

Medical Officer of Health Environmental Health ADVICE

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Introduction

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) is preparing to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on the urban redevelopment associated with the Mangere Growth Centre Plan. This is our second HIA focussing on urban design and development.

In this issue of EH Advice, we have included safety tips for swimming, food safety at large social events and health effects and safe management of lead-based paint hazards.

Health Impact Assessment for the Mangere Growth Centre Plan

ARPHS in partnership with Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) are preparing to conduct a HIA on the Mangere Growth Centre Plan. The HIA will focus on urban redevelopment and how urban design can contribute to a reduction in obesity levels within the Counties Manukau District. The HIA will have a particular focus on supporting the CMDHB's *Let's Beat Diabetes Strategy*.

Background

CMDHB has developed a five-year plan *Let's Beat Diabetes* to address the diabetes epidemic. The plan addresses four groups: Group A, healthy people; Group B, overweight or obese people; Group C, people with diabetes; Group D, people with diabetes and complications. The goals of the plan are to;

1. Keep the 'healthy' population from becoming at risk (keep in 'A');
2. Move individuals from being at risk to healthy (B to A), or at least keep the at risk population (i.e. obese) from developing diabetes (keep in B);
3. Slow progression of disease in those with diabetes, allowing people to remain complication free for longer (keep in C);
4. Provide more effective management and treatment for people living with diabetes complications;
5. Prevent premature death of people with diabetes.

The plan has identified 10 key action areas for diabetes prevention and management. One of the action areas identified

in the plan is: Changing Urban Design to support healthy active lifestyles. Key action points around this area are;

- ▶ to ensure urban design in Counties Manukau encourages and supports physical activity and provides access to medical facilities;
- ▶ to determine the impact of good urban design on physical activity;
- ▶ CMDHB and ARPHS will work in partnership with Manukau City Council providing health advice and expertise where required for urban design planning.

Aims of the HIA project

- ▶ Increase knowledge and understanding of the linkages between urban design and health. How urban design can contribute to a reduction in health inequalities and contribute to addressing the determinants of health;
- ▶ Strengthen relationships with local authority planners contributing to an upstream approach to addressing health in the Auckland region;
- ▶ Identify the positive and negative health and well-being impacts of implementing the Mangere Growth Centre precinct plans;
- ▶ Provide important information from the HIA process into the preparation of the first precinct plan; likely to be the Pershore Precinct.
- ▶ Recommendations, if incorporated into future planning work over the next 20 years for the area, will result in health benefits to the broader community.

Safe swimming tips

Over the summer months, there are a number of ways you can keep your family and friends safe whilst swimming.

Beaches, rivers and lakes

Check the current beach water quality results by phoning 0800 SAFESWIM;

Do not swim for 48 hours after heavy rain;

Do not allow children to play or swim in stormwater drains or near sewage outfalls;

Check the depth and look for hidden objects before jumping into water.

Swimming pools and spa pools

- ▶ If you or your children have had diarrhoea (an upset tummy) in the last two weeks - don't go swimming;
- ▶ Go to the toilet and wash your hands with soap and water (preferably warm) before you enter the water;
- ▶ Where possible, shower yourself and your children before entering the water, washing thoroughly using soap and warm water;
- ▶ If there are no showers available at your school, children should be asked to shower in the morning at home using soap and warm water;
- ▶ Babies should wear firm-fitting togs in the pool, not ordinary nappies. Always wash your hands after changing a nappy;

- ▶ Spa pools and swimming pools should be appropriately fenced with childproof fencing as required by the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 and local council by-laws;
- ▶ Never drink pool water;
- ▶ Make sure young children make frequent trips to the toilet to avoid accidents;
- ▶ If you think someone has had an accident in the water i.e. have excreted or urinated in the pool, immediately notify the person in charge.

Geothermal Pools

- ▶ Keep your head above water at all times if swimming in a geothermal pool. Never jump, splash, dive or duck in the pool as this can force water up your nose.

