

**EPI Update for Friday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

**Items for this week's EPI Update include:**

- **13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13)**
- **Are the germs you carry more personal than you think?**
- ***Alice In Wonderland's* mad hatter and work-related illness**
- ***TakeAway* – Iowa's medication disposal program**
- **New recommendations for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

**13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13)**

Recently, a 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13, Pfizer) was licensed and is recommended for use in infants and toddlers (as well as in children 60 through 71 months with underlying medical conditions that increase their risk of pneumococcal disease or complications). PCV13 is also recommended as supplemental dose for children through 59 months of age who have completed the age appropriate series of 7-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV7). Children who have started their immunization series with PCV7 should complete their series by switching to PCV13 at any point in the schedule. For more information, see [www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/immunization.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/immunization.asp) or [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5909a2.htm?s\\_cid=mm5909a2](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5909a2.htm?s_cid=mm5909a2)

**Are the germs you carry more personal than you think?**

A recent study suggests the possibility that germs carried on the hands of individuals may be useful in forensics – much like fingerprints – to determine whether or not an individual has been present at a specific location. For more details, see [www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/03/01/1000162107.abstract?sid=cdeff221-b1d2-45cc-bf0d-bd45693ef3f2](http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/03/01/1000162107.abstract?sid=cdeff221-b1d2-45cc-bf0d-bd45693ef3f2)

***Alice In Wonderland's* mad hatter and work-related illness**

What do Johnny Depp and Occupational Health and Safety have in common? Depp's portrayal of the "Mad Hatter" in the movie *Alice in Wonderland* was influenced by the symptoms and signs of mercury poisoning. British hat makers in the mid-1800's often exhibited slurred speech, tremors, irritability, shyness, depression, and other neurological symptoms; hence the expression "mad as a hatter." The symptoms were associated with chronic occupational exposure to mercury. Hatters toiled in poorly ventilated rooms, using hot solutions of mercuric nitrate to shape wool felt hats.

IDPH reminds health providers to look for potential work-related health issues in their patients and their family members by including an occupational exposure

history. And remember – mercury poisoning is a reportable condition in Iowa. For more information, contact us at 800-972-2026.

For more information on mercury poisoning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (and Johnny Depp's interview on mercury poisoning), see [www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-03-04-10.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-03-04-10.html).

### **TakeAway – Iowa's medication disposal program**

Unused and expired medications can be properly disposed of at pharmacies across Iowa through *TakeAway*, Iowa's medication disposal program. Over 330 pharmacies have *TakeAway* systems to collect unused medications. To learn more about what medications can be disposed of through *TakeAway* and to find a participating pharmacy near you, visit [www.iarx.org/takeaway](http://www.iarx.org/takeaway).

### **New recommendations for rabies postexposure prophylaxis**

New recommendations were just issued on the use of a reduced (4-dose) vaccine schedule for postexposure prophylaxis to prevent human rabies; previously a 5-dose rabies vaccination regimen was recommended for everyone (along with Rabies Immune Globulin or RIG). This new guidance reduces the number of vaccine doses to 4 in immune-competent patients (along with RIG); however, patients who are immune-compromised should continue to receive the 5-dose vaccination regimen (along with RIG). No other rabies vaccine use guidance has changed.

To review the new guidance, visit [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5902a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5902a1.htm). IDPH is in the process of updating our rabies materials and rabies webpage to reflect these changes.

### **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

The *Long Term Care Infection Prevention & Control Conference* on April 8 at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs will cover key interventions, limitations in applying hospital guidelines, and practical approaches to isolation. For more information, visit [www.goapic.org/brochures/10/10LTC.pdf](http://www.goapic.org/brochures/10/10LTC.pdf).

### **Have a healthy and happy week (and almost snow-free)!**

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
800-362-2736