

EPI Update for Friday, September 26, 2008
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **September is Food Safety Month**
- **Introducing the IDPH Toxicology Manual**
- **Iowa's Prescription Drug Donation Repository Program**
- **Sharing breakfast with a bat**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

September is Food Safety Month

The final tip in this month's series is to CHILL: Refrigerate foods promptly. Cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Bacteria spreads fastest at temperatures between 40 F and 140 F, so chilling food properly is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of food-borne illness.

- Cool the fridge to 40 F or below, and use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature.
- Chill leftovers and takeout foods within two hours, and divide food into shallow containers for rapid cooling.
- Thaw meat, poultry, and seafood in the fridge, not on the counter, and don't overstuff the fridge.

Don't forget to 1) Clean, 2) Separate, 3) Cook and 4) Chill to *Be Food Safe*.

For more information on National Food Safety Education Month visit www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/september.html.

Introducing the IDPH Toxicology Manual

The toxicology program within the Environmental Health Division of IDPH has created a Toxicology Manual. This manual provides various fact sheets on chemicals and potentially toxic substances to educate the public on the health effects from exposure to toxic substances in the environment. The fact sheets include information on:

- Uses of these chemicals, and sources of exposure in Iowa.
- Human health effects of short-term or acute exposure to large amounts of these chemicals.
- Human health effects of long-term or chronic exposure to small amounts of these chemicals.
- Methods to protect individuals from exposure.

Also included on each of the chemical fact sheets are internet links to additional on-line sources of toxicological information. The on-line references include detailed toxicological profiles, medical management guidelines, case studies, clinical treatment and patient care, and occupational exposure information.

To view the Toxicology Manual, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/idph_universalhelp/main.aspx?system=IdphToxicologyManual.

The initial rollout of the Toxicology Manual includes information on 15 chemicals and substances. In the future, information on additional chemicals and substances will be added to the manual. The toxicology program will gladly take recommendations on chemicals and substances to be added to the manual. Please contact Stuart Schmitz at 515-281-8707 or sschmitz@idph.state.ia.us if you have any questions or comments.

Iowa's Prescription Drug Donation Repository Program

Iowa's Prescription Drug Donation Repository Program began on March 7, 2007, following the adoption of Administrative Rules by the Iowa State Board of Health. The program is overseen by IDPH in cooperation with the Iowa Board of Pharmacy Examiners. The Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation (IDPC), a not-for-profit entity, was awarded the contract to administer the program.

The purpose of the program is to improve the health of low-income Iowans by authorizing medical facilities and pharmacies to re-dispense prescription drugs and supplies that would otherwise be destroyed. A majority of donations have come from long-term care pharmacy providers, but other sources include physician medication samples and private individuals with sealed or unit-dose medications.

Any medication, except for controlled substances, may be donated if:

- The medication is in its original, tamper-evident packaging. A single unit-dose or blister pack with the outside packaging opened may be accepted if the packaging is intact.
- The medication bears an expiration date that is more than six months after the date the medication was donated.

Once medications arrive at IPDC, they are verified by a licensed pharmacist for accuracy, integrity, and proper expiration dating. Any questionable medications are discarded immediately.

Patients who fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty level or who are uninsured or underinsured are eligible to receive these medications. Pharmacies and medical facilities (as defined by administrative code) with authority to dispense may distribute donated medications.

For 2008 through July, the program received and determined safe to distribute 377,527 units at a retail value of \$515,855. Units shipped to free clinics and other medical facilities totaled 207,731 at a retail value of \$313,113. For the first six months of 2008 a total of 1,124 individuals received 62,751 pills.

Recently, IPDC has received 48 Zyvox 600mg tablets. This medicine is an oxazolidinone antibiotic used to treat certain serious bacterial infections that are resistant to other antibiotics, including complicated skin infections in adults that are caused by methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). To date, IPDC has distributed 24 of these tablets to persons in need. Consultation with an infectious disease specialist is suggested.

The program continues to grow with 34 medical facilities having signed up to participate. Sites are allowed to order their medications every other month with reports due each quarter. If you have additional questions or are interested in participating in the program, please call IPDC at 1-866-282-5817 or visit our Web site at www.iowapdc.org.

Sharing breakfast with a bat

Although many people enjoy a cup of coffee to help them wake up in the morning, an Iowa woman recently found something unexpected in her morning brew. This woman had seen a bat in her house the day before, but since the bedrooms were shut off from the part of the house where the bat was seen, she (quite correctly) didn't worry that she or her family could be exposed to rabies while sleeping. She set up her automatic coffee maker and went to bed. The next morning, she enjoyed her coffee as usual and went about her daily routine. She became concerned that evening however, when she removed the coffee filter to refill the coffee maker for the next morning - only to discover a dead bat in the filter, which had evidently gone through the brew cycle in the morning.

Our coffee drinker first telephoned the poison control center, which referred her to her local public health department. Public health in turn called CADE, who sought information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC recommended testing the bat for rabies and, if positive or not testable, recommended post-exposure prophylaxis with rabies immune globulin and rabies vaccine, despite the low risk of rabies virus surviving the brewing temperature. The bat was sent to the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory for rabies testing, but the brain was too cooked by the heat of the brewing water to be tested. She then began the rabies post-exposure prophylaxis.

Fortunately, few of us are likely to have such a bat encounter. Bat encounters that routinely are recommended to lead to rabies testing are bat bites or a person who has been asleep with a bat in their sleeping quarters. If such a bat is found to be positive for rabies or if the bat, for some reason, cannot be tested, rabies prophylaxis should be given. If prophylaxis is judged to be necessary, call CADE at 800-362-2736 for instructions on how to obtain rabies immune globulin and vaccine or for other consultation on rabies exposures.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health
800-362-2736