

EPI Update for Friday, January 3, 2014
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **CADE's 10 Top Diseases of 2013**

CADE's 10 Top Diseases of 2013

Happy New Year! With 2013 now in the rearview mirror, many take a moment – amidst making new promises of eating healthier and finally using that gym membership – to nostalgically reflect upon the yesteryear.

It is no different here in CADE, where year in and year out, our cast of epidemiologists and staff put the “mmm” in communicable disease. 2013 was an exciting (read: *interesting*) year where CADE and our local public health colleagues handled a plethora of infectious diseases (known in scientific circles as “icky bugs”) ranging from the normal players all the way to the rarest of ailments. Who says Iowa is BORING?! Nearly 8,000 disease events were reported to CADE in 2013.

So sit back, grab a healthy snack, and enjoy CADE's Top 10 Diseases of 2013:

10. Rabies

- This is the topic of CADE's most frequently asked questions. One answer: while animals can be lots of fun, rabid wild animals should NEVER be taken to school for “show and tell”.

9. Influenza

- Fact: the 2012-2013 influenza season saw more hospitalizations at sentinel hospitals than the 2009 H1N1 pandemic in Iowa. A rhyme from the time of the 1918 flu pandemic went like this: *I had a little bird, and its name was Enza. I opened the window, and in-flew-Enza.* Sad to think that over 90 years later Iowans are still getting ill and dying with the flu, so please be smart and get vaccinated.

8. West Nile Virus

- In 2013, WNV cases were up compared to previous years. Who could have predicted that in 2013, Iowans would be getting sick from a virus named after an east African area? Just reminds us how small the infectious disease world is....

7. Norovirus

- Clearly feeling bullied by the other “cool” diseases Iowa experienced throughout the year (they used to laugh and call it names), there was an “explosion” of

Norovirus outbreaks in early December, many tied to holiday parties. If there is one bug that definitely takes the “jolly” out of a holiday season, it is this one.

6. Type F Infant Botulism

- Through 2012, only 13 cases of *Clostridium botulinum* Type F infant botulism had ever been reported in the United States. Unfortunately, Iowa confirmed its third case of this disease in 2013. We do not take pride in being the epicenter for this little bugger...

5. Cholera

- This is one souvenir that this lowan did not want to bring back from his Caribbean vacation. Fortunately, Iowa was a dead end for this bacteria.

4. Staphylococcus Toxin

- This little toxin had the CADE “staph” investigating an outbreak in 2013 that resulted several ill children and adults.

3. Shigella

- In the last quarter of 2013, nearly 250 cases of diarrhea caused by *Shigella* have been reported in Woodbury County alone. The prolonged, smoldering prevalence of cases circulating among children and between families in this community has many saying “oh Shig!”

2. Cryptosporidium

- 2013 saw a 350% increase over the five-year average in Iowa causing many pools across the state to be hyperchlorinated to get rid of it. Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water...

And now, the moment you’ve all been waiting for... Drum roll, please...

1. Cyclospora

- Who would have thought that our “Fields of Opportunities” would provide Iowa with a large outbreak of a little-known, exotic parasite that would put us in the national spotlight? Not exactly what we’d like to be known for, but it showed that sometimes ordering the side salad is NOT the healthiest alternative...

So, there you have it, folks: CADE’s Top 10 Diseases of 2013. While not an all-inclusive list by any means, these 10 little organisms serve as a reminder that infectious disease remains a focal point of public health and medicine – both human and veterinary. Our sincere apologies if your favorite disease did not make this year’s cut, but as we say - “There’s always next year...”

Have a happy and healthy 2014 - Please!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

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