

**EPI Update for Friday, March 20, 2015**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Ebola update**
- **Increases in ocular manifestations of syphilis**
- **Woman unharmed after strangling a rabid raccoon**
- **Measles activity update**
- **Influenza update**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

**Ebola update**

Travelers continue to arrive from the three West African countries (Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia) involved in the Ebola outbreak. Until this situation is resolved, it is recommended that appropriate health care facilities remain vigilant and screen acutely ill patients for travel within 21 days from one of the three affected countries.

There have been no cases of Ebola in Iowa. No persons in Iowa are being tested for Ebola. This week there are two travelers who are under public health orders. For more information, visit:

[www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Ebola%20Outbreak&pg=Ebola%20Outbreak%20Home](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Ebola%20Outbreak&pg=Ebola%20Outbreak%20Home).

**Increases in ocular manifestations of syphilis**

California health departments are reporting increases in ocular manifestations of syphilis; untreated syphilis can affect a variety of organ systems, including the eyes. Typically, syphilitic eye disease is associated with the later stages of syphilis and neurosyphilis but can occur at any stage of the infection (early stage eye manifestations are more common among individuals who are immunocompromised, such as those who are co-infected with HIV). Any stage of syphilis is curable with the proper antimicrobials but early treatment is important because damage done to the eye may be irreversible.

In Iowa, syphilis increased from 31 cases in 2011 to 171 cases in 2013, a 450 percent increase. Although 2014 data are not yet complete, it appears that the number of cases in will be similar to 2013. No syphilis cases in Iowa have been linked to blindness, but there are an increasing number of individuals and clinicians reporting ocular manifestations of the infection and a small but noticeable increase in syphilis diagnoses by ophthalmologists (typically in individuals referred by a primary care provider).

For screening and treatment recommendations, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/screeningrecs.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/screeningrecs.htm) or  
[www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2010/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2010/default.htm)

**Woman strangles a rabid raccoon**

In another state, a 75-year-old woman was walking through the botanical center where she volunteers and suddenly found herself face-to-face with a raccoon. It lunged at her

left leg, puncturing her skin and latching onto her pants. Having practiced and taught Tai Chi for more than 40 years, she was able to pin the animal down and strangle it (it took five minutes for the raccoon to stop moving).

She then ran for help and was taken to the hospital. The raccoon was collected and tested positive for rabies. The woman has started rabies post exposure prophylaxis, but regretted the situation. "I knew I was killing an animal, and I am an animal lover," the woman said. "It was horrible, but it had to be done."

For information on rabies, visit, [www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx).

### **Measles activity update**

Over 60 situations of possible measles or measles exposures have been investigated in Iowa, with no cases of measles being confirmed. IDPH continues to consult with healthcare providers on patients with fever and rashes.

If you suspect your patient has measles, isolate the patient and contact IDPH immediately. During business hours, call 800-362-2736. After business hours, call the Iowa State Patrol at 515-323-4360, which will then contact the epidemiologist on-call. For more information on measles, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Measles%20Outbreak&pg=Measles%20Outbreak%20Home](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Measles%20Outbreak&pg=Measles%20Outbreak%20Home) .

### **Influenza update**

Iowa influenza activity remains at regional level and with influenza B predominating, but cases continue to decrease. For more information on influenza, visit, [www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx).

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

**39<sup>th</sup> Annual Iowa Infection Prevention and Control Seminar**, May 5-6, 2015, Des Moines. Featured speakers include Phil Smith, MD, *Inside the UNMC Omaha Bio-containment Center*; Jennifer Kuntz, Ph.D., *Clostridium difficile*; Edward Septimus, MD, *Universal Decolonization*; Mike Hartley, *The New Face of Emergency Management* and Chris Crnich, MD, *Long Term Care*. More information available at: Conference questions: Martha Freeman 319 356-1742 or [martha-freeman@uiowa.edu](mailto:martha-freeman@uiowa.edu), and registration questions at the UI Center for Conferences at 1.800.551.9029 or email [conferences@uiowa.edu](mailto:conferences@uiowa.edu).

### **Have a healthy and happy week (with the grass beginning to green up)!**

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