

EPI Update for Friday, February 2, 2007 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Herpes gladiatorum**
- **Influenza rages on...**
- **Common influenza vaccine questions**
- **Superbowl safety**
- **Cough etiquette video**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Herpes gladiatorum

According to the Associated Press, some Minnesota high school wrestling programs were suspended Tuesday because of a widespread herpes outbreak.

The Minnesota State High School League banned competitions and direct contact between wrestlers in practice until Feb. 6 after 24 cases of herpes gladiatorum were reported by 10 teams. The virus is spread by skin-to-skin contact, and symptoms include lesions on the face, head and neck. Herpes gladiatorum is the same herpes species that causes oral herpes or cold sores.

Concern has been raised about Iowa wrestlers, especially in northern Iowa, coming in contact with other wrestlers with this infection. For prevention information, visit www.ncaa.org and click on the "Library" tab. From there, click on "Wrestling Rules."

Influenza rages on...

Influenza activity continues to be widespread across Iowa this week. The following is a brief summary of the data for the week ending Jan. 27:

- There were 58 laboratory-confirmed cases from 26 counties. Thirty-four percent of all lab-confirmed cases for the entire season are children ages 5-8.
- Sentinel physicians reported that 2.56 percent of their patients had influenza-like illnesses
- Sentinel school and businesses reported an absenteeism rate of 4.49 percent;
- There were thirty-seven schools, in 21 counties, reporting at least one day of absenteeism of greater than 10 percent. Sixty-nine percent of reports attributed absence solely to influenza-like illness.
- There were two hospitalizations reported in each of the age groups 0-4 and 25-64.

For more information on influenza activity, view the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network weekly report at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/iisn.asp.

Common influenza vaccine questions

Should I get another dose of influenza vaccine because I got my dose in October?

The optimal time for influenza vaccination is usually during October and November. But health care providers should offer influenza vaccine throughout the influenza season, even after influenza activity has been documented in the community. In the United States, seasonal influenza activity can begin as early as October or November, thus vaccination efforts start about this time, but influenza activity usually does not peak until late December to early March, so vaccines are made to protect throughout the flu season. Among adults, studies have indicated limited or no improvement in antibody response to a second dose of vaccine administered during the same season. Thus the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention do not recommend a second dose of influenza vaccine during the same flu season, except for children younger than 9 years of age who are receiving vaccine for the first time.

How long does immunity from influenza vaccine last?

Trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine is most effective when it precedes exposure by no more than two to four months. Receiving flu vaccines each year is needed because of waning antibodies and changes in the strains of circulating influenza virus from year to year.

Superbowl safety

Superbowl Sunday is a great time for large groups of people to make a lot of noise and eat a lot of interestingly prepared food. The goal is to have a good time without having problems in the “endzone.” Perhaps the most important thing to do when preparing food for any crowd is hand washing. Singing the national anthem (at least up to “the rockets red glare,” or about 20 seconds) while washing one’s hands certainly makes sense.

Here are some other tips that may make sense considering the theme of the day.

- Offsides – letting raw meats and their juices contaminate cooked or fully prepared foods.
- Foul – eating undercooked foods like chicken or other poultry items.
- False start – not allowing meats to reach proper cooking temperatures before eating them
- Delay of game – leaving perishable foods out for more than an hour without refrigeration.
- Homerun – OK, wrong game, but it speaks to sharing good food with good friends and not getting sick.

Cough etiquette video

Click on the following link for a humorous and informative video on cough etiquette:
www.coughsafe.com/index.html.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

41st National Immunization Conference

March 5-8, 2007

Kansas City Marriott Downtown

Kansas City, Missouri

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/nip/NIC/default.htm#registration.

Have a healthy and happy week! Keep warm!
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