

**Epi Update for Friday, February 21, 2020**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

**Items for this week's Epi Update include:**

- **Reminder of influenza outbreak management resources for long-term care facilities due to increased outbreak reports**
- **Interim influenza vaccine effectiveness estimates released**
- **School absence due to illness high: Reminder of IDPH resources for schools and parents**
- **Influenza appears to be switching from B to A: There is still time to get immunized even if you already had one type of influenza**
- **In the news: The women's health pioneer you've probably never heard of**
- **In the news: Mediterranean diet scores another win for longevity by improving microbiome**
- **In the news: Teens are still vaping flavors, thanks to new disposable vape pens**
- **Infographic: What is novel coronavirus?**

**Reminder of influenza outbreak management resources for long-term care facilities due to increased outbreak reports**

Long-term care influenza outbreaks have increased in Iowa recently, with 10 outbreaks reported in the last four weeks. Care facilities should suspect and report an outbreak any time there is at least one laboratory-confirmed influenza positive case along with other cases of respiratory illness in a unit. Call the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) at 800-362-2736 to report outbreaks and CADE staff will provide more details about outbreak management and testing guidance. Some of the recommended steps include using molecular flu tests to accurately identify outbreaks, administering antiviral medications to ill and exposed persons as recommended by CDC guidance, using droplet precautions for ill residents, and limiting contact between ill and well residents.

Visit the IDPH influenza page for long-term care facilities at [idph.iowa.gov/influenza/ltc-facilities](http://idph.iowa.gov/influenza/ltc-facilities) for more information including links to CDC and Infectious Disease Society of America guidance as well as an IDPH summary of recommendations.

The IDPH Healthcare-Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance (HAI/AR) Program can visit facilities to conduct infection control assessments to help identify potential gaps and provide evidence based methods to reduce infections from healthcare settings.

To schedule an Infection Control Assessment visit, contact the HAI team by emailing [hai-ar@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:hai-ar@idph.iowa.gov).

**Interim influenza vaccine effectiveness estimates released**

Influenza vaccine effectiveness varies from season to season. The protection provided by an influenza vaccine depends on the age and health status of the person getting the vaccine, and the similarity or "match" between the viruses used to produce the vaccine and the viruses that are circulating. The CDC issued interim influenza vaccine effectiveness (VE) estimates for the 2019-20 flu season on February 20, 2020. Flu vaccines are reducing doctor visits for flu illness by 45% overall (50% for influenza B/Victoria and 37% for influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses.

Notably, 2019-20 flu vaccines are estimated to cut doctor visits among vaccinated children 6 months to 17 years old by over 50%. This is especially important since this flu season has been especially difficult for hospitalization and deaths among children. Annual flu vaccination is the best strategy for preventing seasonal influenza and influenza-associated complications. During the 2018-2019 flu season, interim VE was estimated to be 29% and vaccination was estimated to have prevented 4.4 million illnesses, 2.3 million medical visits, 58,000 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths. As influenza activity is high and is expected to be elevated for several more weeks, CDC and IDPH recommend that anyone 6 months of age or older who has not yet received influenza vaccine during the 2019-20 season get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect against influenza.

For more information on influenza and flu vaccination, visit <https://idph.iowa.gov/immtb/immunization/influenza>.

### **School absence due to illness high: Reminder of IDPH resources for schools and parents**

Reports of at least 10% absence due to illness among Iowa PK-12 students has increased dramatically since the start of the year, with over 150 schools reporting 10% absence in the last two weeks. Of those schools who reported the type of student illness, almost 80% of absences were due to respiratory illness symptoms.

Visit the Iowa influenza school web page at [www.idph.iowa.gov/influenza/schools](http://www.idph.iowa.gov/influenza/schools) for resources for schools and parents dealing with flu and other illness.

### **Influenza appears to be switching from B to A: There is still time to get immunized even if you already had one type of influenza**

For most of this flu season, influenza B (Victoria lineage) has been the predominant flu virus identified by the State Hygienic Lab at the University of Iowa (SHL) accounting for 60% of the 794 influenza specimens subtyped by SHL through the week ending February 1. In the last two weeks influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 has become predominant, although only by a small percentage.

