

EPI Update for Friday, February 29, 2008
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)
Addendum

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **CDC Health Advisory: Influenza Antiviral Use for Persons at High Risk for Influenza Complications or Who Have Severe Influenza Illness**

This CDC Health Advisory is intended to re-emphasize the importance of considering antiviral medications for use in the treatment or prevention of influenza. The antiviral medications recommended for treatment or prevention of influenza includes oseltamivir or zanamivir. Because high levels of resistance to adamantane antiviral medications (rimantadine and amantadine) continue to be observed among circulating influenza A viruses, adamantanes are not recommended for treatment or prevention of influenza.

Recommendations:

Neuraminidase inhibitor medications (oseltamivir and zanamivir) are recommended for the treatment and chemoprophylaxis of influenza. Antiviral treatment should begin within 48 hours of symptom onset if possible, but treatment should still be considered for persons who present more than 48 hours after illness onset if they have severe influenza illness or are at higher risk for severe complications from influenza. Oseltamivir is approved for treatment and prevention of influenza for persons 1 year and older, while zanamivir is approved for treatment of persons 7 years and older and prevention of influenza in persons 5 years and older.

In some communities, circulating influenza virus strains during this influenza season are antigenically different from those contained in current influenza vaccines. Preliminary results suggest that currently available influenza vaccines provide some protection against influenza virus infection. Health care providers should contact their local public health department for assistance when an outbreak of influenza in an institutional setting (e.g., a long-term care facility) occurs.

To reduce the burden of influenza in the U.S., CDC continues to recommend a three-pronged approach: influenza vaccination, use of neuraminidase inhibitor antiviral medications when indicated for treatment or prevention, and use of other measures to decrease the spread of influenza, including promotion of hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, and staying home from work and school when ill.

For more information, please see the CDC website:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/>

Have a healthy and happy week!
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