

EPI Update for Friday May 6, 2005

Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

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

- May is Hepatitis Awareness Month!
- Change in UHL Confirmatory Syphilis Testing
- Update on Indigent Patient Programs for Rabies Post Exposure Treatment
- The Epi 5
- CADE Welcomes Meghan
- Mother's Day and National Women's Health Week
- Meeting Announcements and Training Opportunities

**May is Hepatitis Awareness Month!**

Viral hepatitis describes those infections that can cause inflammation of the liver, are infectious, and are caused by viruses. All cases of viral hepatitis are potentially communicable, and can have devastating effects on the lives of those infected. Cases of viral hepatitis, most commonly hepatitis A, B or C, are reportable to the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) as mandated by [Iowa Code section 139A.3](http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IACODE/2003SUPPLEMENT/139A/3.html) <<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IACODE/2003SUPPLEMENT/139A/3.html>> and [Iowa Administrative Code 641, Chapter 1](http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Rules/Current/iac/641iac/6411/6411.pdf) <<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Rules/Current/iac/641iac/6411/6411.pdf>>.

For more information on viral hepatitis, visit the [Iowa Department of Public Health Hepatitis Program Website](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/hepatitis.asp) <<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/hepatitis.asp>>

**Change in UHL Confirmatory Syphilis Testing**

Serological tests for syphilis may be classified into two groups. The non-treponemal tests used for screening detect non-specific treponemal antibody. These include the Venereal Diseases Research Laboratory (VDRL) and rapid plasma regain (RPR) tests. The treponemal tests used for confirmatory testing, detect specific treponemal antibody and include the *Treponema pallidum* Particle Agglutination (TPPA) and the Fluorescent Treponemal Antibody-Absorbed test (FTA-ABS).

The University Hygienic Lab has recently reevaluated the testing services offered for syphilis serology and determined that the confirmatory test offered will be the TPPA test. The reason for the change to the TPPA is that the test is more specific than the FTA-ABS and is equal in sensitivity.

**During the transition period, beginning the week of May 1, 2005, UHL will report both the TPPA result and the FTA-ABS result. Accompanying each result will be an interpretation on the final report. A guide for interpretation of these results can be found on the UHL web site at: <http://www.uhl.uiowa.edu/>**

Click on **Results Interpretation** from the left side of the home page (under Quick Links). Under Results Interpretation, click on **Syphilis Serology (in PDF)** to view the syphilis serology test guide.

### **Update on Indigent Patient Programs for Rabies Post Exposure Treatment**

IDPH is often contacted with questions regarding options for individuals who have had a rabies exposure who are uninsured, not covered by Medicare or Medicaid, and do not have the financial means to pay for the rabies post exposure treatment. Patient support programs for rabies post exposure treatment are available, however, the patient's healthcare provider is responsible for application and inquiry regarding patients who may be eligible. Sanofi-Pasteur manufactures the human rabies immune globulin and their patient support program representatives are available at 877-798-8716. Chiron is still the only manufacturer of the rabies vaccine (Rabavert®), and their patient support program is managed through Rx Hope at 866-972-2437 (<http://www.rxhope.com/>).

### **The Epi 5**

Here are some more trivia questions on epidemiology and it's history:

1. What are the three key components of a questionnaire?
2. What base information does an Epi Curve provide?
3. What information is included in a case definition?
4. What is the origin of the word Epidemiology?
5. What type of study identifies a study population based on their exposure?

Look for the answers next week.

### **CADE Welcomes Meghan**

CADE extends a hearty welcome to Meghan Harris, MPH, to the CADE staff. Meghan joins us as an Epidemiologist. She has a B.S. in microbiology and a MPH, both from the University of Iowa. Her most recent position was with Johnson County Public Health as a Disease Prevention Specialist. She has worked extensively with enteric diseases, pertussis, and West Nile Virus. In addition to her experiences at Johnson County, Meghan has an extensive background in website development, laboratory-based research including pcr, genetics, and microbiology, and experience in hospital nursing.

