

EPI Update for Friday, January 18, 2008
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA) releases recommendations regarding use of over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold products**
- **2007 State Physician Workforce Data Book released**
- **Tuberculosis**
- **Misery loves company – other viral illnesses**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) releases recommendations regarding use of over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold products

In the Oct. 12 issue of EPI update, we discussed the recall of over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold products by manufacturers. FDA recently issued a Public Health Advisory for parents and caregivers, recommending that OTC cough and cold products not be used to treat infants and children less than 2 years of age because serious and potentially life-threatening side effects can occur from such use.

The announcement advisory does not include the FDA's final recommendation about use of OTC cough and cold medicines in children ages 2 to 11 years. The agency's review of data for 2- to 11-year-olds is continuing. Pending completion of the FDA's ongoing review, parents and caregivers who choose to give OTC cough and cold medicines to children ages 2 to 11 years should:

- Follow the dosing directions on the label of any OTC medication
- Understand that these drugs will NOT cure or shorten the duration of the common cold
- Check the "Drug Facts" label to learn what active ingredients are in the products because many OTC cough and cold products contain multiple active ingredients
- Use only the measuring spoons or cups that come with the medicine or those made specially for measuring drugs

For more information and the full list of the FDA's recommendations, visit www.fda.gov/cder/drug/advisory/cough_cold_2008.htm.

2007 State Physician Workforce Data Book released

The 2007 State Physician Workforce Data Book has been released. The report examines each state, current medical school enrollment, physicians in graduate medical education programs, and in-state retention rates. According to the report Iowa has a retention rate of 30 percent and ranks 39th in the nation. The retention rate is the proportion among active physicians who graduated from a public, medical or osteopathic school in the state.

For more information, visit www.aamc.org/workforce/statedatabooknov2007.pdf .

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis continues to be one of the world's deadliest diseases. Consider these facts.

- One third of the world's population is infected with TB.
- Each year, nearly 9 million people around the world become sick with TB.
- Each year, there are almost 2 million TB-related deaths worldwide.
- TB is the leading killer of people who are HIV infected.

Iowa continues to have a low rate of tuberculosis disease. Case numbers for Iowa in 2007 are not finalized yet. Tuberculosis latent infections are NOT the same as tuberculosis disease and these two conditions are managed differently. People with no evidence of tuberculosis lung disease pose no threat to others around them.

Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (XDR-TB) is a growing concern. This type of tuberculosis is resistant to almost all antibiotics and is even more difficult to manage than multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. So far, no cases of XDR-TB have been reported in Iowa.

For more information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/tb_control.asp.

Misery loves company – other viral illnesses

Although local outbreaks of influenza are occurring throughout Iowa, medical providers are also seeing a wide variety of other misery-causing viruses, especially respiratory ailments, like cold viruses. There are 110 different viruses known to cause the common cold, which is why even if immunity is developed to one cold virus, people can still come down with a cold several times a year. Although those suffering from a respiratory viral illness often hope a prescribed medication will speed their recovery, viruses do not respond to antibiotics. Over-the-counter medications should not be given to young children especially children under 2 years of age.

There is no practical way to avoid all viruses, but people can reduce their risk of catching one. The best defense includes getting the flu vaccine every year and frequent hand washing. Besides washing hands for 20 seconds several times a day, other preventative measures include getting enough sleep, keeping well-hydrated, being active at least 30 minutes a day and including plenty of fruits and vegetables in one's daily diet.

It is important for people to stay home from work or school when ill to help prevent the spread of viruses to others. Most people recover from a viral illness within two to seven days. If symptoms last longer than that, fever does not diminish, a high fever develops or symptoms get worse, it should talk to your health care provider.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week! Remember wind chill will be a factor this weekend so be careful when outdoors.

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