

EPI Update for Friday, September 4, 2015
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza vaccine: best to get by the end of October**
- **A hot tip on hot tubs**
- **Adult chickenpox**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Influenza vaccine: best to get by the end of October

The annual influenza vaccination season has started and flu vaccine is beginning to become available in our communities. The flu vaccine is available in several forms, including a traditional shot and a nasal spray, those with high-dose antigens and egg-free. It is recommended that everyone 6 months of age and older get an influenza vaccine every season. Vaccination is especially important in the very young and those aged 65 and older, and those with chronic medical problems because of their high risk of serious complications. About 90 percent of influenza-related deaths in the U.S. occur in people age 65 and older.

The 2015-2016 influenza vaccines will contain two A strains (A/California(H1N1) and A/Switzerland(H3N2)), and a B Yamagata strain (B/Phuket). Quadrivalent formulations will include a second B strain from the Victoria lineage (B/Brisbane).

IDPH conducts year-round influenza surveillance via the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network. For more information about where and what kind of influenza is in Iowa all season long, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx?pg=FluHome.

A hot tip on hot tubs

Last week, a family reported becoming ill after spending time in an Iowa hotel's hot tub. The investigation found that all of the ill family members had developed symptoms of fever, chills, headache, fatigue, and body aches. They reported that the hot tub water was "dingy" and "smelled funny." Pontiac fever is a possible cause of this illness. The hot tub has been cleaned and inspected, and the investigation continues.

Many diseases have been linked to hot tubs, such as Legionnaire's disease, Pontiac fever, and pseudomonas folliculitis. Indoor hot tubs pose a higher risk of respiratory illness as the hot tub mist hangs in the air longer than it would outdoors.

Proper hot tub maintenance is critically important to reduce the risk of illness - the warm water conditions are great environments for some water pathogens, and hot tub biofilm can harbor and shield the pathogens from the disinfection chemicals. Iowa regulations require regular daily monitoring and maintenance of water chemistry, including the disinfectant and pH levels, and monthly bacteriological testing of publically used hot tubs. In addition, hot tubs are required to be regularly drained and all surfaces and filters scrubbed or replaced to remove accumulated biofilm before refilling the hot tub with

fresh water. For more information about hot tub safety, visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/hot-tub-user-tips-factsheet.html.

Adult chickenpox

You may have seen headlines this week like “*Chickenpox outbreak hits Kansas City Royals*”. These players will now miss multiple games, and teammates are being vaccinated. While chickenpox was historically thought of as a childhood disease, today it is often adults - who were not infected or vaccinated as kids - who are getting sick. The best way to prevent chickenpox in all ages is the chickenpox vaccine.

Chickenpox (varicella) used to be very common in the United States before the chickenpox vaccine became available in 1995. In the early 1990s, an average of 4 million people got chickenpox, 10,500 to 13,000 were hospitalized (range = 8,000 to 18,000) and 100 to 150 died each year. Most of the severe complications and deaths from chickenpox occurred in people who were previously healthy. Today, varicella vaccination prevents more than 3.5 million cases of varicella, 9,000 hospitalizations, and 100 deaths each year in the United States.

All children, adolescents, and susceptible adults should have two doses of chickenpox vaccine – especially health care workers, pregnant women without evidence of immunity (upon completion of pregnancy), and those born in 1980 or later.

- In children, the first dose should be given no younger than age 12 months. The second dose is generally recommended to be given between ages 4-6 years.
- In people 13 years of age and older, two doses (0.5 ml each) of the single-antigen varicella vaccine should be given subcutaneously four to eight weeks apart.

Chickenpox vaccine is very safe and effective at preventing the disease. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. If a vaccinated person does get chickenpox, it is usually mild—with fewer blisters and mild or no fever. The chickenpox vaccine prevents almost all cases of severe disease. For more information about chickenpox vaccine, visit www.cdc.gov/chickenpox/vaccination.html.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

2015 Iowa Immunization Summit, October 28-29, 2015, Des Moines, Iowa. Will cover principles of vaccination, general recommendations, immunization strategies, and featuring nationally renowned speakers on immunizations and vaccine issues. For more information, visit

www.idph.state.ia.us/ImmTB/Immunization.aspx?prog=Imm&pg=ImmHome.

Extension Training Program for Infection Prevention, Sept. 28 – Oct. 2, 2015 University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City, IA. Five-day intensive program provides fundamental and current information for infection prevention and control professionals. To more information, 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 (and Labor Day weekend!)

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

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