EPI Update for Friday, May 27, 2011 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Influenza reporting during the summer
- Microcystin poisoning continues as a reportable disease
- Daddy, is it done yet?
- (See Emergency EPI Updates #1 and #2 for measles information)

Influenza reporting during the summer

After May 27, 2010, the influenza weekly report will be published only once a month over the summer, but will resume weekly reports in October.

Microcystin poisoning continues as a reportable disease

This is the third year that the IDPH Director has designated suspected or confirmed cases of exposure to microcystin (a toxin produced by blue-green algae) a reportable disease in Iowa. This enables us to continue to study its occurrence and epidemiology in Iowa. This designation is in place until October 31, 2011.

Due to above average rainfall the past three years, we are anticipating more incidences of elevated microcystin, and potentially more reports of suspected cases of microcystin poisoning. IDPH encourages health care providers to look for potential cases of microcystin poisoning, especially during the later summer months when elevated microcystin levels historically have occurred.

Diagnosis of microcystin poisoning is based on symptoms, and a history of exposure to a body of water. There is no routine test for microcystin poisoning. Exposure to bluegreen algae can occur either by swallowing water, by having direct skin contact as when swimming or wading, or by breathing airborne droplets containing microcystins, such as during boating or waterskiing.

Symptoms of microcystin poisoning may take hours or days to show up, but normally are exhibited within one week after exposure:

- stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and fever,
- rash, hives, or skin blisters, especially on the lips or under swimsuits,
- watery eyes and nose, cough and sore throat, pleuritic pain, wheezing, and allergic reactions, and
- liver damage evidenced by an elevated SGGT (serum gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase) after exposure to large amounts of microcystin.

Treatment of microcystin poisoning is supportive.

To report a suspected case of microcystin poisoning, call 1-800-972-2026 during regular business hours. Please contact Stuart Schmitz at 515-281-8707 or Randy Lane at 515-281-5894 if you have any questions.

Daddy, is it done yet?

Just in time for the Memorial Day weekend (the "unofficial" start of the grilling season in lowa), some important changes have been made in recommended cooking temperatures for meats:

- Cooking Whole Cuts of Pork: USDA has lowered the recommended safe cooking temperature for whole cuts of pork from 160 °F to 145 °F with the addition of a three-minute rest time before carving or consuming.
- Cooking Whole Cuts of Other Meats: For beef, veal, and lamb cuts, the safe temperature remains unchanged at 145 °F, but the department has added a three-minute rest time before carving or consuming as part of its cooking recommendations.

Ground meat should still reach an internal temperature of 160 °F, and all poultry of should reach 165 °F.

Read the full release on the changes to recommended cooking temperature from USDA at www.fsis.usda.gov/News & Events/NR 052411 01/index.asp. For additional tips to keep food safe, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

Meeting announcements and training opportunitiesNone

Have a healthy and happy and measles-free week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology Iowa Department of Public Health 800-362-2736