

EPI Update for Friday, August 14, 2015
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Blastomycosis infection in Wisconsin**
- **Gastroenteritis outbreak linked to wedding**
- **Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Blastomycosis infection in Wisconsin

Public health officials in Wisconsin have confirmed four blastomycosis cases among individuals who went tubing on Wisconsin's Little Wolf River in early June. There is currently no way to identify areas where the organism exists at a specific time; however, blastomycosis is endemic in eastern Iowa. For a map of endemic areas of the US, visit www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/blastomycosis/causes.html.

Blastomycosis develops when inhaled spores of *Blastomyces dermatitidis*, a type of fungus found in soil, cause an infection in the lung. The spores are released and become airborne when the soil or rotting organic matter is disturbed. The fungus grows and produces infecting spores only under very specific weather and soil conditions, so a "hot" spot for spores may pose no further risk after a day or two.

Onset of illness can occur between three and 15 weeks after exposure. Symptoms typically include a fever, cough, muscle aches and fatigue which may progress to weight loss, chest pain and a persistent cough. If not detected and treated early, blastomycosis can cause serious health complications; however, about half of individuals exposed to the fungus never develop symptoms. Blastomycosis is not spread from person-to-person and can be treated with anti-fungal medications.

For more information on blastomycosis in Wisconsin, visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/080515.htm.

Gastroenteritis outbreak linked to wedding

Unfortunately, pathogenic organisms, as well as vows were exchanged at a wedding in Iowa this last weekend. Of the 75 attendees, 52 have reported becoming ill with vomiting and diarrhea approximately 24 to 36 hours after the event. The event was catered, but an initial inspection of the caterer found no obvious food safety issues. Stool samples were collected from wedding guests and laboratory testing is pending at SHL.

Several possibilities for cause are being investigated, including norovirus, *C. perfringens*, *S. aureus* and *B. cereus* – all of which can cause diarrheal illness within hours to a day or two after eating contaminated food. As a precaution, norovirus-specific cleaning has been recommended at several sites, including the wedding venue, since norovirus is the most common cause of diarrheal outbreaks in Iowa (and since this type

of cleaning is very robust and will address other pathogens, too). For more information on norovirus, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/DiseaseIndex.aspx?disease=Norovirus.

Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update

The new issue of the *Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update* is available by visiting www.idph.state.ia.us/IDPHChannelsService/file.ashx?file=E99FD5F6-2013-4658-A13B-CC161B4FE6CC.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Extension Training Program for Infection Prevention, September 28 – October 2, 2015, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City. Targeted audience includes infection prevention and control professionals. CADE's celebrated Mary Rexroat will be presenting. To view a brochure, visit www.uihealthcare.org/uploadedFiles/UIHealthcare/Content/Services/Clinical_Quality_Safety_and_Performance_and_Improvement/2015%20ETP%20Brochure.pdf.

Have a healthy and happy week! Enjoy the State Fair!

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