



Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials

SUSQI NEWS

Susquehanna Conference –

Winter Holiday Edition 2011

*From the Susquehanna Conference of CASA,
Board and Committee Members,
We wish all of you a Happy Holiday and
Healthy New Year!*



Enjoy the Holiday Bustle - But Be Aware

The end-of-year holiday season - with all its hustle and bustle - is fast approaching. With all the distractions and activity, we sometimes forget the basics about safety on the streets and at home. Opportunity is the criminal's key to crime. By staying alert and following a few crime prevention tips, you can ensure a holiday season that is happy and safe. Crime prevention involves being aware of our surroundings and potential areas of danger, thereby closing the criminal's window of opportunity. Busy shoppers can be targeted for purse snatching and other forms of street robbery. The malls are full of folks with money to spend. As we speed along, focused on getting through our treasure hunt, a criminal can size up a potential victim.

- ❖ Outside of the mall, stick to well-lit, well-traveled streets, walkways and parking areas for both walking and parking.
- ❖ Stay off the cell phone as you walk through parking lots and streets. It is a distraction that makes you vulnerable to robbers, and your cell phone itself is a tempting target.
- ❖ Don't flash large amounts of cash or offer tempting targets for theft such as expensive jewelry or clothing.
- ❖ Carry a purse or shoulder bag close to your body, not dangling by straps. Put a wallet in an inside pocket of your coat or front pants pocket.
- ❖ Don't fumble for house or car keys. Have them in your hand, ready to use when you reach the door.

Here are some additional tips regarding the car or house you've left behind while on your travels.

- ❖ ALWAYS lock your car and residence, even if you are away for only a few moments.
- ❖ Do NOT leave valuables - gifts, cell phones, purse or clothing - in open view in your car. Take valuables with you, lock them in your trunk, or cover them in an unobtrusive way.
- ❖ Leave lights turned on both inside and outside your residence after dark. Criminals don't like bright places.
- ❖ If you will be away from home for several days, make arrangements for someone to pick up your mail and newspapers. An overstuffed mailbox is a sure sign that no one is home, and burglars are tempted to check those envelopes for holiday gifts.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Caution to Pet Owners – Pet Treats and Toys May Cause Problems for Your Pet

With the holiday season upon us, many pets will receive gifts such as pet treats and toys including chew toys. Each year FDA receives a small number of reports of adverse events associated with pet treats. Pet owners should be aware that occasionally, pet treats and chew toys may cause choking or blockage problems for their pets and may want to monitor their pets for signs of potential problems.

Pet treats that are meant to be consumed are most digestible (edible) when chewed into small pieces; however, rawhide type treats can become very slippery when wet and larger chunks can then become lodged in the back of the animal's mouth or throat, causing gagging, choking, and even death. Through chewing, pet treats and toys may become broken into pieces that may become lodged in your pet's airway or gastrointestinal tract.

The sign(s) that your pet exhibits may help your veterinarian determine where the obstruction has occurred. If pieces of treats or toys are stuck in the back of the throat, your pet may become frantic and you may notice signs such as drooling and choking. Severe airway obstructions are not uncommon, and they should be considered life threatening. This calls for an emergency visit to your veterinarian.

If your pet experiences an esophageal obstruction, you may notice repeated gulping and drooling. Also, your pet may regurgitate undigested food after eating.

If something is stuck in your pet's stomach or intestines, your pet may vomit, exhibit depression or a loss of appetite, have abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Chronic obstructions may lead to severe illness and a life-threatening abdominal infection (known as peritonitis.)

If you observe your pet swallowing a piece of a holiday decoration, toy, or small piece of a pet treat, it is important to contact your veterinarian for medical advice. Your veterinarian may take x-rays to evaluate the problem. Veterinarians may also use other procedures (called endoscopic procedures) to remove objects from the esophagus and stomach. Your veterinarian may also need to perform surgery for intestinal blockages.

Please remember to always keep small objects from within reach of your pets and contact your veterinarian if you have concerns about something your pet has swallowed or exhibits symptoms of having a problem.

During our December 2011 quarterly meeting, attendees enjoyed samples of Peter's Chocolate Gingerbread Truffles – *Delicious!*

PETER'S CHOCOLATE Gingerbread Truffles

24 oz. Peter's Ultra milk chocolate, melted
6 oz. Heavy cream
¼ cup Molasses
½ tsp. Ground ginger
½ tsp. Ground nutmeg
½ tsp. Ground cloves
¼ tsp. Ground cinnamon
Peter's Burgundy semisweet chocolate, for enrobing

Heat the heavy cream to a near boil (180 – 190° F). Remove from heat and add molasses, ginger, nutmeg, cloves and cinnamon. Allow to cool below 90°F. Whisk in Peter's Ultra milk chocolate, and blend into a smooth ganache. Allow to set up to firm consistency overnight. Portion with a #100 scoop and allow to crust (dry slightly). Roll into balls and allow to crust again, and coat with tempered Peter's Burgundy semisweet chocolate. If desired, decorate with ground ginger before chocolate coating solidifies.

