

EPI Update for Friday, August 7, 2015
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza is currently in Iowa and causing outbreaks**
- **First West Nile virus case confirmed**
- **Free materials on WNV, Lyme, other tick-borne diseases**
- **Environmental and health data tracking web portal**
- **Prevent antibiotic resistant germs**

Influenza is currently in Iowa and causing outbreaks

Outbreaks of influenza can occur any time of year, especially in vulnerable populations. Recently, IDPH and a county health department investigated an outbreak of influenza A (H3) at a long term care (LTC) facility. The outbreak was quickly contained by good control measures that were implemented immediately.

During the 2014-2015 surveillance season, 61 influenza outbreaks in LTC facilities were reported. IDPH encourages submission of specimens from anyone with influenza-like illness (ILI) at any time of year. These specimens are critical to determine the strain(s) of influenza viruses circulating in Iowa. For more information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Influenza.aspx.

First 2015 West Nile virus case confirmed

Iowa's first 2015 human case of West Nile virus (WNV) has been confirmed in an adult female in Ringgold County. She is recovering. WNV is transmitted by mosquitoes, and can cause serious illness in humans and animals. There is no medicine to treat or vaccine to prevent WNV. The best way to prevent the virus is to eliminate mosquito breeding areas such as standing water, and to reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes. This is best done by wearing mosquito repellent containing DEET, permethrin, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, especially during peak biting hours from dusk to dawn. Special precautions should be considered when using insect repellents on children.

For more information about WNV and ways to prevent mosquito bites, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/DiseaseIndex.aspx?disease=West Nile Virus](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/DiseaseIndex.aspx?disease=West+Nile+Virus)

Free materials on WNV, Lyme, other tick-borne diseases

Free educational materials on WNV, Lyme and other tick-borne diseases can be ordered in bulk from the clearinghouse. To order these materials, visit healthclearhouse.drugfreeinfo.org/cart.php?target=category&category_id=295.

Environmental and health data tracking web portal

Iowa Public Health Tracking (IPHT) is a CDC-sponsored web-based portal that tracks key environmental hazards and health problems. IPHT gives access to both environmental and health outcome data simultaneously:

- Childhood lead: annual, 3 year-old cohort and 6 year-old cohort data
- Reproductive outcomes: infant mortality, preterm and low birth weights data
- Demographics: race, ethnicity, age and gender data
- County health snapshots: 84 measures of health by topic area
- Top cause report: top causes of death, hospitalizations, emergency visits
- At-a-Glance reports: quick visual summary related to births, deaths, inpatient hospitalizations and emergency department visits
- Oral health: hospitalizations and emergency department visits

To access the Iowa Public Health Tracking portal, visit <https://pht.idph.state.ia.us>. To access the CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program, visit www.cdc.gov/ephrtracking.

Prevent antibiotic resistant germs

According to CDC's *Vital Signs*, actions can be taken to prevent bacteria from becoming resistant – by reducing inappropriately prescribed antibiotics and increasing infection control measures. According to the CDC:

- Antibiotic resistant bacteria cause more than two million illnesses and at least 23,000 deaths each year in the U.S.
- Infections and antibiotic use in one facility impacts other facilities because of patient transfers. Alert receiving facilities when transferring patients who have drug resistant germs.
- Prescribe antibiotics properly. Use the right drug at the right dose. Know when to stop use of antibiotics.
- Ask patients if they have recently received care in another facility.
- Public health leadership is critical.

To access this *Vital Signs* article, visit www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/stop-spread/index.html.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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