

EPI Update for Friday, December 7, 2012
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Increased number of Syphilis cases in Iowa**
- **Flu activity has started early and is significantly increasing in Iowa**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Increased number of syphilis cases in Iowa

Cases of early syphilis have increased 97 percent (an additional 30 cases) in 2012 compared 2011. The greatest increase in early syphilis has occurred in Polk County, where an increase of 420 percent (21 additional cases) has been noted. Early syphilis is of greatest concern because it is highly contagious and very easily spread by sexual contact of any type.

IDPH encourages medical providers to be vigilant for possible syphilitic signs and symptoms in their patients. The primary stage of syphilis consists of a painless chancre (sore) with a hard edge that occurs at the site(s) of infection. The chancre will self-resolve without treatment, despite the fact that the infection persists in the body. Signs of secondary syphilis include a diffuse rash that may occur on multiple areas of the body, including, but not limited to, the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. The rash will also self-resolve without treatment. A complete sexual history of patients should be taken, and patients exhibiting possible signs or symptoms (as well as persons at higher risk; e.g., men who have sex with men) should be screened for syphilis.

Recommended testing for syphilis consists of two types of tests, a non-treponemal followed by a confirmatory treponemal test. Both the medical provider and the laboratory should report confirmed syphilis cases to IDPH. Patients with confirmed cases of syphilis and their partners should be treated with antimicrobials recommended by the CDC; see www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2010/STD-Treatment-2010-RR5912.pdf. Contact George Walton (515-281-4936) for more information or questions.

Flu activity has started early and is significantly increasing in Iowa

The Iowa flu season has started early this year and is increasing quickly. In Iowa's 21 sentinel hospitals, there have been 49 hospitalizations due to the flu so far this year, as compared to only eight last year at this time. Additionally, there have been 378 confirmed cases of influenza from Iowa's sentinel system to date, compared to only 10 last year. So far this school year, 23 schools have reported more than 10 percent of their student body out sick on the same day, compared to only eight last year at this time (this week's reporting is not yet complete).

All three strains of seasonal flu have been confirmed in Iowa this season, and all are covered by the vaccine. The primary strain circulating in Iowa is influenza A (H3N2).

IDPH strongly encourages all people over 6 months of age to get a flu shot if they have not already done so.

For more information about influenza, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health, April 9 – 10, 2013, Scheman Conference Center, Ames, Iowa. For more information, visit www.iowapha.org/Default.aspx?pageId=127969.

Live Healthy Iowa 2013: Begins on January 28 and goes thru April 5, 2013. Registration opens December 19. For more information, visit www.livehealthyiowa.org/.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy week!

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