

EPI Update for Friday, February 2, 2018
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Updated shingles vaccine recommendations**
- **When are deaths considered influenza-associated?**
- **Several norovirus outbreaks reported in Iowa**
- **In the news: How feeding prairie dogs peanut butter could help save ferrets from the plague**
- **In the news: What we can learn 100 years later from the 1918 flu pandemic**
- **Infographic: Rules of the game for food safety**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Updated shingles vaccine recommendations

Shingles (herpes zoster) is a painful, localized skin rash resulting from reactivation of latent chickenpox (varicella zoster) virus. Approximately one million shingles cases occur in the U.S. annually, and incidence increases with age.

In 2008, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended Zoster Vaccine Live (ZVL), Zostavax, for adults over 60 years old. In 2017, a Recombinant Zoster Vaccine (RZV), Shingrix, was approved by the FDA. Studies have shown ZVL effectiveness wanes substantially over time, leaving recipients with reduced protection. However, studies on RZV have demonstrated high efficacy among adults over 50 years old and modest waning of protection in the years following vaccination.

Based on these findings, ACIP has stated the following:

- **Recombinant Zoster Vaccine (RZV) is recommended for the prevention of herpes zoster and related complications for immunocompetent adults over 50 years old.**
- **RZV is recommended for the prevention of herpes zoster and related complications for immunocompetent adults who previously received Zoster Vaccine Live (ZVL).**
- **RZV is preferred over ZVL for the prevention of herpes zoster and related complications.**

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6703a5.htm.

When are deaths considered influenza-associated?

Each week during the influenza season, IDPH reports the cumulative number of influenza-associated deaths in Iowa based on death certificates flagged by IDPH's Bureau of Health Statistics. IDPH counts deaths as influenza-associated if influenza is listed on the death certificate as the immediate cause, an underlying cause, or a significant contributing factor of death.

How IDPH reports influenza-associated deaths depends on the information included on the death certificate. For example, the type of influenza is occasionally reported, but may not be verified. Vaccine status is not reported by IDPH, even if included on the death certificate. There may be a delay of weeks or months between time of death and filing of death certificates. Therefore, changes in the cumulative number of influenza-associated deaths reported in the IDPH surveillance report each week will not necessarily include all influenza-associated deaths that occurred during that reporting week.

Iowa has reported 77 influenza-associated deaths since October 1, 2017, which is an underestimate for several reasons. In Iowa, only influenza-associated pediatric deaths are required to be reported, as they are nationally reportable and prompt an investigation coordinated by IDPH. However, influenza-associated adult deaths are not reportable in Iowa. Adult deaths will not be counted as influenza-related if the patient is not diagnosed with influenza or the death certificate does not mention influenza as a cause or contributing factor.

Several norovirus outbreaks reported in Iowa

While norovirus activity occurs year-round, it is traditionally higher in winter. Symptoms of norovirus include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and low-grade fever. Symptoms usually last for about two days and individuals generally recover completely with no long-term health effects.

Norovirus is highly infectious. Those with symptoms of norovirus should stay home from school, daycare, work or other events while ill. They also should not handle food items for others for 48 hours after symptoms have resolved, regardless of how well they wash their hands.

For more information on norovirus, visit www.idph.iowa.gov/cade/disease-information/norovirus.

In the news: How feeding prairie dogs peanut butter could help save ferrets from the plague

www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/how-feeding-prairie-dogs-peanut-butter-could-help-stop-plague-and-save-ferrets-180955937/

In the news: What we can learn 100 years later from the 1918 flu pandemic

www.cnn.com/2018/01/29/health/1918-flu-history-partner/index.html

Infographic: Rules of the game for food safety



To view in full size, visit

www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/pdfs/rules-of-the-game-infographic-508c.pdf.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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