarian or by calling Animal Care and Control at 561-233-1272.

### *Jim's Epi Corner*

- **YPPL AS AN ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR INFLUENZA AND PNEUMOCOCCAL**

A review of the Years of Potential Life Lost (YPPL) comparing year 1997 with year 2000 prompted the question **Why did the YPPL for influenza and pneumonia increase from 806 in year 1997 to 849 in year 2000, a 1.12% increase?** The specific age group that increased the numbers was 1 to 14 years of age, with 146 in year 1997 to 344 in year 2000, a 135% increase. Two recent developments will address the problem. First, the introduction of a pneumococcal vaccine for children will immediately affect the numbers. Second, the emphasis on giving influenza vaccine to children has increased. It is anticipated that there will be a significant decrease in the YPPL for influenza and pneumonia.

- **WHAT IS YOUR RISK OF ACQUIRING A FOOD RELATED ILLNESS AT YOUR FAVORITE RESTAURANT?**

The 291 complaints investigated by the Palm Beach County Health Department alleging illnesses related to food received in 2001 suggests that persons who eat out are being exposed to the risk of becoming ill from the foods they eat. The 69 inspections by the Division of Environmental Health and Engineering revealed problems in complying with basic food handling procedures. The observed violations were broken down to 54% temperature, 30% sanitation, 29% equipment cleaning, 26% food cross contamination, and 17% employee hygiene. It is very important that equipment is in good repair and that we continue to emphasize the education of management and employees.

It is important that food originate from a source that has a history of quality, especially when there is no way to protect the end consumer from the consequences. Specific fish are related to ciguatera and certain geographic areas are associated with increased incidence. Ciguatera is not detectable and is heat stable so the only protection available is to know the species and origin of the fish. Another illness, cyclospora, relies upon its growing conditions for protection. It occurs on uncooked products, such as lettuce and berries, thus any protection relies on the consumer to rinse the product before serving.

The 291 complaints are probably just the tip of the iceberg. Recently, a Norwalk virus spread to 60% of employees and residents in an institutional setting. A working ill restaurant employee practicing poor hygiene has the potential to be a major contributor to food related illnesses.

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**Communicable Diseases and Selected Public Health Indices  
Palm Beach County, Florida**

**Enteric, Hepatitis, Meningitis, AIDS, HIV, STD, TB,  
Live Births, Infant Deaths, Foodborne Outbreaks,  
Childhood Lead Testing**

**1st Quarter  
January – March 2002**

	<b>Number This Qtr.</b>	<b>Number To Date This Yr.</b>	<b>Number To Date Last Yr.</b>
<b><i>Enteric, Hepatitis, Meningitis</i></b>			
Campylobacteriosis	18	18	11
Shigellosis	18	18	7
Salmonellosis	35	35	22
Giardiasis	15	15	3
Hepatitis A	7	7	6
Hepatitis B	10	10	12
Meningitis & Invasive Disease due to Neisseria Meningitidis	3	3	0
Meningitis & Invasive Disease due to Haemophilus Influenzae	5	5	5
<b><i>AIDS</i></b>			
# New AIDS Cases Reported (Adult/Adolescent)	159	159	112
<b><i>HIV***</i></b>			
# HIV Tested	3088	3088	2440
# HIV Positive	103	103	77
% HIV Positive	3.3	3.3	3.2
<b><i>STD</i></b>			
Primary/Secondary Syphilis	7	7	8
Congenital Syphilis	1	1	1
Gonorrhea	183	183	204
Chlamydia	497	497	429
<b><i>Tuberculosis</i></b>			
Total Tuberculosis Cases	30	30	17
Total Tuberculosis Cases <15 Yrs. of Age	3	3	0
<b><i>Live Births</i></b>			
Total Infant Births	3279	3279	3342
Infant Births, White	2352	2352	2284
Infant Births, Non-White	926	926	1050
<b><i>Infant Deaths</i></b>			
Total Infant Deaths	31	31	17
Infant Deaths, White	18	18	8
Infant Deaths, Non-White	13	13	9
<b><i>Food Related Complaints and Outbreaks</i></b>			
Number of Complaints	66	66	102
Suspected Foodborne Illness Outbreaks	3	3	7
Confirmed Foodborne Illness Outbreaks	0	0	1
<b><i>Childhood Lead Testing</i></b>			
Lead Poisoning	8	8	8

Data provided is provisional

N/A = Not Applicable

\*\*\*Data Representing PBCHD clients only

\*\*Data Unavailable

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