

EPI Update for Friday November 11, 2005

Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza update**
 - **Seasonal influenza update**
 - **Avian flu update**
 - **Pandemic flu planning**
- **The season for norovirus outbreaks has arrived**
- **Laboratory testing for *Neisseria meningitides* (meningococcal disease)**
- **Spanish translated fact sheets**
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 - **Pandemic influenza ICN**
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Seasonal influenza update

No influenza has been seen in Iowa. South Dakota is the only neighboring state with influenza activity. Levels of influenza-like illness in Iowa remain below the baseline for sentinel providers, schools, child care centers and long term care facilities. For more information on influenza, visit our Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp <<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp>>, or the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov/flu/ <<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>>.

Avian influenza update

As of Nov. 9, 2005, WHO has reported 125 cases of avian influenza and 64 deaths. The most recent activity has occurred in Vietnam; no new countries have reported human cases. There has been a report of a positive bird in Kuwait. This is the first report of any activity in the Persian Gulf region. For current information, visit the WHO's Web site on avian influenza at www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/ <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/>.

Pandemic influenza planning efforts

The Iowa Department of Public Health has released its Pandemic Influenza Response Plan Annex to local public health agencies and other state agencies. The plan annex will become part of the Bioemergency response plan.

The federal government (Health and Human Services) has also released its pandemic influenza response plan with state and local guidance documents. Both documents are available on the HHS Web site at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> <<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>>.

Spanish translated fact sheets

Fact Sheets for Category A and B Agents and Influenza have been translated to Spanish and are now available on our Web site at http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/epi_fact_sheets.asp.

We are currently preparing a link from the influenza Web site for the Spanish Influenza Fact Sheets.

The season for norovirus outbreaks has arrived

Several schools have recently reported outbreaks of norovirus gastroenteritis. Typical symptoms of norovirus infection include nausea, abdominal cramps, diarrhea and vomiting. Ill people may also have a low-grade fever. The period of illness usually lasts 24 to 48 hours and the time between ingestion of the virus and illness is typically 24 to 48 hours, but may be as short as 12 hours. The virus spreads readily via the oral-fecal route and can be easily transmitted by an infected food handler, or person-to-person among children and staff. It can be spread in the air from vomit, when droplets in the air enter the oral cavity and are swallowed. People who have had norovirus infections should stay home from school for 24 hours after diarrhea ceases. Hand washing is very important in a school that has a norovirus outbreak. Norovirus infection is not a reportable disease, but outbreaks are reportable. Guidance for investigating suspected norovirus infections can be found in the Epi Manual and on the Web at

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/epi_manual/norovirus.pdf. A fact sheet of norovirus is also available at

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/epifacts/norovirus.pdf>.

Laboratory testing for *Neisseria meningitidis*

Meningococci are the second most common cause of bacterial meningitis, second only to *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. Humans are the only known host of *N. meningitidis* and the meningococci do not survive well outside of their host. Because the bacterium is transmitted by direct contact with contaminated respiratory secretions, family members and other close contacts of persons with meningococcal disease are at high risk of acquiring the disease and should receive immediate prophylaxis with antibiotics. Most meningococcal infections in the United States are caused by serogroups B, C and Y, with each being responsible for approximately one-third of the cases. When a laboratory

isolates *N. meningitidis* from blood or CSF, the lab should send the isolated to UHL for serotyping immediately (see Iowa Administrative Code 641, chapter 1). The serotype provides valuable information for public health to follow up, and determine if a larger outbreak is occurring. The serotype information may also be important if vaccination is being considered for prevention or control of an outbreak since the vaccine does not contain serogroup B, thus cannot be used in an outbreak of B. In addition, UHL may need to perform molecular strain typing studies, such as pulsed field gel electrophoresis to determine the exact strain.

Upcoming trainings

Pandemic Influenza ICN: IDPH is hosting a Pandemic Influenza ICN for local public health agencies, health care, and law enforcement on Wednesday, Nov. 16 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., or from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Topics include an overview of the potential for pandemic influenza, surveillance, the plan annex, surge capacity and risk communication. For more information on ICN locations go to www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu_icn.asp <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu_icn.asp>.

Save the date: Antibiotic Resistance Training: Iowa's Antibiotic Resistant Taskforce is sponsoring a seminar on Dec. 14 from noon to 1:00 p.m., titled "**When antibiotics don't work.**" Topics that will be covered include: 1) antibiotic resistance surveillance and what it tells you about what is happening in Iowa; 2) decreasing antibiotic resistance through patient education; and 3) community acquired MRSA.

Veteran's Day

Governor and Lt. Governor's Veterans Day Message:

The freedoms that every American rightfully enjoys are thanks to the hardships endured by our country's veterans. Too often we forget the tremendous sacrifice that has been made - and continues to be made - by the men and women who serve in our armed forces. This Veterans Day we honor the ongoing memory of those men and women who have served our country in uniform.

The Iowa Department of Public Health will be closed on Nov.11 for Veteran's Day.