

EPI Update for Friday, November 7, 2008

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Cold versus flu - how to tell the difference**
- **Rabies vaccine for pre-exposure vaccination is now available through Novartis**
- **Q fever – symptoms and sources of exposure**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Cold versus influenza – how to tell the difference

Colds and influenza are both respiratory illnesses caused by different viruses. These two illnesses have similar symptoms but there are important differences:

- Influenza has an abrupt, significant onset. Colds may come on slowly, with mild symptoms.
- Flu infections involve a fever of 100°F or greater AND cough AND/OR sore throat. Influenza infections do not result in vomiting or diarrhea without respiratory symptoms. Colds may result in a low-grade fever.
- In addition to respiratory symptoms, persons with influenza often have body aches, chills, and extreme malaise.
- Influenza duration in adults is a few days to 2 weeks. Colds often linger longer than influenza, but symptoms overall are more mild.
- Influenza may result in serious complications like pneumonia, which lead to hospitalization. Colds generally do not.

Early in influenza season when activity is low, rapid influenza tests are not very reliable. IDPH encourages health care providers to submit suspected influenza specimens to the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory. Specimens should also be submitted on patients who are strongly suspected to have influenza, but who have a rapid test that is negative.

When started within the first two days of symptoms, an influenza antiviral medication can reduce illness severity and shorten duration of illness. For more information on the treatment of influenza go to www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/index.htm.

Rabies vaccine for pre-exposure vaccination is available through Novartis

Novartis has announced that RabAvert is available for pre-exposure vaccination of high risk workers (such as laboratorians, animal control staff, veterinarians and veterinary technicians, wildlife care providers); however, vaccine remains unavailable for foreign travelers. Current vaccine procurement guidelines for both pre-exposure vaccination and post-exposure treatment are summarized below:

Pre-Exposure Vaccination:

Novartis: A password is not required to place vaccine orders. Vaccine orders should be placed directly with your Novartis wholesale distributor.

Sanofi-Pasteur: Pre-exposure vaccine is not available from Sanofi Pasteur.

Post-Exposure Treatment

Novartis: A password is not required to place vaccine orders. Contact Novartis at 800-244-7668 or your local Novartis wholesale distributor to order vaccine.

Sanofi-Pasteur: Sanofi-Pasteur requires that health care providers confer with state public health officials to obtain a confirmation code (that changes weekly)

before processing vaccine orders. Please contact IDPH at 800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours to obtain the confirmation code required by Sanofi-Pasteur to order rabies vaccine.

IDPH is available 24/7 for consultation. During business hours, please call 800-362-2736 or after hours call 515-323-4360. The after hours number will connect you to the state patrol who will page the on-call staff.

IDPH has added a link at the top of the Rabies Page on the IDPH Web site which provides current information on product availability and guidelines for ordering. Please visit the link at: www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/cade/rabies_vaccine_ordering_instructions.pdf

Q fever – symptoms and sources of exposure

Cases of Q fever are identified in Iowa every year, and there have been several recent reports. We ask that health care providers consider Q fever when patients present with consistent symptoms and history of potential exposure.

Exposure:

Goats, sheep, and cattle are the primary reservoirs. Infection of humans usually occurs by inhalation of aerosolized organisms from placental material, birth fluids, and excreta of infected animals.

Symptoms:

Most acute cases will begin with a sudden onset of one or more of the following:

- High fevers, chills, headaches, malaise, myalgia, sweats, cough, nausea, vomiting, confusion, diarrhea, abdominal pain, chest pain.
- Fevers can last for one to two weeks.
- Weight loss can occur and persist for some time.
- 30 to 50 percent of patients with symptomatic infection will develop pneumonia.

Chronic Q fever most commonly presents as endocarditis

For more information see

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_q_fever.htm

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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800-362-2736