

EPI Update for Friday, May 22, 2009
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Novel Influenza A (H1N1) update**
- **Ticks are active: precautions needed**
- **Keep food safe during summer cookouts and picnics**
- **Measles update**
- **May is viral hepatitis month**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) update

Iowa now has 73 confirmed cases. Fifty-five in Marshall County, three in Polk County, two in Hardin County, one in Story County, one in Des Moines County, ten in Tama County, and one Chickasaw County. The influenza update is at www.idph.state.ia.us/h1n1/common/pdf/novel_influenza_daily_report_20090521.pdf

The H1N1 surveillance report will go to reporting cases once a week, combining this report with the current weekly seasonal influenza report. This will be available on the IDPH Influenza website www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/iisn.asp.

Ticks are active: precautions needed

Spring is here and ticks are becoming active. With increased tick activity comes the increased risk for exposure to Lyme and other tickborne diseases. Reducing exposure to ticks is the best defense against these infections.

- Do not walk barelegged in tall grass or woods.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and tuck pants into socks.
- Wear light-colored clothing so crawling ticks can be seen more easily.
- Use insect repellent with DEET on exposed skin and clothing to prevent tick bites. Permethrin can be applied to clothing; DO NOT apply it directly to the skin. Wash off all repellents after going indoors.
- Conduct "tick checks" daily after spending a lot of time outdoors. The ticks are most often found on the thigh, arms, underarms, and legs.

As of May 12th, 2009, 33 blacklegged or deer ticks, *Ixodes scapularis*, have been submitted to the Iowa State University (ISU) medical entomology laboratory in support of the statewide surveillance program. The deer ticks can transmit the bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, that causes Lyme disease; thus, these ticks are also tested for these bacteria.

In 2008, 18.4 percent of susceptible ticks tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and 109 human cases of Lyme disease were reported to the IDPH. Information on the surveillance program is available at www.ent.iastate.edu/medent/. A brochure developed by ISU, "Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases in Iowa," is available at www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM2036.pdf.

The CDC and the Infectious Disease Society of America agree that testing individual ticks found on patients for Lyme disease is not useful in deciding whether the person needs antibiotic therapy. For that reason, UHL does not perform tick testing for diagnostic purposes, but only for research and surveillance.

Keep food safe during summer cookouts and picnics

IDPH wants everyone to enjoy cooking and eating outside all summer long by making sure food stays safe.

- Always wash your hands with warm, soapy water before and after handling food.
- When marinating, keep foods refrigerated. Don't use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food.
- The best way to ensure that cooked meat is safe to eat is to use a meat thermometer. Hamburgers should be cooked to 160° F, while large cuts of beef such as roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145° F for medium rare or to 160° F for medium. Cook all poultry to 165° F. Fish should be opaque and flake easily.
- When taking foods off the grill, do not put cooked food items back on the same plate that previously held raw food.
- A cooler full of cold food will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled, so it is important to pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs to insure a constant cold temperature. A thermometer can be used to be sure that the cooler stays at a temperature of 40° F or below.

For more information, visit IDPH's "Food Safety at Home" page at www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/toxicology_food_safety.asp

Measles update

A case of measles was identified in Clay County on April 15, 2009. Since then, an additional 17 persons with rash illnesses have been tested; eight more from Clay County and nine from six other counties. All were negative for measles; thus, no additional cases have been identified.

May is viral hepatitis month

In light of that, we'd like to give you some facts about hepatitis.

Facts about hepatitis:

- There are five distinct types of viral hepatitis: A, B, C, D, and E.
- The hepatitis B virus is 100 times more infectious than HIV.
- It is estimated that there are 1.4 million Americans with chronic hepatitis B.
- Hepatitis B and C can lead to liver cancer.
- There are vaccines for hepatitis A and B, but not for hepatitis C.
- Hepatitis C is the most common blood-borne infection in the U.S.
- Almost 4 million Americans, or 1.8 percent of the U.S. population, are or have been infected with hepatitis C.
- An estimated 53,000 Iowans are infected with hepatitis C.

There are hepatitis resources available for Iowans:

- Hepatitis C testing services:

Free hepatitis C testing is offered to high risk people at 13 health agencies across the state. High-risk populations include: people who have ever injected drugs, injecting drug users who share needles or other equipment, persons who received blood, blood products, or organ transplants prior to 1992, or persons ever on long-term hemodialysis. For agency information please visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/hepatitis/hep_c_testing_sites.pdf

- Hepatitis A and B Vaccination Services:

Free hepatitis A and B vaccinations are offered at 13 health agencies for high risk people. High-risk populations include people diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease in the past 90 days, men who have sex with men, injection and non-injection drug users, HIV or hepatitis C-infected persons, and sexual partners of persons infected with HIV, hepatitis A (HAV), or hepatitis B (HBV). www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/hepatitis/hep_a_hep_b_vaccine_sites.pdf

- Treatment services:

On IDPH's Viral Hepatitis Physician Treatment Directory, there is a list of health care providers and other service providers.

www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/hepatitis/directory_physicians_treating.pdf

- Need hepatitis educational materials?

Visit the HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis Program clearinghouse to obtain free brochures, pamphlets, posters, and DVDs to help educate patients and community members.

www.drugfreeinfo.org/state/cart.php?target=category&category_id=303

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy holiday weekend!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

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