

EPI Update for Friday March 11, 2005

Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **New Environmental Emergency and Terrorism Preparedness Web Site**
- **Results of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey - Flu Vaccination**
- **Hoaxes and Urban Myths**
- **Yellow Fever Vaccination Sites in Iowa Posted**
- **Meeting Announcements and Training Opportunities**

New Environmental Emergency and Terrorism Preparedness Web Site

The CDC has launched a new Emergency and Terrorism Response website particularly geared towards environmental health practitioners. It has information on the following areas: General Preparedness, Food Security, Water Security, Hazardous Materials, Building Environment, Radiation, Vector Control and Biologic and Infectious Waste. It also has links to other sites related to preparedness, and environmental health. It can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ETP/default.htm> .

Results of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey- Flu Vaccination

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a monthly state-based survey. An average of 5,000 households per week and 20,000 households per month are interviewed nationwide. This year addition questions were added to the survey to specifically look at vaccination rates for the priority groups designated by the CDC/ACIP guidelines. Vaccine coverage in this report reflects vaccination received between Sept. 1 2004 and Dec. 31, 2004 and was collected from Jan. 2 through Jan. 22, 2005.

The major findings were:

Vaccination coverage among children in priority groups combined was 50.7percent. For children aged 6-23 months, coverage was 57.3percent; for children aged 2-17 years with high-risk medical conditions, coverage was 43.8percent. The vaccination coverage among children aged 6-23 months for 1 or more doses of influenza vaccine from the 2002 National Immunization survey was 7.7 percent; therefore, results from the BRFSS interviews indicate a substantial increase in coverage for this age group.

Vaccination coverage among non-institutionalized adults in priority groups was 43.1percent compared with 8.3percent among adults not in a priority group.

Twenty-eight percent of high-risk persons 18-64 years of age and 42.6 percent of healthcare workers reported vaccination with the 2004-05 vaccine.

Based on the above information they concluded that most of the available 2004-05 influenza vaccine administered through the end of December 2004 was used to vaccinate persons in priority groups.

No state specific data are available at this time, but from our observations we feel that Iowa had done a very good job of using its available vaccine for those in the priority groups. We want to thank the local public health agencies and everyone else in the medical community who has worked so hard this flu season to make sure the most appropriate people received the flu vaccine. To see this week's Iowa influenza surveillance report go to: <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp>.

Hoaxes and Urban Myths

In the last couple of weeks, we have seen several hoaxes going around the Internet on health issues (remember the famous Klingerman virus, or the dreaded flesh eating bacteria on bananas?). These can cause unnecessary concern and fear among Iowans. CDC maintains a site where many of the urban legends and Internet hoaxes are debunked. See <http://www.cdc.gov/doc.do/id/0900f3ec80226b9c>

One of the recent ones (about the use of plastic in microwave ovens causing dioxin poisoning) cited Johns Hopkins University as the source of this information. See their site debunking that hoax:

http://www.jhsph.edu/PublicHealthNews/articles/Halden_dioxins.html

(My favorite episode about a hoax happened back when the deadly "Klingerman virus" hoax was going around. The information was that it was being sent through the mail in purple containers. People would get infected when they opened it and would die. A mom up in northwestern Iowa collected the mail one day and found a purplish colored cardboard tube that was addressed to her son. She was scared and called the police. They arrived, opened up the tube, and found not the Klingerman virus, but illegal drugs. Bet her son was a bit chagrined when he got home that night (I would have loved to hear that conversation!).

Yellow Fever Vaccination Sites

The CDC has now posted Iowa's Yellow Fever vaccination sites on their National Center for Infectious Disease Travelers Information website. Go to the website listed below and click on Iowa on the U.S. map. This will take you to the list of Yellow Fever vaccination sites in Iowa.

<http://www2.ncid.cdc.gov/travel/yellowfever/index.asp>

Meeting Announcement and Training Opportunities:

- **The Governor's Conference on Public Health: Barn Raising V:**

Building Iowa as a Healthy Community

Our Past: What can we learn from it?

Our Present: What are we doing now?

Our Future: Where do we need to go?

July 28 and 29, 2005

Drake University, Des Moines

Registration Fee: \$50

Watch for registration announcement and conference details in May!

For more information: www.idph.state.ia.us <<http://www.idph.state.ia.us>>

Or call (515) 360-8046

- **2005 Public Health Conference:**

Partnering for a Healthier Iowa Dept. of Public Health

March 29 and 30, 2005

Iowa State Center, Scheman Building, Ames

Conference partners are:

Iowa Public Health Association

Iowa Environmental Health Association

University of Iowa College of Public Health

Child Health Specialty Centers

University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory

Iowa Department of Public Health:

Bureau of Family Health

Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion

Bureau of Health Care Access

Oral Health Bureau

Registration materials, conference information and the agenda can be found at:

<http://www.iowapha.org/2005_PH_Conference_Brochure.pdf>