

Plano Health

Quarterly Online Newsletter

Spring 2008 Volume 1, No. 1

BRING ON SPRING . . .



We're managing to complete another Texas winter, highs in the 70's, lows in the teens, thunderstorms and even snow, we wouldn't have it any other way. That's almost behind us so now it's time to plan for longer days with warmer and wetter weather.

Spring season for the Health Department means preparing for pool season, an increase in temporary food events, continued surveillance of Plano's creeks and streams in conjunction with the daily duties of restaurant inspections, food protection, customer concerns and community education.

We're introducing a quarterly online newsletter to keep everyone informed of the activities and events occurring within the Health Department. This newsletter will provide a vast array of information with the desire of educating and communicating with the public we serve.

Please contact us with questions or requests for topics you would like to see posted in the quarterly newsletters.

Remember, Spring officially began on March 20th.

Plano is on the safe list

February's "Men's Health" magazine ranked Plano, TX number 8, out of more than 100 cities nationwide, as the safest place to eat. The list was compiled gathering information from the Community Health Status Indicator Project on outbreaks pertaining to E. Coli, Salmonella, and Shigella-related infections and information from the CDC's Wonderbase. The investigators also found out which states have adopted FDA's current version of the uniform Food Code.

Plano's Health Department commits to serving this community with education and regulation to help maintain a high level of food safety for our residents and visitors. Restaurant inspection scores are posted on the city's main webpage (www.plano.gov) under Health Departments. Our goal is #1.

Carnivals, festivals, general fun. .

If you are interested in hosting a carnival or event within the City of Plano that would include providing food and/or drink products to the public please contact Pamela Webb-Dockins, Temporary Event Coordinator, at 972.941.7143, for details and permitting information. Some events will require health permits before operations may begin. Ensure that your event is safe and in compliance by contacting the Health Department at least 7 business days prior to the scheduled event. We look forward to working with you.

This issue

Our first
online
newsletter

Plano's
Food Safety
Ranking

Temporary
Food
Events

Healthy
Fruits and
Vegetables

Swimming
Pool
Cleaning

Helpful
weblinks

www.fda.gov

www.cdc.gov

www.plano.gov

KEEPING OUR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES HEALTHY

Spring time is around the corner and the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables available is increasing. As part of a healthy diet it is recommended that we consume at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables each day. In hopes of reaping the healthful benefits of fruits and vegetables we must ensure that we handle and prepare these items in a manner that removes possible bacteria presence and that prevents possibilities of cross contamination.

The soil in which produce is harvested contains many harmful bacteria and some may contain chemical pesticides. Fruits and vegetables containing these bacteria and pesticides may cause severe foodborne illness if ingested. Following a few simple steps may help reduce our risky encounters.



When purchasing produce, inspect the condition of the items. Avoid buying those items that are bruised or damaged. Fresh cut produce, such as cantaloupes and melons should be stored at cold hold temperatures of 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

The cold hold temperatures help maintain quality and safety by limiting the growth of certain bacteria. Also, bag fresh produce separately from raw meats to avoid cross contamination. Before cutting or eating fresh produce, wash the outside areas thoroughly since bacteria on the surface of the fruit may come in contact with the flesh of the fruit when cutting/slicing. Washing produce with detergent or using commercial produce washes is not recommended.

Consuming 5 servings of fruits and vegetables can be a healthy reward if purchased and handled in a safe manner. Let's continue caring for our body and keeping our fruits and vegetables healthy as well.

READY TO DIVE IN...



It's time to remove the covers and tarps of our winter protected swimming pools and begin preparation for spring time fun. It's time to drain the stale water, clean the yards and fire up the grills. Let's remember a few tips.

Before draining a pool ensure that the chlorine level of the water is non detectable and that pH is neutral. This is important because any water drained from the pool into the alley will flow directly into our storm drain which in turn goes directly into our lakes, streams and creeks, as an untreated product. We want to protect the animal life and vegetation of our waterways by ensuring that they are not contaminated with high levels of chlorine and not interrupting the natural balance by adding water that has a non-neutral pH (around 7.0). A standard pool testing kit, which may be purchased from a pool company, will provide instructions for proper chlorine and pH testing, in addition to testing for other chemical levels.

Once the pool is ready for activity, getting the rest of the home magazine ready may include a fresh coat of paint, fertilizer for the new plants/shrubs and a fresh mow to the grass. All of these items should be disposed of properly and should not be washed down the driveway/alley or allowed to enter the storm drain. Questions on how to dispose of household contaminants or pick up dates/times may be directed to 972.769.4150

Let's work together in keeping Plano healthy and beautiful.