

EPI Update for Friday, July 30, 2010
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Influenza activity update
- Increased potential for dengue infection in travelers returning from international and selected domestic areas
- Pesticide poisoning awareness and reporting guidelines
- Food safety brochures available
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Influenza activity update

Sporadic cases and the two small outbreaks of seasonal influenza A (H3) continue to be monitored in Iowa. Several of the ill people have connections to travel outside of Iowa; however, some do not. While some sites in the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network will not be tracking influenza until September, limited surveillance is ongoing. Nearby states including MN, AK, and WI have also reported recent influenza A (H3) activity. Continue to consider influenza in patients with febrile, respiratory illness throughout the summer.

While the current Midwest influenza A (H3) strain characterization is pending, the strain seen internationally originated in Perth, Australia in 2009. (Before 2009, the Brisbane strain of influenza A (H3) was actively circulating.) This change in the H3 antigen from the Brisbane to the Perth is significant. The last time a major change in the H3 antigen occurred was in 1997. That year, the influenza season began earlier than usual, and outbreaks were reported, particularly in long term care settings. The 2010-2011 influenza vaccine will contain the A (H3) Perth strain, as well as the 2009 H1N1 pandemic strain.

Increased potential for dengue infection in travelers returning from international and selected domestic areas

In 2010, IDPH investigated a case of dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) in an international traveler. Dengue virus transmission has been increasing to epidemic levels in many parts of the tropics and subtropics, and travelers to these areas are at risk of being infected with dengue viruses and developing dengue fever (DF) or the severe form of the disease, dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF). Because the incubation period for dengue infection ranges from three to 14 days, the patient may not present with illness until after returning from travel.

All health care providers in the United States should:

1. consider DF and DHF when evaluating patients returning from dengue-affected areas, both domestic (Florida, Puerto Rico and the SW border area) and abroad, who present with an acute febrile illness within two weeks of their return;
2. submit serum specimens for laboratory testing to UHL, and;
3. report all presumptive and confirmed cases of DF and DHF to public health.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2010/r100713.htm and www.cdc.gov/dengue/.

Pesticide poisoning awareness and reporting guidelines

Recently more than 55 people were exposed to pesticides through three separate crop dusting applications in one central Iowa county, resulting in many seeking medical care. If a pesticide exposure occurs, the person should immediately leave the area, be decontaminated, and seek medical care. Remember that any pesticide poisoning must be reported.

Public Health's Pesticide Poisoning Prevention Program has teamed with the Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center, ISPCC, to provide a one-stop shop for reporting pesticide exposures; this results in gaining useful information on the incident, type of pesticide involved in the exposure, and treatment of pesticide exposure. The IPCC must be contacted for each pesticide poisoning no matter how mild or severe the case. Call the Iowa Statewide Poison Control at 800-222-1222.

For more information on pesticide poisoning, contact the IDPH Pesticide Poisoning Surveillance Coordinator at 515-281-0908 or the national Pesticide Information Center at 800-858-7378. For more information on pesticide poisoning, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/lead_poisoning_prevention.asp#pesticide.

Food safety brochures available

With food-borne illness season in full swing, be aware that free food safety brochures entitled "Be Food Safe, 4 Easy Lessons in Safe Food Handling" are available through the State Clearinghouse, and can be ordered in volume (each case contains 1125 brochures).

You can place an order from the Clearinghouse in four ways:

1. Enter order online at: www.drugfreeinfo.org/order/
2. Call: 1-888-398-9696
3. Fax: 319-395-7797
4. E-mail: crlhouse@crlibrary.org

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

We wish everyone a healthy, cool, and flood-free week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

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