EPI Update for Friday, April 24, 2009
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Novel Swine Influenza Cases in CA and TX**
- **Update on measles investigation**
- **Good hygiene helps prevent the spread of noroviruses**
- **National Medical Laboratory Professionals week**
- **Spring has sprung, and so have ticks**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Novel Swine Influenza Cases in CA and TX

Eight cases of A (H1N1) swine influenza have been recently reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from two states; California (CA) reported six cases from the San Diego area and Texas (TX) two cases. Most of the cases are not epidemiologically-linked to each other. The cases do not report swine exposure. There has been one reported hospitalization and no deaths.

This strain of A (H1N1) swine influenza is a novel influenza strain that may have the potential to spread person to person. It is resistant to amantadine and rimantadine antiviral medication but is susceptible to oseltamivir and zanamivir. The seasonal flu vaccine is not believed to protect against this novel strain of swine influenza.

Actions requested of Health Care Providers in Iowa:

- Consider influenza if patient presents with:
  1) Fever ?37.8°C (100°F)
  2) and a cough and/or sore throat without other apparent cause
- Ask about:
  1) Recent travel to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, or Mexico; AND/OR
  2) Occupational exposure to pigs
- If a patient meets both above criteria:
  3) Collect a nasopharangeal swab specimen and submit to the University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL). Use a surgical mask

or procedure mask when collecting the specimen. Do not perform rapid influenza testing on patients.

4) Contact the Iowa Department of Public Health IMMEDIATELY at 800-362-2736.

For questions on testing for swine influenza, contact UHL at 319-335-4500. For more information on specimen submission and testing, go to http://www.uhl.uiowa.edu/.

Update on measles investigation

IDPH and the University Hygienic Laboratory continue to coordinate closely with health care providers and public health officials to conduct enhanced surveillance for additional measles cases. As resources and additional information become available, it will be posted on the measles resources section of our Web site. Please visit: www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/measles.asp.

Good hygiene helps prevent the spread of noroviruses

The Iowa Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) is investigating recent outbreaks of illnesses caused by norovirus. Norovirus is a major cause of gastrointestinal illnesses each year. Symptoms of norovirus illness include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and low-grade fever. Although sometimes called the 'stomach flu,' noroviruses are not the same as influenza. 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 keep drinking fluids. The most common health complication from norovirus is dehydration.

Norovirus is spread when people fail to wash their hands after going to the bathroom and before preparing or serving food. It is also spread when people prepare food while ill with vomiting and diarrhea. Anyone with diarrhea or vomiting in the last few days should not be handling any food items. That rule is important no matter if you're cooking for two or 200, or whether it's a regular family meal or at a restaurant. As Iowans go into the season for graduations, weddings, banquets and summer parties, it's important to remember basic good food handling practices and hand washing to prevent illness. For more information on noroviruses, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/idph_universalhelp/main.aspx?system=IdphEpiManual&context=Norovirus_factsheet.

National Medical Laboratory Professionals week

There are approximately 300,000 practitioners of clinical laboratory science in the United States and to acknowledge these key members of the health care team, April 19th – 25th has been designated as National Medical Laboratory Professionals week. The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) recently produced a 12 minute video entitled “A Life Saved”. The video

highlights the vital role that laboratory professionals play every day in every lab across the country and the importance of their contributions to health care. In the video, a nine-year-boy and his family share the story of the lifesaving tests performed in a clinical laboratory that diagnosed him with acute promyelocytic leukemia (M3). To see the video, visit www.ascls.org/leadership/ppc/lifesavedvideo.asp

Spring has sprung, and so have ticks

Spring is upon us and ticks will become active soon. With increased tick activity comes the potential for exposure to the organism that causes Lyme disease. Reducing exposure to ticks is the best defense against Lyme disease and other tick-borne infections.

Here are some tips to protect yourself and your family against tick bites:

- Do not walk barelegged in tall grass or woods where ticks may be found.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and high socks. Tuck pants legs into socks. Wear light-colored clothing so crawling ticks can be seen more easily.
- Use insect repellent with 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin and clothing to prevent tick bites.
- Always follow the directions on the repellent label.
- Wash off all repellents after going indoors.
- Permethrin is another type of repellent that can be applied to clothing, but DO NOT apply it directly to the skin.
- Conduct "tick checks" daily if spending a lot of time outdoors. Ticks are most often found on the thigh, arms, underarms, and legs.

In 2008, 18.4 percent of susceptible ticks submitted to the Iowa Lyme Disease Surveillance Program tested positive for the bacteria responsible for Lyme disease, and 109 human cases of Lyme disease were reported to the IDPH.

For more information on Lyme disease visit: www.idph.state.ia.us/idph_universalhelp/main.aspx?system=IdphEpiManual&context=Lyme_Disease_factsheet

The Iowa State University Medical Entomology laboratory conducts tick surveillance across the state and that surveillance data is available at: www.ent.iastate.edu/medent/ . The Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases in Iowa brochure developed by Iowa State University Medical Entomology laboratory is available at: www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM2036.pdf

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

33rd Annual Iowa Infection Prevention and Control Seminar

May 5-6, 2009 at the Marriott Hotel & Convention Center Coralville, Iowa. To see the conference brochure, visit: www.uihealthcare.com/depts/cqspi/newsevents/2009infectionctrl.pdf

Have a healthy and happy week!

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800-362-2736