

EPI Update for Friday, May 8, 2015
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Avian influenza update**
- **Changes to Ebola recommendations for Liberia**
- **Microcystin poisoning surveillance in Iowa**
- **HIV diagnoses in Iowa fall to lowest level in 11 years**
- **Tick season has begun**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Avian influenza update

As of May 6, avian influenza (H5N2) has been confirmed in 28 Iowa farms. More than 100 Iowa workers have been monitored for symptoms and/or recommended to take antiviral prophylaxis. No human infections have been reported in Iowa or other affected states. More than 20,000,000 poultry have been affected and depopulated. Neighboring states with affected flocks include Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, and Missouri. For more information about avian influenza in Iowa, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h5/index.htm.

Changes to Ebola recommendations for Liberia

Liberia has reported fewer than 10 cases per week since January 2015, and cases have continued to decrease. The Liberian outbreak will be declared over if no new cases are reported by May 9th (two incubation periods or 42 days since the burial of the last confirmed case). For more information on the current Ebola situation in Africa, visit apps.who.int/ebola/. CDC has not yet changed their recommendations concerning the screening of patients nor surveillance in travelers coming from Liberia.

CDC is no longer recommending that U.S. residents avoid nonessential travel to Liberia; however, travelers are advised to continue to practice enhanced precautions (avoiding contact with blood and body fluids) in Liberia. Travelers should also be aware that getting medical care in Liberia may be difficult because the health infrastructure has been severely strained by the Ebola outbreak. Certain travelers, such as senior citizens, people with underlying illnesses, and people with weakened immune systems, should consider postponing travel.

Microcystin poisoning surveillance in Iowa

This summer, IDPH and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) are again participating in a surveillance project to assess the human and animal health risks associated with algal blooms. Thus, IDPH is asking both human and animal health providers to report suspected or confirmed cases of microcystin poisoning. For more information on microcystin poisoning, including how to report suspected cases, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/algal_blooms.asp.

HIV diagnoses in Iowa fall to lowest level in 11 years

From 2013 to 2014, new diagnoses of HIV among Iowans decreased by 19 percent. According to the 2014 HIV surveillance report, 99 Iowans were diagnosed with HIV last year. Although racial and ethnic minorities continue to be over-represented in HIV diagnoses, this disparity dropped markedly in 2014 (e.g. HIV diagnoses in blacks/African-Americans dropped from 21 percent in 2013 to 12 percent in 2014). Most people diagnosed with and living with HIV in Iowa in 2014 were white, non-Hispanic men between the ages of 25 and 44. The number of HIV-infected persons residing in Iowa at the end of 2014 was 2,369 (prevalence of 77 per 100,000 people).

For more information on the IDPH HIV/AIDS program, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/HivStdHep/HIV-AIDS.aspx?prog=Hiv&pg=HivHome. For the latest surveillance report, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/HivStdHep/HIV-AIDS.aspx?prog=Hiv&pg=HivSurv.

Tick season has begun

Spring in Iowa begins outdoor recreation for many people, but it also means the start of tick season. While being active outdoors, remember to protect against ticks. Ticks in Iowa carry Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Ehrlichiosis. In 2014, there were 194 cases of Lyme disease in Iowa; two cases have been reported so far this year.

Prevent tick bites by avoiding wooded and tall grassy areas, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants tucked into socks or boots (yes - you'll look like a nerd, but will stay a healthy nerd), and use insect repellents that contain DEET (remember DEET is not recommended for use on children under 2 months of age). For more information on how to prevent tick bites and remove ticks, visit www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on_people.html. For guidelines on the safe use of insect repellents, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/idph_universalhelp/main.aspx?system=IdphEpiManual&context=DEET_factsheet.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

2015 Iowa HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Conference: A New Era - The Future is Now! June 18-19, 2015, Holiday Inn Des Moines – Airport/Conference Center. To view a brochure, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/IDPHChannelsService/file.ashx?file=097E96C0-1F97-4394-8898-C540A5FAEADE. To register, visit www.trainingresources.org.

Have a healthy and happy (and rainier) week!

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