

Epi Update for Friday, December 30, 2016
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **First influenza-related death reported**
- **CDC: flu vaccine protected millions, but coverage remains low**
- **Respiratory virus update**
- **Fatal measles complication more common than previously thought**
- **In the news: It's a Bird Wearing Goggles and Flying through Lasers**
- **Infographic: Life-threatening signs of alcohol poisoning**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

First influenza-related death reported

Iowa's first reported influenza-related death has occurred in an elderly (81 years of age and older) Central Iowa woman who had other underlying health conditions. While influenza activity has been low so far this season, this death serves as an unfortunate reminder that the influenza virus is circulating and has the potential to cause severe illness.

Please remember that when influenza activity levels are low, the positive predictive value of rapid influenza tests is also low (false-positive test results are more likely) and the negative predictive value of rapid influenza tests is high (negative results are more likely to be true). Consider sending specimens to the State Hygienic Laboratory for confirmation. Laboratories are asked to send rapid antigen test positive specimens until one rapid A and one rapid B result are confirmed by RT-PCR. Hospitals are asked to submit specimens on all hospitalized patients with influenza-like illness (without other apparent cause of the illness).

For more information on influenza testing at SHL, visit www.shl.uiowa.edu/dcd/influenza/. For more information and clinical guidance on influenza rapid tests, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/rapidlab.htm.

CDC: flu vaccine protected millions, but coverage remains low

As of November 2016, only two out of five people in the United States reported receiving this season's flu vaccine. Last season, an estimated five million flu illnesses and 71,000 flu hospitalizations were prevented by flu vaccination and that flu vaccination reduced the amount of flu illnesses and hospitalizations by 19 percent.

Concern over vaccination rates in high risk groups remains, even though vaccination rates are similar to rates seen at this time last season. Only 37 percent of children ages 6 months to 17 years have received a flu vaccination this season. Vaccination rates among adults ages 50 years and older dropped three percentage points compared to this time last year. More than half of pregnant women remain unvaccinated, but there has been a six percentage point increase in vaccination coverage since this time last year.

In Iowa, the number of doses of seasonal vaccine administered so far this season is approximately 840,000. This is a seven percent increase in vaccination coverage since this time last year.

For the full vaccination report from CDC, visit www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/p1207-flu-vaccine-coverage.html.

Respiratory virus update

While influenza activity remains low in Iowa, influenza activity is increasing across the nation. Since the start of the influenza season in October, the State Hygienic Laboratory has primarily detected influenza A(H3) circulating in Iowa (~ 92 percent). Influenza A(H3) is also the most commonly detected strain circulating nationwide.

Other respiratory viruses are also currently circulating in Iowa; Rhinovirus/Enterovirus (578 cases), Adenovirus (125), Parainfluenza virus type 2 (82), Parainfluenza virus type 3 (115), Respiratory Syncytial Virus (50) and Coronavirus (80) have been most commonly identified within surveillance samples.

For more information on currently circulating influenza and respiratory viruses, visit idph.iowa.gov/influenza for Iowa or www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/current.htm for national information.

Fatal measles complication more common than previously thought

Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, a 100 percent fatal complication of measles, occurs more than previously thought according to data presented at IDWeek 2016. The estimated risk of SSPE was previously thought to be one in 100,000. A more recent analysis discovered that the rate of SSPE was one in 1,700 among children infected with measles before 5 years of age, and the study suggests that the rate may be even higher. For more information, visit: idsa.confex.com/idsa/2016/webprogram/Paper56915.html.

In the news: It's a Bird Wearing Goggles and Flying Through Lasers

To study flight, researchers at Stanford University have trained a parrot to wear goggles as it flies through a field of lasers! For more information, visit [Obi wears goggles](#) (This is not really public health, but had a really cute picture of a parrot wearing goggles!)

Infographic: Life-threatening signs of alcohol poisoning

Life-threatening signs of alcohol poisoning include:

-  Inability to wake up
-  Slow breathing
(fewer than 8 breaths per minute)
-  Seizures
-  Vomiting
-  Irregular breathing
(10 seconds or more between breaths)
-  Hypothermia
(low body temperature),
bluish skin color, paleness

What is a “standard drink” in the US?



SOURCE: National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Infographic available at www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/alcohol-poisoning-deaths/infographic.html

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a happy and healthy New Year!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health
800-362-2736