

EPI Update for Friday, February 3, 2017

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Influenza activity (including flu-related deaths) on the rise in Iowa
- Public health investigated 40 outbreaks in January 2017
- New Environmental Health Division Director at SHL
- In the news: Lychee cause of mysterious disease that plagued Indian town
- Infographic: The benefits of flu vaccination
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Influenza activity (including flu-related deaths) on the rise in Iowa

Influenza-related outbreaks, deaths and surveillance data all indicate that influenza activity is continuing to increase in Iowa. To date, 25 influenza-associated deaths have been reported (all but one person had underlying conditions or contributing factors). Please remind patients that it is not too late to get vaccinated against influenza. If patients are ill, they should stay home until 24 hours after their fever resolves (without the use of fever reducing medications).

To see the weekly influenza surveillance report, visit <http://idph.iowa.gov/influenza/reports>.

Public health investigated 40 outbreaks in January 2017

Since January 1, 2017, local public health departments across Iowa and the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) have investigated 40 outbreaks in 23 Iowa counties. Twenty-one of these outbreaks were due to gastrointestinal illnesses, 17 respiratory, and two were rash-related.

If you suspect an outbreak, please call CADE at 1-800-362-2736.

New Environmental Health division director at the State Hygienic Laboratory

The State Hygienic Laboratory would like to introduce Dr. Susie Dai, PhD as the new Environmental Health division director. Dr. Dai will lead programs that monitor and analyze environmental contaminants in drinking water, ground water, soil, food and other sources.

Dr. Dai previously served as a research associate professor for the Office of the Texas State Chemist with a joint appointment to the Texas A&M University Department of Veterinary Pathobiology in the Veterinary School. Her background focused in field application of measurement science, regulatory science, biomonitoring, biotechnologies, quality control and quality assurance, and risk assessment. She has developed and implemented risk management models while maintaining research programs and academic appointments.

Dr. Dai earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry at Fudan University in Shanghai, China, and then entered the Duke University doctoral program, where she earned her Ph.D. in chemistry with additional education in biomedical engineering and regulatory science.

Welcome, Dr. Dai!

In the news: Litchi cause of mysterious disease that plagued Indian town

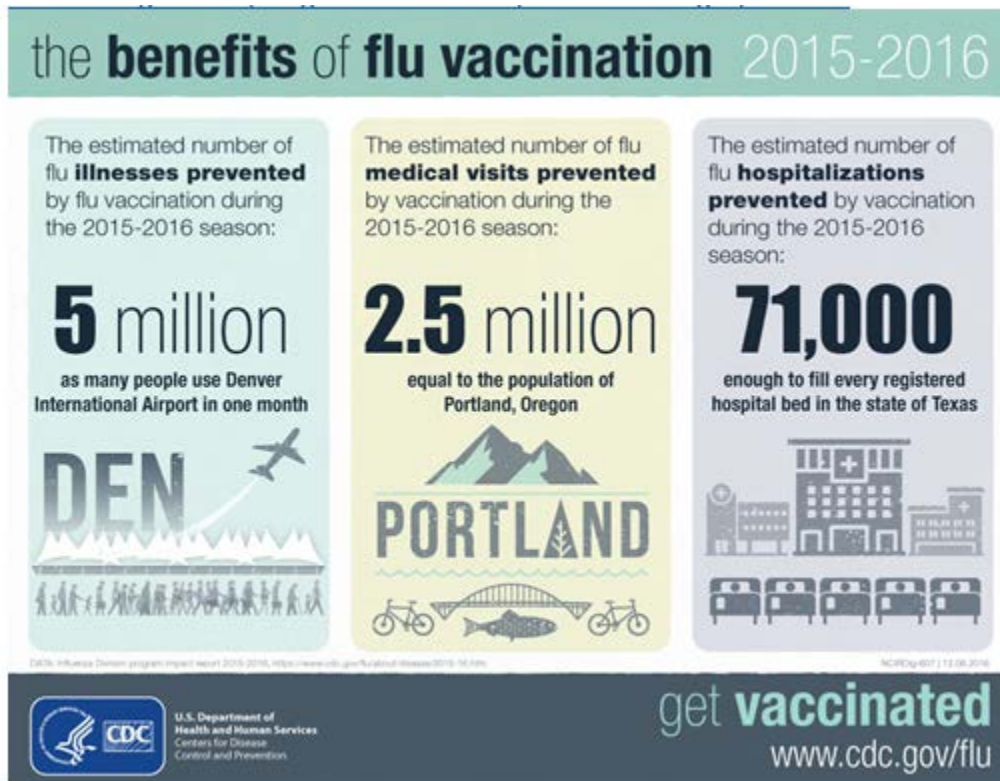
Outbreaks of an unexplained acute neurologic illness affecting young children and associated with high case-fatality rates have been reported in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar state in India since 1995. The outbreaks generally peak in June and decline weeks later with the onset of monsoon rains. There have been multiple epidemiologic and laboratory investigations of this syndrome, leading to a wide spectrum of proposed causes for the illness, including infectious encephalitis and exposure to pesticides. An association between illness and litchi fruit had been postulated because Muzaffarpur is a litchi fruit producing region, but has not been corroborated until now. A new report published in The Lancet Global Health medical journal identifies the litchi fruit as a contributing factor.

For more information,

visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6403.pdf and <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/01/health/lychee-fatal-illness-india/>.

Infographic: The benefits of flu vaccination

www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/flu-vaccine-protected-infographic.htm



Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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800-362-2736