

EPI Update for Friday January 7, 2005  
Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology  
Iowa Department of Public Health

*Items for this week's EPI Update include:*

- **Influenza Update**
- **Food Safety New Year's Resolutions**
- **Strive for Five in 2005**
- **Winter Travel Tips**
- **The Epi 5**

**Influenza Update:**

Influenza activity in Iowa continues to increase. For the week ending January 1, 2005 regional influenza activity was reported for Iowa. Both Influenza A (H3N2) and Influenza B strains have been confirmed by the University Hygienic Laboratory. Although influenza is not a reportable disease in the state of Iowa, the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology welcomes voluntary reports of influenza rapid test positives from health-care providers around the state. This helps us to determine influenza activity levels (we only want a provider to report county of residence of the case, not patient identifiers.) To report a rapid test positive, call the disease reporting hotline at (800) 362-2736, select option 2, and leave a message on the number of positive tests, whether they are positive for A or B, and county of residence of the cases.

**Food Safety New Year's Resolutions:**

Did you know that approximately 76 million people in the United States contract foodborne and other acute diarrheal illnesses each year? The good news is that since 1996, the overall occurrence of foodborne illness from several types of bacteria has decreased (*Campylobacter*, *Cryptosporidium parvum*, *Escherichia coli* O157, *Salmonella*, and *Yersinia enterocolitica*). The bad news is that foodborne illness in infants and children continues to be of great concern, especially illness caused by *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157.

The Iowa Dept. of Public Health, Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology would like to encourage everyone to put food safety at the top of his or her 2005 New Year's resolutions' list. On Dec. 27, 2004, USDA-FSIS published 12 food-safety resolutions, some of which are quite humorous, but all of which are very important:

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News & Events/NR\\_122704\\_01/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_122704_01/index.asp)

**Strive for Five in 2005:**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have estimated that soon overweight and obese-related diseases could supplant tobacco use as the number one cause of death in America. Overweight and obesity costs our country an estimated \$117

billion annually. From any number of diseases related to these factors, from lost production time, to increased insurance costs, to medical bills, and more, Americans will be facing disaster in our health care system soon if something positive isn't done. The most logical thing is for those who are carrying extra weight and/or who are living sedentary lifestyles, to take charge of their own lives.

This week the Iowa Dept. of Public Health along with its partners the Iowa State University Extension, and Iowa Games unveiled this year's Lighten Up Iowa campaign. This year's competition will begin on Jan. 19 and it is a five-month program that encourages Iowans to make a lifestyle change by adopting a healthy diet and increasing their physical activity. Teams will receive a training T-shirt and weekly nutrition and activity tips via e-mail. In 2005 there will be a "Strive For Five" theme promoting the national 5-A-Day fruit and vegetable effort and the recommendation for physical activity at least 30 minutes at least 5 days a week. This emphasis on the number 5 will also touch on the importance of 5 other numbers...

Participant's cholesterol (HDL)

Participant's cholesterol (LDL)

Participant's blood pressure.

Participant's resting heart rate.

Participant's recommended weight.

Visit <http://www.lightenupiowa.org/> or call 888.777.8881 to learn more about Lighten Up Iowa.

### **Winter Travel Tips:**

The latest foot of snow and miserable travel conditions this past week, prompted us to provide some travel safety tips from the CDC:

- Listen for radio or television reports of travel advisories issued by the National Weather Service.
- Do not travel in low visibility conditions.
- Avoid traveling on ice-covered roads, overpasses, and bridges if at all possible.
- If you must travel by car, use winter tires or tire chains and take a mobile phone with you.
- If you must travel, let someone know your destination and when you expect to arrive. Ask them to notify authorities if you are late.
- Check and restock the winter emergency supplies in your car before you leave.
- Never pour water on your windshield to remove ice or snow; shattering may occur.
- Don't rely on a car to provide sufficient heat; the car may break down.
- Always carry additional warm clothing and footwear appropriate for the winter conditions.

Staying in your vehicle when stranded is often the safest choice if winter storms create poor visibility or if roadways are ice covered. These steps will increase your safety when stranded:

- Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna as a signal to rescuers and raise the hood of the car (if it is not snowing).
- Move anything you need from the trunk into the passenger area.
- Wrap your entire body, including your head, in extra clothing, blankets, or newspapers.
- Stay awake. You will be less vulnerable to cold-related health problems. Run the motor (and heater) for about 10 minutes per hour, opening one window slightly to let in air. Make sure that snow is not blocking the exhaust pipe-this will reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
  - As you sit, keep moving your arms and legs to improve your circulation and stay warmer.
  - Do not eat unmelted snow because it will lower your body temperature.
  - Huddle with other people for warmth.

### **The Epi 5:**

For those of you who enjoy trivia, here are a few basic questions on epidemiology and it's history.

1. Who is considered the father of modern epidemiology?
2. What criteria were used to develop the CDC's category "A" diseases/agents list?
3. What is the difference between the terms infectious and communicable?
4. What is primary prevention?
5. What observation lead to the development of the first smallpox vaccine?

**Answers will be posted in next week's Friday Update**

### **Meeting Announcement and Training Opportunities**

No announcements this week.

**Have a healthy and happy week. Drive safely if you have to travel.**

**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology**

**Iowa Department of Public Health**

**800-362-2736**