Yields: 75 truffles



Partnership for Food Safety Education

Eggnog Exactly Right

Homemade eggnog is a tradition for many during the holiday season. But, this creamy drink may contain harmful *Salmonella* bacteria that may make you sick. Ensure your eggnog makes for a happy holiday by not using raw eggs.

What should you do?

1. Cook the egg mixture following a food-safe eggnog recipe
2. Don't count on alcohol to kill bacteria
3. Use an egg substitute product

Unsure of how to cook eggs for eggnog? Here's a delicious and food safe holiday recipe.

Holiday Eggnog

Ingredients:

1 quart of 2 % milk
6 eggs
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup whipping cream, whipped
Ground nutmeg

Calories: 135 per ½ cup
Cholesterol: 120 mg. per ½ cup
Yield: 2 quarts

Directions:

- ❖ Heat milk in large saucepan until hot (do not boil or scald). While milk is heating, beat together eggs and salt in a large bowl, gradually adding the sugar.
- ❖ Gradually add the hot milk mixture to the egg mixture while continually stirring.
- ❖ Transfer the mixture back to the large saucepan and cook on medium-low heat. Stir constantly with a whisk until the mixture thickens and just coats a spoon. The food thermometer should register 160 degrees F. Stir in vanilla.
- ❖ Cool quickly by setting pan in a bowl of ice or cold water and stirring for about 10 minutes.
- ❖ Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, several hours or overnight.
- ❖ Pour into a bowl or pitcher. Fold in whipped cream. Then dust with ground nutmeg and enjoy!

Pa. Turnpike Reminds Motorists of 10% Cash-Only Toll Increase Next Year

Turnpike customers encouraged to get E-ZPass now to avoid higher tolls in the New Year.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission reminds customers that fares are set to go up on most of the state's toll roads by 10 percent on Jan. 1, 2012 for cash-paying travelers only. Because electronic-toll rates will not go up, E-ZPass customers will pay about 17 percent less than cash customers, on average, starting next year. (E-ZPass users presently pay 7 percent less, on average, than cash customers on the Pa. Turnpike.)

With the new rates - that will take effect at 12:01 a.m. - the most-common cash toll for passenger vehicles will increase from \$1.10 to \$1.25 while the most-common cash toll for a standard commercial-truck classification (Class 5) will rise from \$8.95 to \$9.85. (The 2012 fares were determined by applying a 10 percent increase on top of the 2011 fare then rounding up to the nearest nickel.) The increase will be applied to all vehicle classes on all Turnpike sections except the Southern Beltway (Turnpike 576) in Allegheny and Washington counties, where rates will be unchanged.

Turnpike Chairman William K. Lieberman of Pittsburgh said by not raising E-ZPass rates, the agency is easing the economic impact of a toll increase. "Since nearly two-thirds of travelers already use E-ZPass, only about a third of our customers will be affected," he explained. "For anyone without E-ZPass, I recommend you sign up soon if you want to have that transponder in hand before the end of the year."

Getting E-ZPass is easy: Most customers enroll online at www.paturnpike.com or by calling 1-877-Penn-Pass (1-877-736-6727). Customers can also open an E-ZPass account at many of the state's AAA offices and at certain regional grocery stores including Acme, Giant Eagle, Get-Go and Karns. For a complete list of retail locations, visit www.paturnpike.com/ezpass/sales.aspx.

Chairman Lieberman said there are several reasons to motivate people to get E-ZPass. "We believe it's important to encourage more travelers to switch to E-ZPass because of the numerous benefits, including economic, environmental and customer-safety advantages," he explained. "Collecting tolls electronically is not only safer, faster and more convenient for customers, but it is better for the

environment because it helps diminish idling at the toll plazas and also reduces the Turnpike's operating costs."

The cost to process an E-ZPass transaction is about four times less than the cost of handling a cash transaction; it costs the commission about \$1 per transaction to collect a cash toll, and less than 25 cents per transaction to collect tolls via E-ZPass.

The lower E-ZPass rates apply to all individual and commercial E-ZPass customers regardless of issuing agency or state in which an account was established. Presently, there are 24 E-ZPass agencies in 14 states, largely in the Northeastern U.S., and more than 20 million E-ZPass transponders in use on toll roads, bridges and tunnels nationwide.

The 2012 increase is needed, in part, to satisfy the Turnpike's funding obligation to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A 2007 statute expanded the Turnpike's role by directing it to utilize tollbooth revenues to help underwrite a transportation-funding shortfall. Under Act 44 of 2007, the Turnpike Commission continues to make annual contributions of \$450 million to PennDOT; of that amount, \$250 million is used for transit agencies across the state and \$200 million is used to help fund non-Turnpike road and bridge projects. To date, the commission provided more than \$3 billion to the state under this law. The 2012 toll increase will be the fourth rate hike needed to meet the debt-service costs associated with Act 44.