

EPI Update for Friday, September 16, 2011
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Two human West Nile virus cases confirmed in southwestern Iowa**
- **Listeria outbreak linked to melon**
- **Home food safety mythbusters**
- **Contagion**
- **National Health Information Technology Week**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Two human West Nile virus cases confirmed in southwestern Iowa

Two human cases of West Nile Virus were confirmed this week in western Iowa. The first case occurred in an adult male from Pottawattamie County, and the second in an older adult Harrison County woman. Several additional cases are also being investigated in southwestern Iowa. The months of standing water resulting from the Missouri River flooding has likely provided favorable conditions for mosquitoes. West Nile virus activity usually peaks in September and October. For more information about West Nile virus, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/WNV.aspx.

Listeria outbreak linked to melon

CDC is collaborating with public health officials in several states and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to investigate a multistate outbreak of listeriosis. The outbreak has been preliminarily linked to cantaloupe. The grower has issued a voluntary recall of potentially contaminated products. A total of 22 persons infected with the outbreak-associated strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from seven states. The outbreak has caused one death in Colorado and one death in New Mexico. To date, there have been no cases of *Listeria* linked to this outbreak in Iowa.

For melons not part of this recall, follow this general advice for melon safety:

- Consumers and food preparers should wash their hands before and after handling any whole melon, such as cantaloupe, watermelon, or honeydew.
- Wash the melons and dry them with a clean cloth or paper towel before cutting.
- Cut melon should be promptly consumed, or refrigerated at or below 40 degrees F (32-34 degrees F is best) for no more than seven days.
- Cut melons left at room temperature for more than four hours should be discarded

For recalled product information, visit www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm271879.htm.

For more information on the outbreak, visit

www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/listeriosis/outbreak.html.

Home food safety mythbusters (part 3)

September is National Food Safety Education Month and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) encourages all Iowans to learn the truth behind some common food safety 'myths.' This week's myth is about cutting boards.

Myth: Plastic or glass cutting boards don't hold harmful bacteria on their surfaces like wooden cutting boards do.

Fact: Any type of cutting board can hold harmful bacteria on its surface. Regardless of the type of cutting board you use, it should be washed and sanitized after each use. Solid plastic, tempered glass, sealed granite, and hardwood cutting boards are dishwasher safe. However, wood laminates don't hold up well in the dishwasher. Once cutting boards of any type become excessively worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves, they should be discarded.

To learn more about how to reduce your risk of foodborne illness, and for additional information about food safety myths, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/food_safety.asp.

Contagion

"Contagion," which is currently the number one movie in America, is a fictional drama about the threat posed by a deadly disease. This film depicts how the CDC and other U.S and international partners respond to an emerging infectious disease outbreak. The movie presents an opportunity for public health to provide accurate and potentially life-saving information about how to prepare for a real, not Hollywood, public health emergency.

National Health Information Technology Week

This week has been proclaimed National Health Information Technology Week to highlight the importance of efficient information systems that protect the privacy and security of personal health information while improving the delivery of health care in the United States.

IDPH is currently preparing to assist health care providers and hospital laboratories in achieving 'meaningful use' objectives related to submission of immunization registries and reportable lab results. Visit the IDPH Meaningful Use web page for more information www.idph.state.ia.us/meaningful_use.asp.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

HIV 2011: An Interdisciplinary Conference will be held in Iowa City on Friday, October 7, 2011. National, state and local leaders will provide information on current issues in Hepatitis C, stigma and discrimination, and health care policy for HIV/AIDS at the conference. The intended audience includes physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, case managers, public health workers, and other interested individuals. For additional information regarding the conference and registration, visit www.iowamatec.org.

Disease Epidemiology and Prevention XV (2011 Fall Epi Update) The Fall Epi Update will be held in Des Moines on September 21. Topics include acute disease trends, public information considerations, tuberculosis update and more. For more information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/IDPHChannelsService/file.ashx?file=95B7E505-C5D5-423D-BE78-B36AE5DA188E.

Have a healthy and happy and cooler week!

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