

EPI Update for Friday, October 3, 2014
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **New Ebola guidance released this week: please review**
- **Ebola identification in Texas**
- **Acute neurologic illness with focal limb weakness of unknown etiology in children**
- **Influenza season surveillance**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

New Ebola guidance released this week: please review

Healthcare providers are requested to:

1. increase their vigilance in inquiring about a history of travel to West Africa in the 21 days before illness onset for any patient presenting with fever or other symptoms consistent with Ebola;
2. isolate patients who report a travel history to an Ebola-affected country (currently Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea) and who are exhibiting Ebola symptoms in a private room with a private bathroom and implement standard, contact, and droplet precautions (gowns, facemask, eye protection, and gloves); and
3. immediately notify IDPH.
 - During business hours call (800) 362-2736
 - After hours, call (515) 323-4360 (the Iowa State Patrol will contact the person on call)

Healthcare providers should review the three new Ebola guidance documents released this week by the CDC:

- Ebola Virus Algorithm for Evaluation of the Returned Traveler, available at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ebola-algorithm.pdf.
- Checklist for Patients Being Evaluated for Ebola Virus Disease in the United States, available at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/checklist-patients-evaluated-us-evd.pdf.
- Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points for Management of Patients with Known or Suspected Ebola Virus Disease in the United States, available at www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-emergency-medical-services-systems-911-public-safety-answering-points-management-patients-known-suspected-united-states.html.

For additional resources visit: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00371.asp>.

Ebola identification in Texas

It is understandable that there is concern about the identification of an Ebola case in Texas. Healthcare providers are asked to help alleviate concern among patients by discussing the disease and its implications to the U.S. with them. Here are some facts that you can use when discussing this virus with your patients:

- Ebola is not a virus spread through the air.
- You can only get Ebola by having direct contact with bodily fluids of a sick person.
- People can only spread this illness when they are sick and actively having symptoms.
- There is a world of difference between the healthcare systems in the U.S. and the parts of Africa where Ebola is spreading.
- Our hospitals and healthcare providers handle very contagious illnesses every day.
- Our hospitals and healthcare providers are well-trained and equipped to handle any infectious disease, including Ebola.

For additional information and resources, visit www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html.

Acute neurologic illness with focal limb weakness of unknown etiology in children

CDC is working closely with public health and healthcare partners in Colorado to investigate a cluster of nine pediatric patients hospitalized with acute neurologic illness of undetermined etiology. The illness is characterized by focal limb weakness and abnormalities of the spinal cord gray matter on MRI. These illnesses have occurred since August 1, 2014 coincident with an increase of respiratory illnesses among children in Colorado.

For additional information, visit <http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00370.asp>.

Influenza season surveillance

IDPH and the State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa (SHL) perform influenza surveillance to provide situational awareness as to when and where the virus is circulating in Iowa. Specimens are also submitted to the CDC for further characterization as to genotype, looking for new/emergent strains and anti-viral resistance. This information is published in a weekly flu report available at www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx?pg=FluSurveillance.

SHL will provide influenza surveillance testing for all hospitalized patients with influenza-like illness and without other apparent cause. SHL also asks the laboratories submit rapid antigen test positive specimens until one test is confirmed by RT-PCR.

For information on specimen submission and to view the 2014-2015 testing algorithm, see www.shl.uiowa.edu/dcd/influenza/index.xml or call SHL at 319-335-4500.

We appreciate your support of the Iowa influenza Surveillance Program!

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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800-362-2736