

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakotans Reminded to Take Safety Precautions While Attending Summer Events

BISMARCK - Summer fairs and outdoor festivals are important North Dakota traditions. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) reminds people to take healthy precautions at fairs, festivals, carnivals, and rodeos this summer. Certain diseases, like *E. coli* and influenza, can be passed back and forth between humans and animals.

“With so many outdoor festivities and gatherings, summer is a great time to enjoy activities with friends and family,” said Michelle Feist, epidemiologist with the NDDoH. “A few simple precautions can help to keep illnesses from interrupting summer fun.”

General recommendations for attendees:

- Wash your hands often with soap and running water before and after exposure to live animals and their surroundings. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Do not eat or drink while in petting zoos or livestock viewing areas.
- Do not allow children to put anything in their mouths while in animal areas.
- Do not take toys, pacifiers, cups, baby bottles, strollers, or similar items into animal viewing areas; these items can pick up germs from animal areas and can become a source of contamination for small children.
- Always provide adult supervision in animal areas for children younger than 5 years old.
- Avoid close contact with any animal that looks or acts ill.
- If you are ill, avoid close contact with animals and viewing animals in enclosed spaces, such as barns.
- To further reduce the risk of infection, minimize direct contact with animals in barns and viewing areas.
- If you are bringing or preparing your own food, don't let food sit out for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is over 90°F. Keep perishable food items in a cooler or insulated bag.
- Wear U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent to keep mosquitos, ticks, and other bugs away when outdoors.

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Anyone at high risk of serious complications from infectious diseases like influenza or *E. coli* may consider avoiding contact with live animals at the fair. High risk individuals can include small children, pregnant women, people 65 years and older, and people with long-term health conditions. People with respiratory conditions should consider avoiding enclosed spaces where livestock are present, such as barns and indoor arenas.

Anyone who becomes ill after contact with livestock or other animals should contact a health care provider, and should tell the health care provider about the animal contact. For more information about these topics, visit the Division of Disease Control website at www.ndhealth.gov/disease/ or call 701.328.2378.

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