Stephen Glover Train
Memorial Center
11 Pierce Street
Brookline, MA 02445
(617)-730- 2300

abalsam@brooklinema.gov

Hours of Operation
Monday-Thursday 8:00-5:00
Friday 8:00-12:30

Alan Balsam
Director

2013 Brookline Seasonal Flu Clinics Flyer (Click here for dates, times, and locations)

In early September 2013, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) identified West Nile Virus-positive mosquitoes in Brookline. (PDF)

September is National Preparedness Month

CLEAN HANDS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Dr. Alan Balsam, Director of Public Health and Human Services, states that "Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water is perhaps the simplest and most effective way to help you and your family stay healthy." "Regular soap works fine," Dr. Balsam emphasized, "antibacterial soap is unnecessary. In fact, the antibacterial soaps may contribute to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance." Dr Balsam also noted that with the increased incidence of diseases such as MRSA, (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) a drug resistant staph infection, simple hand washing is a very effective strategy to avoid the spread of germs.

The Health Department offers hand-washing educational packets to local schools, day care centers, buildings, senior living centers and other Brookline locations. The packets include samples of posters, flyers and curricula that can be ordered from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Medical Society and other organizations.

Tips for effective hand washing include:

Rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces.

Wash for at least 20 seconds. (Tip: have your children sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice while washing.) It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.

When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu. However, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers do not remove dirt.

Dr. Balsam mentioned two other very beneficial hygiene practices to avoid spreading germs:

1) Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when people touch something that is contaminated with germs and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.Germs can live for a

long time on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.

2) Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Turn your head (never cough in the direction of someone else) and cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow. Then, wash your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

Dr. Balsam also noted that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website, www.mass.gov/handwashing
has hand-washing information that can be copied from the website. If you would like any additional information about hand-washing materials, please contact Dawn Sibor at the Brookline Health Department, 617-730-2656.