

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

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Continuing rabies vaccine shortage**
- **Importance of blood lead testing**

- **Food safety tips for Labor Day grilling**

- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Continuing rabies vaccine shortage

Novartis (currently the only U.S. producer of rabies vaccine) continues to require that health care providers confer with state public health officials to obtain a confirmation code (that changes often) before allowing vaccine orders to be processed and vaccine be sent to the providers.

We remind health care providers that PEP is an urgent medical issue, but usually not an emergency. In almost all circumstances, vaccination can be delayed until the animal is tested for rabies or a ten day observation period is completed (for dogs, cats and ferrets). If possible and appropriate, please test or observe the animal rather than immediately using vaccine. This approach will not only limit administration of PEP to persons with confirmed rabies exposure, but it will also conserve the limited supply of rabies vaccine.

The schedule for administering vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin remains the same. For more information visit:

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5703a1.htm Please note that "Day 0" is the day the first rabies vaccine/immunoglobulin is administered and **not** the day the exposure occurred. Subsequent doses of vaccine should be administered on days 3, 7, 14, and 28.

Please contact IDPH at 800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours to consult on potential rabies exposures or to obtain the confirmation code required by Novartis to order rabies vaccine.

Importance of blood lead testing

State law requires that all children entering kindergarten to have been tested for lead poisoning. Lead is a neurotoxin and children are more vulnerable to its neurological effects than adults. Before the law was passed in 2007, a 2-year-old

child was found on routine testing to have an elevated blood lead level that required chelation. The child's family was tested and four other family members (two children and two adults) were also found to have elevated blood lead levels. One of the adults was in the third trimester of a pregnancy and had a blood lead level greater than 100 mcg/dL. Fortunately, she did not manifest any neurological symptoms associated with severe lead poisoning. The mother was immediately chelated and completed her pregnancy uneventfully. When the child was born, the newborn had a blood lead level greater than 100 mcg/dL and spent the first week of life being treated for lead poisoning. Had the 2-year-old fallen through the cracks and not been tested for lead poisoning, the family-wide lead poisoning would have gone undiscovered. While chelation therapy is not a cure-all for lead poisoning, the medical team treating the family is hopeful that chelation has improved the chances of the newborn to have a normal neurological development. This is an extreme case, yet it does demonstrate the importance of routine testing for lead poisoning.

Food safety tips for Labor Day grilling

A few simple precautions can reduce the risk of food-borne illness:

- Cook meat and poultry thoroughly. It is best to use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature of meat and poultry. Cook hamburger, pork and beef to 160°F, poultry to 165°F. If a thermometer is not available, cook meat, especially ground meats until no pink remains and all juices run clear.
- Avoid cross-contamination by washing hands, utensils and cutting boards after they've been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch another food. Put cooked meat on a clean platter, not on the one that held the raw meat.
- Keep foods refrigerated when marinating. Do not use the sauce you used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food.
- Clean your grill between each use.
- Don't keep perishable foods on a serving table for longer than two hours (one hour when the outside temperature is above 90°F).
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables or leftovers promptly. Bacteria grow quickly at room temperature.
- Pack your cooler with 75 percent food and 25 percent ice or cold packs. A cooler that is packed full stays colder longer than one that is half-full.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food. Don't prepare food for others if you have a diarrheal illness.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week! Hope you have a nice Labor Day Weekend.
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

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800-362-2736