She recently moved to Pleasant Hill with her husband, a Marine Corps sergeant who recently returned from a tour of duty in Iraq, and her 7-month old son. Meghan can be reached at 515-241-7134 and [mharris@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:mharris@idph.state.ia.us) [<mailto:mharris@idph.state.ia.us>](mailto:mharris@idph.state.ia.us).

## **Happy and Healthy Mother's Day - Celebrate National Women's Health Week- May 8 -14, 2005:**

The goal of National Women's Health Week is to encourage women to take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life. Women's Health Week runs from May 8-14, 2005, and kicks off with National Women's Check-Up Day on May 9, to encourage women to schedule an appointment with their doctor or other health care provider for an annual check-up and health screenings. Gaining support from as many women and groups as possible is crucial to the success of Women's Health Week. The website provides information on how to get involved, how to find an event in your area, state and county data for health professionals, and more. Visit <http://www.4woman.gov/whw/> for more information.

Women's Health Week has also been declared by Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack. It recognizes that women from all walks of life and at every stage of life have unique health needs that should be addressed in their own right. Keeping women healthy and safe and promoting awareness of women's health issues depends on partnerships with social, health, and other services. Women can also promote health and prevent disease and illness by taking simple steps to improve their physical, mental, social, and spiritual health.

A new website devoted to health issues that impact a majority of Iowans has been unveiled just in time for National Women's Health Week, May 8 - 14, 2005. The website, <http://www.womenshealthiowa.info> has been designed to offer objective, medically-accurate health information for women and families in Iowa. Browse the database for great resources or take a look at the *Health A to Z* section for topics such as breast and cervical cancer, fitness, general women's health, pregnancy and heart disease.

The website was developed as a collaborative effort between the state health department and Iowa State University Extension and is being funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Information on the website is not for use in diagnosis and treatment and should not be used as a substitute for consulting with a licensed health care professional.

### **Meeting Announcements and Training Opportunities:**

#### **Iowa Immunization Conference - Immunization Works**

- Future Vaccines
- ACIP Recommendations
- Vaccine Shortages
- Varicella Case Based Reporting
- Vaccine Infrastructure

June 2, 2005

Hy-Vee Conference Center

5820 Westown Parkway, WDM, IA

For additional information

<http://www.trainingresources.org/displayconvspecific.cfm?convnbr=1464> or call 515-309-3315.

### **New Zoonotic Disease Course**

The University of Iowa's Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases (College of Public Health) and the University Hygienic Laboratory announce a new five-day summer course in Zoonotic Diseases that will be first offered **May 23-27th 2005** in **Iowa City**. The course will introduce students to the epidemiology and control of zoonotic diseases and will emphasize zoonoses endemic to the Midwestern United States. The course is comprised of readings, lectures, field studies, and laboratory exercises. Each day there will be three hours of lecture and three or more hours of laboratory/field activity (mosquito identification, tick identification, water sampling, visiting a meat processing plant, etc.). If you are not currently enrolled in the College of Public Health you may still be able to take the course by contacting Judy Rowles at the Center for Credit Programs at (319) 335-2577. Details regarding the course can be found in the syllabus, which may be reviewed at:

[http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/CEID/MS\\_Word\\_files/173157\\_syllabus\\_2005.pdf](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/CEID/MS_Word_files/173157_syllabus_2005.pdf)

### **Barn Raising V**

Mark your calendars for the *Governor's Conference on Public Health: Building Iowa as a Healthy Community*, also known as Barn Raising V, on July 28 and 29, 2005, at Drake University in Des Moines. The biennial conference brings together cutting-edge experts from several health care arenas. The purpose is to expand participants' knowledge, introduce new tools and resources, and share successful program models through workshops and networking. The registration fee of \$50.00 covers CEUs, conference materials and meals, and a smoke-free reception. More information on conference speakers, workshops, continuing education credits, registration, poster sessions, displays, and the conference brochure will be posted at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us>. Click on conferences.