A similar trend has been seen in the Iowa respiratory survey data submitted by laboratories to SHL, as the percentage influenza A positive tests has surpassed the percentage of influenza B positive tests for the first time since December 2019. It is not too late to get an influenza vaccine even if you have already had influenza illness this season, since immunization may protect you from other flu viruses that are starting to circulate more heavily in Iowa. Influenza activity is high in Iowa and is expected to continue for weeks.

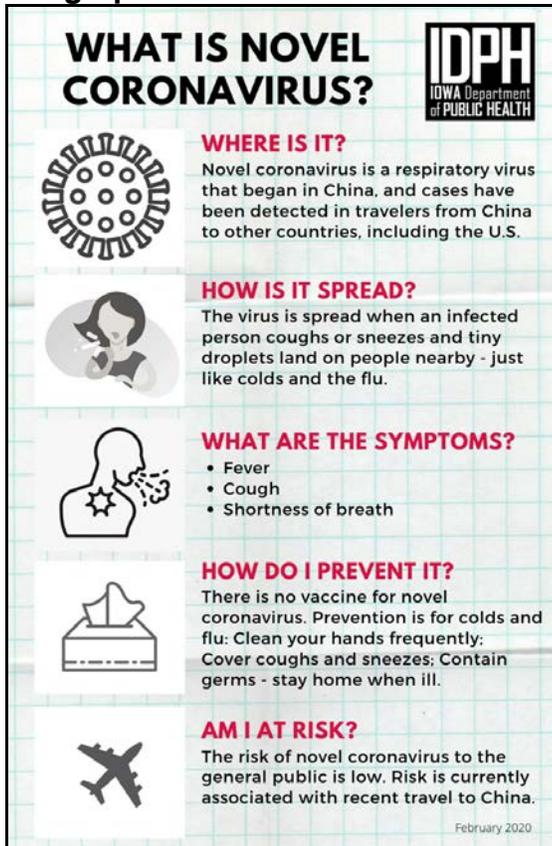
For additional information, visit <https://www.idph.iowa.gov/influenza/reports>.

**In the news: The women's health pioneer you've probably never heard of**  
[blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/the-womens-health-pioneer-youve-probably-never-heard-of/](https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/the-womens-health-pioneer-youve-probably-never-heard-of/)

**In the news: Mediterranean diet scores another win for longevity by improving microbiome**  
[www.cnn.com/2020/02/17/health/mediterranean-diet-microbiome-wellness/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2020/02/17/health/mediterranean-diet-microbiome-wellness/index.html)

**In the news: Teens are still vaping flavors, thanks to new disposable vape pens**  
[www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/02/17/805972087/teens-are-still-vaping-flavors-thanks-to-new-disposable-vape-pens](http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/02/17/805972087/teens-are-still-vaping-flavors-thanks-to-new-disposable-vape-pens)

## Infographic: What is novel coronavirus?



**WHAT IS NOVEL CORONAVIRUS?**

**IDPH**  
IOWA Department  
of PUBLIC HEALTH

**WHERE IS IT?**  
Novel coronavirus is a respiratory virus that began in China, and cases have been detected in travelers from China to other countries, including the U.S.

**HOW IS IT SPREAD?**  
The virus is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes and tiny droplets land on people nearby - just like colds and the flu.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

**HOW DO I PREVENT IT?**  
There is no vaccine for novel coronavirus. Prevention is for colds and flu: Clean your hands frequently; Cover coughs and sneezes; Contain germs - stay home when ill.

**AM I AT RISK?**  
The risk of novel coronavirus to the general public is low. Risk is currently associated with recent travel to China.

February 2020

To view in full size, visit  
[idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/7/What%20is%20nCoV%20Final.png](http://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/7/What%20is%20nCoV%20Final.png).

**Have a healthy and happy week!**  
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
800-362-2736