

EPI Update for Friday, May 25, 2007
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **lowans exposed to measles at New Mexico science fair**
- **Bats living in homes can pose danger**
- **National dog bite prevention week is May 20-26**
- **Recreational water illness prevention week is May 21-27**
- **Possible surface water norovirus outbreak**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

lowans exposed to measles at New Mexico science fair

IDPH has been notified by CDC and the New Mexico health department that a student from India developed measles while attending a science conference in New Mexico. Twenty-five lowans attended this conference, and were possibly exposed. The New Mexico health department provided education and vaccination on-site to attendees. The risk of any of these lowans developing measles is low.

IDPH is working with local public health agencies to contact Iowa attendees. Confirmation of immunization statuses and education about signs and symptoms of measles has been provided to all attendees. Measles is a public health emergency. Anyone with suspected measles should be isolated immediately and public health notified. If you suspect measles in a student or patient, contact your local health department or IDPH at 1-800-362-2736.

Bats living in homes can pose danger

It is spring and people are finding more bats inside their homes. Many lowans are unaware of the potential danger of bats living in homes. Although the prevalence of rabies in bats is very low, bats can become infected with rabies and can transmit the disease to humans and pets. If prompt treatment is not administered, a bite or scratch from a rabid bat can be deadly.

If a sleeping person, a young child or a mentally incapacitated person is found alone with a bat in the same room and the possibility of a bite cannot be eliminated, that person should be treated promptly with post exposure rabies treatments. If the bat dies, and its head is not damaged, it should be kept cold and is delivered to an appropriate laboratory for rabies testing. If the bat is found to be negative for rabies, humans that may have been exposed to the bat do not need treatment.

There are also other ways to avoid rabies exposure:

- **Bat-proof homes.**

- Keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all dogs, cats, ferrets (whether they go outside or not) and horses.
- Keep pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals.
- Call the local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood.
- Avoid contact with wild animals.
- Do not feed wild animals.
- Avoid contact with sick or injured stray animals or wildlife.

For more information on rabies and for deciding who should receive post exposure treatment, see www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/rabies.asp. CADE is available for consultation at 1 800-362-2736.

University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL) tests animals that might have exposed humans to rabies for no charge. Bats and other animals found dead who have not exposed humans are not routinely tested. For information on animal rabies testing, visit www.uhl.uiowa.edu/kitsquotesforms/rabies_slip.pdf or by calling 1-800-421-4692.

National dog bite prevention week is May 20-26

It is estimated that every year, more than 4.7 million Americans are bitten by dogs. Small children are the most common victims, followed by older people and United States Postal Service (USPS) employees. The American Veterinary Medical Association has joined with the USPS and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in sponsoring Dog Bite Prevention Week, May 20-26, 2007, to help prevent dog bites.

Important dog bite prevention tips include:

- Pick a dog that is good match for your home. Consult your veterinarian for details about the behavior of different breeds.
- Socialize your pet. Gradually expose your puppy to a variety of people and other animals so it feels at ease in these situations; continue this exposure, as your dog gets older.
- Train your dog. Commands can build a bond of obedience and trust between you and your dog. Avoid aggressive games like wrestling or tug-of-war with your dog.
- Vaccinate your dog against rabies and other diseases.
- Neuter or spay your dog. These dogs are less likely to bite.
- Never leave a baby or small child alone with a dog.
- Teach your child to ask a dog owner for permission before petting any dog.
- Let a strange dog sniff you or your child before touching it, and pet it gently, avoiding the face, head and tail.
- Never bother a dog if it is sleeping, eating or caring for puppies.
- Do not run past a dog.

For more information on National Dog Bite Prevention Week and to access the brochure online, visit www.avma.org/press/publichealth/dogbite/mediakit.asp.

Recreational water illness prevention week is May 21-27

With the swimming season upon us, IDPH would like to remind citizens that National Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week is May 21-27, 2007. This recognition is to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs). The most commonly reported RWI is diarrhea caused by pathogens such as *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, *Shigella*, and *Escherichia coli* O157:H7. RWIs can cause various ailments, including skin, ear, eye, respiratory, wound, and neurologic infections.

Approximately 62% of these outbreaks are related to the chlorine-resistant pathogen, *Cryptosporidium*, ("Crypto") which can be introduced into a swimming pool by swimmers who are ill with diarrhea and then spread to other swimmers when they swallow contaminated water. Awareness of recreational water illnesses and healthy swimming behaviors play an important role in stopping the transmission of RWIs.

IDPH encourages swimmers to practice these healthy swimming behaviors:

- Don't swim when you have any diarrhea or any intestinal illness;
- Avoid getting pool water in your mouth or swallowing any pool water;
- Shower before swimming (this includes children);
- Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers;
- Take children on regular bathroom breaks and change their diapers often;
- Change children's diapers in a bathroom, not at poolside.

For additional information, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming or www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/rwi_prevention_week.htm.

Possible surface water norovirus outbreak

What may be Iowa's first recognized norovirus outbreak related to surface water exposure occurred in northeast Iowa early in May. A group of 13 students and adults visited an Iowa state park for an overnight hiking trip and approximately 24 hours later most hikers began experiencing vomiting and diarrhea. Although not confirmed, the symptoms matched those of norovirus. Upon investigation, no other common source of infection could be determined other than drinking and playing in the water of the trout stream in the state park. Water filters, but no chemical treatment, were used for the drinking water.

Interestingly, during the previous week, upstream from this watershed a small city had experienced a confirmed norovirus outbreak. Research has shown that norovirus may pose a threat downstream from affected communities, despite good wastewater treatment. It is likely that water taken from surface water such as streams needs to be treated appropriately before drinking.

May 21-27, 2007 is Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week. Iowans hiking and drinking surface water should not rely solely on water filters, but consider either boiling or appropriate chemical treatment.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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