Spread the Word, Not the Germs

December is National Handwashing Awareness Month. PEHP encourages you to “Spread the Word, Not the Germs” by understanding the importance of handwashing.

December is a time of festivities and family get-togethers making clean hands an important step to prevent the spread of disease. Help to avoid any flu or flu-like epidemics this year.

Teach your family the 4 Principles of Hand Awareness and put Healthy Holiday Tips into practice.

In this issue, we offer articles and tips to support healthy living. Register for the December webinar titled, ‘Simplify Your Holiday Season,’ plus check out the Health Tools of the Week on our calendar page highlighting holiday wellness and health safety.

Happy Holidays!
– Your PEHP Wellness Team

Don’t Touch the T Zone! The T Zone includes the eyes, nose, and mouth – parts of our body with mucus membranes especially prone to respiratory infections. Use a tissue and don’t cough or sneeze into bare hands.

– Dr. Will Sawyer, Infection Prevention Specialist

Simplify Your Holiday Season

What: The holiday season is in full gear, and with it comes high levels of stress. Discover ways to simplify your life during this busy time.

When: Dec. 1, 2015, 12–12:30 p.m.

Presenter: Maria Givler, PEHP Registered Dietitian

Register here

Can’t make it? PEHP Wellness Webinars are archived for future viewing. View archived 2015 webinars or browse through our 2014 archives.
Germs at the Gym

If the cold weather has moved your exercise routine indoors for the winter, be aware that the gym can be a source of a variety of germs and bacteria. Having good gym hygiene can limit your exposure to germs that cause a cold, the flu, athlete’s foot, or a staph infection. While the health benefits of exercising at the gym outweigh risks of getting sick, knowing a few tips can help safeguard your health this winter.

» Wash your hands. This is the easiest way to prevent the spread of germs. After exercise, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap, particularly before touching your face or eating.

» Use your own supplies. Bring your own equipment whenever possible, including a yoga mat and a clean towel.

» Use a water bottle, not the drinking fountain. Wash your bottle frequently and use a bottle made of stainless steel instead of plastic, which harbors germs more easily.

» Wipe as you go. A good rule to follow is to wipe down surfaces before and after you touch anything. And don’t just swipe with a plain towel. Use an antibacterial wipe or spray provided by most gyms.

Flu viruses can survive on hard surfaces for up to 24 hours. – CDC

WORKOUT WARRIOR

134 PARTICIPANTS IN OCTOBER
The theme of the October Workout Warrior was Be Active – Reduce Cancer Risk – 134 Workout Warriors participated. Sheila T. was the random winner of an Amazon gift card. Congratulations Sheila!

The theme for December is Stay Fit through the Holiday Season.
Sign up for our Workout Warrior monthly challenge here.

Workout Warrior is email-based, self-paced, and moderated by PEHP Wellness staff. Participants receive useful health information about physical activity. Increase your motivation, and you might even win a prize for participating! Learn more.

Keep moving!
There’s a Right Way to Cough

Coughing is your body’s attempt to rid itself of whatever is obstructing airflow. Uncontrolled coughing collapses and irritates the lungs and throat, trapping mucus and air. Controlled coughing exercises can be helpful for anyone needing to clear their airways, the technique includes:

» Take a couple of deep breaths then inhale slowly through the nose, pushing your stomach out as far as it will go. Exhale slowly through pursed lips.

» Have tissues and a glass of water on hand.

» Inhale slowly and deeply again; then hold for a moment. Bend forward and give two short, sharp coughs.

While sick, it is critical to practice good hygiene etiquette such as keeping hands clean, especially when you cough or sneeze. To help stop the spread of germs remember to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue – if you don’t have a tissue, cough into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The gift of health is one of the best gifts of the season, and just as hand washing can effectively reduce the spread of germs, proper food handling can prevent food-borne illness. This is particularly important as food is involved in most of our holiday celebrations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that every year, 1 in 6 Americans gets sick by consuming contaminated foods and beverages. This brochure provides even more helpful information, including the proper cooking temperatures for the foods you love.

Four Steps to Food Safety

Stay healthy by following these basic steps for proper food handling:

» CLEAN – Wash hands and clean surfaces.

» SEPARATE – Don’t cross-contaminate.

» COOK – Cook to proper temperatures.

» CHILL – Refrigerate promptly.

HEALTH & SAFETY FACT

Nail brushing is one of the most important, and often the most forgotten step when people wash their hands. Nail brushes should be used at least once a day to eliminate germs that hide under fingernails.

– Dr. Will Sawyer, Infection Prevention Specialist
The Year in Review

This year has been exciting for PEHP Waist Aweigh! To bid it farewell, we share highlights from our 2015 newsletter articles. Take this opportunity to consider your own lessons learned over the last several months, and make 2016 even better!

» There are healthy ways to manage stress for every person – find what works best for you!
» The “best” diet is not a fad or “quick fix,” but what you will maintain long-term.
» Build a support system – don’t tackle goals alone!
» Sleep may be as important as diet and exercise for managing stress and weight.
» Stay hydrated to be at your best for daily activities.
» While setting goals, remember to make a plan to handle roadblocks!
» Consider helping others to boost mood and cope with stress.
» Focus on consistency rather than perfection.
» Find simple ways to move more throughout the day.

Are You Ready?
Please reflect on the following when considering enrollment in PEHP Waist Aweigh:

» I am ready for a challenge
» I understand potential barriers
» I am motivated for long-term change
» I can create a support system
» I have realistic expectations
» I am willing to invest time in my health

If these statements apply to you, you may be ready for PEHP Waist Aweigh.

Revised 1-7-15

PEHP Waist Aweigh
Weight Management Program
Support for positive lifestyle change

Health & Safety Fact
Hand sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs, but if you do not have access to soap and clean water, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol.

– Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

PEHP WAIST AWEIGH
Have a BMI of 30 or higher? With your dedication and our support, a healthier lifestyle is within reach with PEHP Waist Aweigh.

Learn More/Enroll Here
Cytomegalovirus, or CMV, is a common virus that infects people of all ages including one of every 150 pregnant women. According to the CDC most CMV infections are “silent,” meaning the majority of people who are infected with CMV have no signs or symptoms.

When CMV occurs during pregnancy, the baby can become infected before birth which is known as “congenital CMV.” CMV transmission can cause potential damage to the unborn baby’s brain, eyes and inner ears. How do you protect yourself and your unborn child from CMV?

The Utah Department of Health recommends that you wash your hands often with soap and water for 15-20 seconds, especially after you:
» Change diapers – disinfect changing tables often.
» Wipe a young child’s mouth or nose – any body fluid may contain the virus.
» Handle children’s toys – wash and disinfect toys often.

It is also important that you don’t share any food, drinks, eating utensils, or your toothbrush with a child. Never put a child’s pacifier in your mouth and avoid contact with a child’s saliva. This virus is dangerous to pregnant women and is passed from infected people to others through direct contact with body fluids.

Remember, most healthy children and adults with CMV don’t feel ill and may not know they are infected. Discuss your risk with your physician and watch this important video here.

**HEALTH & SAFETY FACT**

Congenital CMV is the leading non-genetic cause of childhood hearing loss. Protect your baby – ask everyone upon entering your home to wash their hands, especially before they touch your infant.

– Utah Department of Health

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**PEHP WEECARE**

PEHP WeeCare is a pregnancy and postpartum program provided to help expectant mothers have the healthiest and safest pregnancy possible.
### Mark Your Calendar

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**Sign up for a PEHP Healthy Utah testing session.**