

EPI Update for Friday, November 14, 2008
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Parainfluenza is common among children in fall and winter months**
- ***Salmonella* cases linked to dry pet food**
- **Norovirus awareness**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Parainfluenza is common among children in fall and winter months:

Second only to RSV as a cause of respiratory infection in children, human parainfluenza viruses (HPIVs) have a significant impact on the prevalence of viral respiratory illness. There are four strains of HPIVs, each with distinct clinical features. HPIV-1 and 2 typically cause laryngotracheobronchitis or croup; HPIV-1 is more frequently detected in children. Both types may also cause other upper and lower respiratory infections. HPIV-3 is often associated with pneumonia and bronchiolitis. HPIV-4 is seldom detected because it is less likely to cause severe disease.

HPIV-1 causes biennial outbreaks of croup in the fall (presently in the United States during odd numbered years). HPIV-2 causes annual or biennial fall outbreaks. HPIV-3 peak activity occurs during the spring and early summer months each year, but the virus can be isolated throughout the year. The seasonality of HPIV-4 is unknown due to low levels of detected activity.

The incubation period for HPIVs is typically 1-7 days. Inactivated by soap and water, these viruses are unstable in the environment. However, once aerosolized, the virus may stay suspended in the air for up to an hour.

No vaccine is currently available to protect against infection caused by any of the HPIVs. Passively acquired maternal antibodies may play a role in protection from HPIV types 1 and 2 in the first few months of life, highlighting the importance of breast-feeding. Frequent hand washing and not sharing items such as cups, glasses, and utensils with an infected person should decrease the spread of virus to others. However, excluding children with colds or other respiratory illnesses (without fever) who are well enough to attend child care or school settings will probably not decrease the spread of HPIVs, because the viruses are often spread in the early stages of illness. In a hospital setting, spread of HPIVs can and should be prevented by strict attention to contact precautions, such as hand washing and wearing of protective gowns and gloves.

For more information on parainfluenza, go to www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/respiratory/hpivfeat.htm .

***Salmonella* cases linked to dry pet food:**

This week the CDC released an update on a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella enterica* serotype Schwarzengrund related to human contact with specific types of dry dog food.

From 2006 through 2008, there were 79 cases of human illness identified from 21 states, and one case has been identified in Iowa. To date, there have been 105 brands of dry pet food recalled, however, dry pet food has a one year shelf life, and contaminated product might still be in the homes of purchasers and could produce illness. Visit the following link for a list of recalled pet food <http://petcare.mars.com/othernewsreleases.html>

Consumers should be aware that all dry pet food, pet treats, and pet supplements can be contaminated with pathogens such as *Salmonella*. To reduce the risk of illness:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap immediately after handling dry pet foods, pet treats, and pet supplements, and especially before preparing and eating food for humans.
- Keep infants away from pet feeding areas.
- Do not allow children less than 5 years of age to touch or eat dry pet food, treats, or supplements.
- Wash your hands if you come in contact with fecal material from pets.

Norovirus awareness:

As the holiday season approaches, most of us are planning events to reconnect with friends and family. It is likely there will be lots of shared meals and fun activities for young and old. The Iowa Department of Public Health reminds you that disease causing organisms, such as viruses and bacteria, can be shared along with the good will. One example is norovirus.

Noroviruses are one of the most common causes of gastrointestinal illnesses in Iowa. Common symptoms of this viral GI illness are nausea with vomiting, diarrhea, and cramps. Noroviruses are most commonly spread by consumption of food or water contaminated with stool or by direct person-to-person spread. The virus can also be spread by contact with objects contaminated with stool and by airborne spread that may occur after someone vomits. The illness lasts for a few days and victims usually recover completely with no long-term health effects. If ill, the most important thing to do is to keep drinking fluids, as the most common cause of hospitalization with norovirus infection is dehydration.

Noroviruses are usually spread by people failing to wash their hands after going to the bathroom and before preparing food, as well as working in food preparation while ill with vomiting and diarrhea. Anyone who is ill with diarrhea, vomiting or fever should not work with food, the elderly, in health care or child care.

The proper method for hand washing:

- Use warm water and soap.
- Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds making sure to scrub the backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.
- Rinse well under warm water and dry.
- If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product to perform hand hygiene.

The CDC also recommends thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of illness by using a bleach-based household cleaner. It is important to immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated

with virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap). For more information about norovirus, visit either

www.idph.state.ia.us/idph_universalhelp/main.aspx?system=IdphEpiManual&context=Norovirus_factsheet or www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus.htm

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

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