

EPI Update for Friday, January 25, 2008
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Yellow fever vaccine shortage**
- **Morgellons study**
- **Nationwide recall of pre-filled heparin and normal saline flushes**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Yellow fever vaccine shortage

For months, yellow fever vaccine providers across Iowa have reported a shortage of the yellow fever vaccine (VF-FAX) single-dose vials. According to the manufacturer, Sanofi Pasteur, there is no shortage of the vaccine itself, but there is a temporary issue related to the production equipment used to insert the vaccine into single-dose vials. Delays occurred when the supplier of this equipment went out of business, making it necessary to validate a new supplier. The 5-dose vials of YF-VAX continue to be available in sufficient supply but requires reconstituted vaccine to be used within 60 minutes. The single-dose vials are expected to be back in stock in March 2008. Until that time, yellow fever clinics are encouraged to batch vaccination times where they schedule five people to come in for yellow fever vaccination within an hour, so they can maximize the 5-dose vial's use.

Health-care providers should refer to Chapter 5: Yellow Fever Vaccine Requirements and Information on Malaria Risk and Prophylaxis by Country in *CDC Health Information for International Travel 2008*, for information about which countries require yellow fever vaccination for entry and for which countries CDC recommends yellow fever vaccination. In the absence of a country requirement, CDC does not recommend yellow fever vaccination for travel to a country if the traveler's itinerary does not include travel to a yellow fever-endemic area. Travelers should receive the vaccine 10 days prior to travel. Due to the shortage, Iowa travelers are encouraged to schedule vaccination appointments early.

To access the Travelers' Health announcement, go to www.cdc.gov/travel/contentYellowFeverVaccineShortage.aspx.

To find out which countries require yellow fever vaccine, go to www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh5-MalariaYellowFeverTable.aspx.

Morgellons study

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in conjunction with Kaiser Permanente's Northern California Division of Research, launched a study to learn about an unexplained skin condition known as Morgellons. Case patients

report a range of symptoms including non-healing skin lesions, emergence of fibers or solid material from the skin, abnormal skin sensations (such as stinging and biting or pins and needles) and non-cutaneous symptoms such as difficulty concentrating and short-term memory loss.

The cause of Morgellons is unknown; the medical community has insufficient information to determine whether case patients have a common cause for their symptoms or share common risk factors. Researchers hope to learn more about factors that may contribute to illness.

Nationwide recall of pre-filled heparin and normal saline flushes

There is a nationwide recall of all lots of both heparin and saline pre-filled flushes manufactured by AM2 PAT. These products are distributed under two brand names, Sierra Pre-Filled, Inc. and B. Braun. These products are sold in 3ml, 5ml sizes for heparin and 3ml, 5ml and 10ml sizes for normal saline. Both products are sold as pre-filled syringes.

Lot 1003-02 and lot 070926H heparin IV flush syringes have been found to be contaminated with *Serratia marcescens*, which has resulted in patient infections. CDC has confirmed growth of *Serratia marcescens* from several unopened syringes of this product. This bacterial infection could present a serious adverse health consequence that could lead to life-threatening injuries and/or death.

Iowa consumers and facilities that have any of these recalled pre-filled syringes, Heparin or Saline Lock Flush Solution USP, should **stop using the product immediately**. These products should be returned to your distributor immediately.

For more information, visit www.fda.gov/oc/po/firmrecalls/am2pat01_08.html.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

“Norovirus School Prevention and Management”

Iowa Communications Network, January 28, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Public health personnel are asked to help promote this ICN to our colleagues in the school setting. This ICN from K-12 Connections will discuss school-related prevention of norovirus outbreaks.

For more information, visit www.iptv.org/iowa_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=8503.

Have a healthy and happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health
800-362-2736