

EPI Update for Friday, August 7, 2008
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **First human case of West Nile virus in 2009**
- **Make a public health impact – become an influenza surveillance site**
- **Prevention and control of seasonal influenza with vaccines**
- **What time is it? – it's State Fair time!!**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

First human case of West Nile virus in 2009

The first human case of West Nile virus disease in Iowa has been confirmed in a middle-aged woman in Clayton County who was not hospitalized. Also, statewide surveillance indicates increased numbers of mosquitoes infected with the virus. The West Nile virus season in Iowa typically lasts until the first frost.

Iowans should take the following steps to reduce the risk of West Nile virus:

- Use insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always read the repellent label and consult with a health care provider if you have questions when using these types of products for children. For example, DEET should not be used on infants less than 2 months old and oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under 3 years old.
- Avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, shoes, and socks whenever possible outdoors.
- Eliminate standing water around the home because that's where mosquitoes lay eggs. Empty water from buckets, cans, pool covers and pet water dishes. Change water in bird baths every three to four days.

Approximately 20 percent of people infected with West Nile virus will have mild to moderate symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches and vomiting. Less than one percent becomes seriously ill and only rarely does someone die.

Since West Nile first appeared in Iowa in 2002, it has been found in every county in Iowa, either in humans, horses, or birds. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were 1,356 total human cases of West Nile virus in the U.S. in 2008, including 44 deaths. Five cases were reported in Iowa, including one death. For more information about West Nile virus, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/wnv_surveillance.asp.

Make a public health impact – become an influenza surveillance site

With the potential for five influenza strains to circulate this fall, the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network (IISN) needs your help! Health care providers, hospitals, schools, and laboratories willing to collect and report basic influenza data are the core of the IISN program. This data allows public health to determine where, when and which strains of influenza are circulating, and to then provide information to health care providers about the flu activity in their communities.

The reporting requirement varies by the type of surveillance site. In general, sites count the number of patients ill with influenza and total patients seen or hospitalized. School sites only report total number of students enrolled and those absent due to illness. Everyone reports into a simple, Web-based system by the close of business on Tuesdays of the following week. Sites are provided with the weekly surveillance report and certificates of appreciation.

If you are interested in serving as an influenza surveillance site or would like more information, contact Meg Harris at mharris@idph.state.ia.us or 515-281-7134.

Prevention and control of seasonal influenza with vaccines

Annual seasonal influenza (flu) vaccination is the most effective way of preventing influenza virus infection and its complications. IDPH recommends that providers start the seasonal vaccinations as soon as the flu vaccine becomes available and continue throughout the influenza season. With the probability of an additional vaccination campaign for the novel influenza A (H1N1) this fall, providers beginning seasonal flu vaccinations early may avoid confusion and overlap with the A (H1N1) vaccinations. For a full review of the seasonal influenza vaccination recommendations including updates, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5808.pdf.

What time is it? – it's State Fair time!!

Here are a few tips to make your trip to the State Fair safe and enjoyable:

- Drink plenty of water and other non-alcoholic fluids and wear light-weight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Wash your hands before eating and drinking or handling bottles and pacifiers.
- Wash your hands after petting animals or touching animal enclosures.
- Wear sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Remember, the elderly, young children, and those with certain medical conditions are most susceptible to heat problems and illness.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

The 2009 FDA Southwest Region Educational Conference will be held September 29-30 in West Des Moines, and will cover food safety practices and

food-borne illness issues. Conference registration is \$105.00 and NEHA Continuing Education credits are available; for more information contact Judy Harrison with the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, at: judy.harrison@dia.iowa.gov or 515-281-8587.

The Fall Epidemiology Updates are one-day seminars intended for local public health staff, infection preventionists, and staff from long term care facilities. Below are the dates and locations; additional details, including an agenda describing topics, will be provided at a later date:

Cherokee	September 17
Marshalltown	September 30
Ottumwa	October 2
Creston	October 6
Cedar Rapids	October 14
Mason City	November 18

Have a healthy and happy week!

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800-362-2736