

EPI Update for Friday, August 21, 2009
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- ✍ **Seasonal influenza vaccination may begin as soon as vaccine is available**
- ✍ **Food safety tips for “Holi (and “Any”) -day grilling**
- ✍ **Weekly novel influenza A (H1N1) update**
- ✍ **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Seasonal influenza vaccination may begin as soon as vaccine is available

We have received questions about timing of seasonal influenza vaccination since some providers have begun receiving vaccines. Basically, vaccination efforts should ensure seasonal flu vaccination of as many of the recommended persons as possible before the flu season begins.

Vaccination key points:

- ? Seasonal influenza vaccine is highly immunogenic and protection from influenza vaccine is thought to persist for about one year.
- ? Use all opportunities for seasonal flu vaccination (i.e. during routine health care visits or during hospitalizations).
- ? Organized seasonal flu vaccination campaigns for persons with a diminished immune response (i.e. elderly) may be delayed until later in the season (i.e. mid-October to mid-November).
- ? Seasonal flu vaccination efforts should continue throughout the influenza season even if influenza activity has already begun.

In Iowa, seasonal flu typically starts in late November or early December, peaking in January or February and ending in March or April.

Facts to remember about this year's seasonal influenza vaccine:

- ? The potential for a novel influenza A (H1N1) vaccine program starting in late October or November underscores the need to consider beginning seasonal flu vaccination programs as soon as vaccine becomes available.
- ? Seasonal influenza vaccines do not specifically protect against novel influenza A (H1N1), but may lower the overall risk of getting other respiratory viruses.
- ? Most people need one dose of seasonal influenza vaccine each year. However, children younger than 9 years of age getting influenza vaccine for the first time (or who got influenza vaccine for the first time last season

but got only one dose) should get two doses at least four weeks apart this year.

- ? Remember, since children will probably be in a target group for the novel influenza A (H1N1) vaccine, starting seasonal flu vaccinations for them now may be appropriate.

Annual seasonal influenza vaccination is the most effective method for preventing seasonal flu and its complications. For a full review of the seasonal flu vaccination recommendations: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5808.pdf

Food safety tips for “Holi” (and “Any”) -day grilling

A few simple precautions can reduce the risk of food-borne illness:

- ? Cook meat and poultry thoroughly. It is best to use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature; cook hamburger, pork and beef to 160°F, poultry to 165°F. If a thermometer is not available, cook meat (especially ground meats) until no pink remains and all juices run clear.
- ? Avoid cross-contamination by washing hands, utensils and cutting boards after they've been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch another food. Put cooked meat on a clean platter, not on the one that was used for the raw meat.
- ? Keep foods refrigerated when marinating. Do not use the sauce you used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food.
- ? Clean your grill between each use.
- ? Don't keep perishable foods on a serving table for longer than two hours (one hour when the outside temperature is above 90°F).
- ? Refrigerate or freeze perishables or leftovers promptly. Bacteria grow quickly at room temperature.
- ? Pack your cooler with 75 percent food and 25 percent ice or cold packs. A cooler that is packed full stays colder longer than one that is half-full.
- ? Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food. Don't prepare food for others if you have a diarrheal illness.

For more information, including recommended temperatures for other meats and seafood, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

Weekly novel influenza A (H1N1) update

(This new reoccurring section will appear in each issue of the Friday Update)

Preparedness for schools

Novel influenza A (H1N1) planning guidance for schools and universities is now available at www.pandemicflu.gov. These materials are extremely useful for school administrators, nursing staff, and teaching staff in preparing for novel influenza A in schools and universities this fall. More information specific to Iowa and our schools will be available soon.

Parents of children in child care and/or school should also review materials on this Web site. A few notes of interest include having a personal preparedness plan:

- ? Could you work from home for several days at a time if you needed to?
- ? Do you have multiple levels of backup child care arrangements? A backup for your usual child care provider may not be enough. In addition, you may want to designate a family member or neighbor to care for your child if he or she is sick and you must work.
- ? Contact your child's health care provider now about getting your child vaccinated for seasonal influenza. You should also check to make sure your child is up-to-date on the pneumococcal and HIB vaccinations as well, since these can cause pneumonia after influenza.

Weekly surveillance report:

The Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network weekly report is posted on the IDPH website at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/iisn.asp . We are in the process of changing the report format. Please take a look at the new format and submit any suggestions or comments to Meg Harris at mharris@idph.state.ia.us.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities:

The 2009 FDA Southwest Region Educational Conference; Held on September 29-30 in West Des Moines. The agenda includes a range of presentations on food safety practices and food-borne illness issues. Conference registration is \$105.00 and NEHA Continuing Education credits are available. For more information or to register, contact Judy Harrison with the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals: judy.harrison@dia.iowa.gov or call 515-281-8587.

Novel H1N1 Influenza Surveillance Sentinel Sites – Fall Update. This free operator-assisted teleconference provides updates on novel influenza A (H1N1), topics will include an overview of novel and seasonal influenza, guidelines for testing and result interpretation, public health surveillance and your role in prevention and control. No registration is required; one phone line per site.

Date: Wednesday, Aug. 26

- 12 - 1 p.m. Laboratories – Target audience: laboratory staff, lab directors, infection preventionists. Dial in Number: 877.313.6467 Participant Code: 24732341
- 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Health care professionals – Target audience: clinicians, infection preventionists, clinic staff, clinic directors, and public health professionals. Dial in Number: 877.313.6467 Participant Code: 24736628
- 3 - 4 p.m. Schools, childcare and social settings – Target audience: school nurses and administrators, childcare providers, persons supervising/coordinating social gatherings. Dial in Number: 877.313.6467 Participant Code: 24737355.

Fall Epidemiology Updates; One-day seminars given at six sites throughout Iowa. CADE staff will provide presentations on epidemiologic topics of interest. The updates are intended for local public health staff, infection preventionists, and staff from long term care facilities. The following are the dates and locations of the Fall Updates. 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

Extension Training Program for Infection Prevention Professionals: This week-long training (October 5-9, 2009) is sponsored by the Program of Hospital Epidemiology Clinical Quality, Safety and Performance Improvement at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. For complete details go to: www.uihealthcare.com/depts/cqspi/newsevents/index.html

Have a healthy and happy week!

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