

Epi Update for Friday, November 18, 2016 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza update**
- **Zika virus and sexual transmission**
- **Thanksgiving food safety tips**
- **Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update**
- **Public Health in the news: Squirrels in Britain found to have leprosy**
- **Infographic: Let's Talk Turkey**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Influenza update

So far this influenza season has been mild, but that does not mean influenza is not currently affecting Iowans. Since the start of the influenza season there have been eight laboratory confirmed cases of influenza in Iowa. The most common type of influenza currently circulating in Iowa and across the nation is influenza A (H3). Sentinel hospital surveillance sites have reported 11 hospitalizations due to influenza; five of the 11 were in persons aged 65 or older. No Iowa deaths due to influenza have been reported.

The rate of influenza-like illness (ILI) in Iowa, measured as a marker of influenza activity, has remained well below the regional baseline of 1.8 percent (the rate has been less than 0.5 percent). According to the CDC, the current vaccine for influenza has been shown to match the influenza A (H1N1pdm09), and both influenza B (Yamagata and Victoria) strains currently in circulation, as well as around 85 percent of the influenza A (H3) strains.

Zika virus and sexual transmission

Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. These mosquitoes are present in many tropical and subtropical environments. Since these mosquitoes are not established in Iowa, the risk to Iowans for transmission by mosquitoes occurs when they travel to Zika-affected areas. It is important for travelers returning to Iowa to be aware Zika virus can be passed through sex from a person who has Zika virus to his or her sexual partners.

It is especially important for pregnant women to understand sexual transmission risks. For pregnant couples, in which one or both partners traveled to (or live in) an area with Zika, the couple should use condoms from start to finish every time they have sex, or not have sex during the pregnancy. This is important, even if the pregnant woman's partner does not have symptoms of Zika or feel sick. For more information about sexual transmission of Zika virus, visit www.cdc.gov/zika/transmission/sexual-transmission.html.

All pregnant women (regardless of symptoms) with a history of travel or sexual exposure and any other person with symptoms and a history of travel or sexual exposure can be tested (for no charge) at the State Hygienic Laboratory. Health care providers should contact the Iowa Department of Public Health's Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology at 800-362-2736 to ensure the patient meets the testing criteria, and get instructions on sample collection and submission. For more information about Zika virus in Iowa, visit idph.iowa.gov/ehi/zika.

Thanksgiving food safety tips

Foodborne illness affects 48 million Americans each year and causes 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Please remind patients to stay healthy this holiday season by following these food safety tips.

When preparing a turkey, be aware of four main safety issues:

- 1) **Thawing:** There are three safe ways to thaw a turkey - in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in a microwave oven.

Refrigerator:

- Plan ahead: allow approximately 24 hours for every 5 pounds in a refrigerator set at 40°F or below.
- Place the turkey in a container to prevent the juices from dripping on other foods.
- A thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for one or two days before cooking.

Cold water thawing:

- Allow about 30 minutes per pound.
- Be sure the turkey is in a leak-proof plastic bag to prevent cross-contamination and to prevent the turkey from absorbing water, resulting in a watery product.
- Submerge the wrapped turkey in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes until the turkey is thawed. Cook the turkey immediately after it is thawed.

Microwave:

- Follow the microwave oven manufacturer's instructions when defrosting a turkey. Plan to cook it immediately after thawing because some areas of the food may become warm and begin to cook during microwaving.

- 2) **Preparing:** After working with raw poultry, always wash your hands, utensils, and work surfaces before they touch other foods.

- **Stuffing:** For optimal safety, cook the stuffing outside the turkey in a casserole dish; however, if you place stuffing inside the turkey, do so just before cooking and use a food thermometer. Make sure the center of the stuffing reaches a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

- 3) **Cooking:** Set the oven temperature no lower than 325°F and be sure the turkey is completely thawed. Place turkey breast-side up on a flat wire rack in a shallow roasting pan 2 to 2-1/2 inches deep. Check the internal temperature at the center of the stuffing and meaty portion of the breast, thigh, and wing joint using a food thermometer. Cooking times will vary. The food thermometer must reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Let the turkey stand 20 minutes before removing all stuffing from the cavity and carving the meat.

- 4) **Storing:** Remember to refrigerate food promptly after the meal. Discard any food left out more than two hours. Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water when preparing food and serving. Always wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next. Lastly, you should not prepare or touch food meant for others if you are ill.

If you suspect food poisoning after consuming an item from a restaurant, grocery store, convenience store, market or public gathering, call IDPH's IowaSic hotline at 1-844-469-2742. For additional information on safe holiday turkey preparation, visit www.cdc.gov/features/TurkeyTime/.

Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update

The new issue of the Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update is available on our website. Visit idph.iowa.gov/CADE and scroll down to 'Reports' or access the report directly at idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/79/Reports/Misc/Monthly%20Report/IADMU%20Nov%202016.pdf.

In the southern United States some armadillos are infected with leprosy. Recently, a study has found that some British red squirrels carry leprosy as well. For more information, visit mobile.nytimes.com/2016/11/15/health/squirrels-leprosy.html.

Infographic: Let's Talk Turkey

LET'S TALK TURKEY

Unsafe handling and under-cooking your holiday bird can cause foodborne illnesses. Here are a few tips from the USDA to keep your Thanksgiving safe and delicious!

Types of turkeys regulated by the USDA: NATURAL, NOSEEN, FRESH RANGE, ORGANIC, FRESH, FROZEN

3 WAYS TO THAW

While frozen, a turkey is safe indefinitely. As soon as it begins to thaw, bacteria that may have been present before freezing will begin to grow again. Here are three ways to safely thaw your bird:

- Refrigerator:** Safe to store the turkey for another 1 - 2 days in the refrigerator. This is the USDA recommended thawing method. How to thaw: Allow approximately 24 hrs. for every 4-lbs. of bird.
- Cold water:** Cook immediately after thawing. How to thaw: Submerge the bird in cold water & change every 30 mins.
- Microwave:** Cook immediately after thawing. How to thaw: Use the defrost function based on weight.

For more information on safe thawing methods, visit fsis.usda.gov

DID YOU KNOW? It's safe to cook a frozen turkey through cooking time will be 50% longer!

Clean

Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water. Sanitize Plates, Countertops, Cutting boards. SHOULD ALSO BE WASHED. Bacteria, which can be present inside and outside a turkey, can't be washed off the bird! Cooking is the only way to destroy this potentially dangerous bacteria.

SEPARATE

Separate raw turkey from fresh food, and use separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils. Keep dishes that touch raw food separate, too! Wash items that touch raw meat with soap and warm water.

COOK

Your bird is not safe until it reaches 165 °F — you cannot tell by the color. Remember to ensure any stuffing cooked with the bird reaches 165 °F, too! Use three places to check the temperature: Thickest part of breast, Innermost part of wing, Innermost part of thigh. When turkey is removed from the oven, let it stand 30 minutes before carving to allow juices to settle.

CHILL

Take your time around the dinner table, but refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours!

Safe in fridge: 3-4 days. Safe frozen: Use within 3-6 months for best quality. Leftover turkey should be cut into smaller pieces, and store some separately in smaller containers. Reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165 °F. Remember, bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses can't be smelled or tasted!

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Visit foodsafety.gov. If you have a specific question, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHOTLINE or visit AskKaren.gov. Visit PreguntasEnEspañol.gov for questions in Spanish.

USDA, Ad Council

Infographic available at www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/thanksgiving/.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities
None

There will be no Epi Update next week because of the Thanksgiving holiday; the next edition will be published December 2.

Have a healthy and happy (and much colder) week!
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health
800-362-2736