Jellyfish stings

There have been a number of recent reports of swimmers being stung by jellyfish, the majority of stings in the Auckland region have been caused by the Hydromedusae jellyfish. New Zealand wide the bluebottle jellyfish (*Physalia utriculus*) is the species most commonly causing stings and these are generally mild. Other jellyfish may sting but are considered unlikely to cause significant health effects.

What are the symptoms of jellyfish stings?

Most jellyfish stings in New Zealand are not serious and if given prompt first aid people are not likely to develop significant symptoms. Symptoms of jellyfish stings include immediate intense pain with burning and itching at the site of the sting. The sting often appears as a welt with surrounding redness. Rarely victims may develop symptoms such as breathing difficulty or loss of consciousness.

How do I treat a jellyfish sting?

- ▶ Wash the affected area with fresh or seawater;
- ▶ Remove any tentacles or stings attached to the skin – do not touch them to avoid being stung;
- ▶ Place the affected area in warm water (45° C);
- ▶ Do not apply vinegar, methylated spirits or alcohol as these will make the sting more painful.

If the reaction to the sting is severe or the symptoms worsen, antihistamines and topical anti-inflammatory creams may be prescribed.

If the person develops signs such as reduced consciousness or difficulty breathing:

- ▶ Call 111 for an ambulance.

▶ More information on jellyfish stings is available from the Toxinz website www.toxinz.com

Catering for large social events and food safety

ARPHS regularly investigates outbreaks of food borne illness linked to large social events such as weddings and workplace functions. Food borne illnesses can be serious and in extreme cases fatal. Each case of food poisoning costs the country an estimated \$462 per affected person. Some groups in the community including people with weakened immune systems i.e. children, elderly people and pregnant women, are more likely to get sick if exposed to contaminated food and are more likely to suffer illness. The food borne illnesses most frequently associated with large social events in the Auckland region are Salmonella, *C. perfringens* and Norovirus infections. Food borne illness can be easily prevented by following the 4 Cs- clean, cook, cover and chill. The following measures will help prevent food borne illness outbreaks when catering for large numbers of people;

- ▶ Do not let anyone who has had diarrhoea or has been vomiting in the past 24 hours handle food or be in the food preparation areas;
- ▶ Anyone handling food or utensils should wash their hands first;
- ▶ Wash hands thoroughly between handling or preparing raw and cooked food;
- ▶ Keep animals and insects away from food by covering it completely;
- ▶ Make sure that raw food and ready to eat food are stored separately in fridges and chilly bins;

- ▶ Do not leave food out in the sun for extended periods of time;
- ▶ Make sure that there is enough clean quality water for food preparation;
- ▶ Food should only be reheated once and even then it must be heated until piping hot;
- ▶ Sausages, meat patties and chicken should be cooked thoroughly (i.e. meat is no longer pink and any juices run clear);
- ▶ Food should be covered until people are ready to eat;
- ▶ Wash all cooking utensils and work surfaces with hot water and detergent;
- ▶ Wash any cutlery and crockery with hot water and detergent between uses;
- ▶ Do not use the same cooking implements to handle raw and cooked foods unless they have been washed and dried in between;
- ▶ Do not let people take home leftovers if they have not been properly stored (i.e. any food that has been sitting out in the sun should be thrown out) or they can not chill it on the way home.

▶ More information on food safety is available from www.foodsafe.org.nz and the Duty Health Protection Officer telephone 09 623 4600.

Promoting Biosecurity

The Biosecurity Team is currently undertaking health promotion activities in conjunction with the Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) in the Auckland region. These activities follow on from the Enhanced Vector Surveillance Project undertaken by the Biosecurity Team during the period August 2004 - June 2005.

Each TLA will be supplied with a health promotion display board for a period of two to four weeks, which will be exhibited in customer service centres, libraries and other public areas. The aim of the display board is to educate the public on the issues relating to the introduction of exotic mosquitoes into the Auckland region, and the illnesses associated with these mosquito species. The display board provides information on how to reduce mosquito breeding habitats and how to identify and submit mosquito specimens to ARPHS for

identification.

Feedback from the councils who participated in the health promotion activities last summer was excellent, and it is anticipated that a similar level of response will be achieved this year.

