

EPI Update for Friday, May 25, 2012
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Laundry detergent packet dangers**
- **Microcystin poisoning continues to designated as a reportable disease**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Laundry detergent packet dangers

Please remind patients to keep highly concentrated "single dose packs" of laundry detergent up and out of the reach of children.

Poison centers across the country have reported a recent increase in calls about exposures of children to laundry detergents packaged in small packets. Some young children and toddlers who swallow these small packets have become ill and some have required hospitalization. According to the Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center (ISPCC), 10 exposure calls have been received in Iowa since April 1, 2012. The children ranged in age from 8-months-old to 4 years of age. Five needed hospital care but none became seriously ill. All have completely recovered; nationally, however, more serious illness has been reported. There have been no deaths.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers recommends the following steps:

- Always keep detergents locked up and out of the reach of children.
- Follow the specific disposal instructions on the label.
- If you think a child has been exposed to a laundry detergent packet, call the ISPCC immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

For more information about the warnings concerning concentrated packets of laundry detergent visit

www.aapcc.org/dnn/Portals/0/Laundry%20Detergent%20Packs%205.17.2012.pdf.

For information about the Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center visit

<http://iowapoison.org/>.

Microcystin poisoning continues to designated as a reportable disease

This is the fourth year that the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) director has designated suspected or confirmed cases of exposure to microcystin (a toxin produced by blue-green algae) a reportable disease in Iowa to study its occurrence and epidemiology in Iowa. This designation is in-place until October 31, 2012.

Due to above average rainfall in the past few years we are anticipating more incidences of elevated microcystin levels in lakes. IDPH is encouraging health care providers to be on the alert for potential cases of microcystin poisoning, especially during the later summer months when elevated levels historically have occurred.

Diagnosis of microcystin poisoning is based on symptoms and a history of exposure to a body of water. Exposure to blue-green algae can occur either by swallowing water, by having direct skin contact as when swimming or wading, or by breathing airborne droplets containing microcystin, 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. Symptoms may include:

- 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. For questions regarding the microcystin poisoning surveillance program, please contact Stuart Schmitz at 515-281-8707 or Randy Lane at 515-281-5894.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

We wish everyone a happy and healthy week!

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800-362-2736