



Northeast District Department of Health

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PRESS RELEASE

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Health Department Urges Safety at Local Fairs

Hand Washing and Proper Food Handling Minimize Illness Outbreaks

BROOKLYN - The Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) is ready for another busy fair season and offers fairgoers simple advice to enjoy the Brooklyn and Woodstock Fairs in a safe and healthy manner.

“Frequent hand washing and proper food handling are two of the best ways to insure a healthy fair experience,” commented Linda Colangelo, NDDH Education and Communications Coordinator. “The fairs have a long standing tradition of providing fairgoers with plenty of fun, festivities, agricultural and animal exhibits, and food. NDDH partners with fair management to assure that fairgoers have every chance to avoid illness.”

Every year, NDDH sanitarians cover plenty of acreage at both fairs, inspecting hundreds of food establishments. Food vendors are required to have a Food Awareness and Safety Class (FAST) certificate. NDDH offers a FAST Class at both fairs.

“NDDH inspects all food vendors at the fairs to assure compliance with the Public Health Code,” said Sue Starkey, NDDH Director of Health. “A temporary food event that brings hundreds of thousands of people to an area within a short time frame requires tremendous coordination. We remind fairgoers that they play a role in their health and safety. Fairgoers become food handlers when they purchase a food product. They too, should practice food safety so they reduce their risk of food-borne illness.”

In addition to food safety, NDDH encourages frequent hand washing or the use of hand sanitizers if hand washing facilities are unavailable. NDDH-sponsored signage throughout the fairgrounds promotes healthy fair habits.

“The combination of thousands of people, food, animals and limited hand-washing facilities at the fairs creates a higher risk for the potential of bacterial and viral infection,” said Starkey. “These infections can occur through food-borne illness or by interaction with farm animals. By increasing awareness of proper hand washing techniques and the use of hand-sanitizing stations, we hope to reduce the risk of illness for fairgoers. Fun at the fair starts with these simple health reminders.”

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Sidebar:

Enjoy a healthy fair experience by practicing these tips from NDDH:

- Keep food and drinks out of animal areas.
- Do not share your food with animals.
- Do not eat or drink raw (unpasteurized) dairy products.
- Consume fair food immediately to reduce risk of illness. If that is not possible, don't let food sit out more than two hours. On a hot day (90°F or higher), reduce this time to one hour.
- Be sure to put perishable items in a cooler or insulated bag.
- Never keep leftovers in a hot car.

For more information on food borne illness and staying healthy at animal exhibits, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/fairsandfood/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/features/animalexhibits/>