A new quarterly council newsletter has been produced, with the first issue out in January 2006. The aim of the newsletter is to update council staff, particularly Environmental Health Officers, on biosecurity issues in the Auckland region. The newsletter will include interception updates, mosquito trapping results and general health promotion information. It is hoped this will encourage a greater level of council involvement in the mosquito biosecurity area.

Lead-based paint and house renovations

Lead is a significant health hazard and lead poisoning is a notifiable disease under both the Health Act 1956 and Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992. Exposure to lead-based paint and associated lead contaminated dust or fumes is one of the most commonly reported lead sources in the Auckland region. Preventing children's exposure to lead during house renovations is important because children are especially vulnerable to the toxic effects of lead. The health effects of mildly elevated blood lead levels can include;

- ▶ reduced IQ;
- ▶ impaired behaviour development and learning deficits;
- ▶ more physical manifestations of severe poisoning.

Pre-school children are particularly susceptible to poisoning from lead-based paint because of hand to mouth activities and their relative body size. Lead-based paint has a sweet taste and children may develop a taste for eating flaking paint.

Lead-based paint is almost certain to be present in pre-1945 paintwork and is likely to be present on pre-1980 paintwork. Most post-1980 paintwork will have a low lead content if any. Building occupants and others are not normally exposed to the hazards associated with lead in paint. However, the risk of exposure increases as lead-based paint films deteriorate, become damaged or are removed unsafely during redecorating or renovation.

Poisoned children may experience a range of symptoms including abdominal pain. Lead poisoning should be considered as a possible diagnosis in children when they are continually unwell and live in an older home or have a tendency to eat soil or paint flakes.

Safe Management of Lead-based paint hazards

Lead paint kits are available from most paint shops.

Auckland Regional Public Health Service provides;

- ▶ Analysis of paint samples brought into the public health unit by private individuals and non-profit organisations;
- ▶ A free advisory service on the safe management of lead-based paint hazards.

Other sources of lead exposure

Other sources of lead exposure apart from lead-based paint may also be present in homes. Activities that may potentially expose children to lead include;

- ▶ Lead lighting
- ▶ Manufacture of lead fishing weights
- ▶ Cleaning and loading of fire arms
- ▶ Soldering
- ▶ Car radiator repairs
- ▶ Consumption of Ayurvedic medicines.

▶ For further information and free advice to householders

- ▶ Contact Auckland Regional Public Health Service and ask to speak to the Duty Health Protection Officer from the Healthy Environments Team (09) 623 4600 for paints advice or the teams Medical Officer of Health, for medical advice.
- ▶ Enquiries about occupational situations or commercial premises should be made to Occupational Safety & Health phone 0800 20 90 20.
- ▶ Information on repainting lead-based paint is available on the Ministry of Health website www.moh.govt.nz, search on "repainting lead-based paint".

Annual Drinking Water Survey 2006

The Drinking Water Assessment Unit are currently undertaking the Annual Drinking Water Survey for registered drinking water suppliers within the Auckland region. Approximately 330 community water suppliers in the region will be contacted during February and March 2006 to complete a range of information around monitoring and treatment of their water supply. The Drinking Water Standards New Zealand 2005 (DWSNZ) states that "drinking water supplies that supply at least 25 people for 60 days of the year should be registered as a Community Water Supply with their local Public Health Unit". All rest-homes, hospitals, licensed early childhood

education centres and food premises on their own water supply in the Auckland region should have their water supply registered with ARPHS.

The data collected during the Annual Drinking Water Survey is entered on to the national Water Information System New Zealand (WINZ) Programme. The Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) analyse and collate the information to produce an annual report. The Drinking Water Assessment Unit anticipates the conclusion of the survey to be late March 2006.

Roimata Moore



Roimata Moore has recently joined the Healthy Environments team. Roimata has a Bachelor of Applied Science from AUT and has worked for ARPHS for five years. Prior to joining the Healthy Environments team, she worked in the Food Safety and Disease Investigation teams. Roimata has recently been designated as a Health Protection Officer and is currently undertaking Drinking Water Assessor training. Her current work areas include drinking water, biosecurity and early childhood education centres.