

EPI Update for Friday, September 2, 2005

Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **National Food Safety Education MonthSM**
- **Influenza Vaccine Supply and Recommendations Released from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
- **FDA Approval of FluarixTM**
- **Favorable Letter Post-Inspection of Chiron Facility**
- **Hurricane Katrina: Public Health Concerns**
- **Meeting Announcement and Training Opportunities**

National Food Safety Education MonthSM

September marks the eleventh annual National Food Safety Education MonthSM. The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's (NRAEF) International Food Safety Council (IFSC) organizes the month long event to focus attention on the importance of food safety. This year's theme is "Keep Hands Clean with Good Hygiene." A variety of training activities and promotional materials are available at the NRAEF Web site to aid in reinforcing proper hand and personal hygiene. Iowa State University Extension's Food Safety Web site can provide additional information to help keep your friends and family safe this Labor Day weekend.

NRAEF website: <http://www.nraef.org/nfsem/default.asp>

ISU extension website: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety/>

Public Health Application Ideas: Coordinate promotion of food safety education month within the community. Provide access to or distribute materials to appropriate audiences: school nurses for use in the classroom, restaurant operators, grocers, etc. Identify and communicate food safety education opportunities in the community.

Influenza Vaccine Supply and Recommendations Released from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Given the uncertainty in flu vaccine supply, the CDC has developed recommendations for prioritization of flu vaccine distribution have been developed and implemented. The three vaccine producers currently approved by the FDA to distribute trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV) or live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) are Sanofi Pasteur, MedImmune and, recently, GlaxoSmithKline (see article below). The estimated total number of doses available from all three manufacturers is 61 million. The CDC expects

that 18-26 million doses will be available from Chiron (see article below); however, additional steps must be taken before final approval will be granted.

The recommendations for priority TIV use until October 24, 2005 are as follows:

- persons aged ≥ 65 years with comorbid conditions
- residents of long-term-care facilities
- persons aged 2--64 years with comorbid conditions
- persons aged ≥ 65 years without comorbid conditions
- children aged 6--23 months
- pregnant women
- health-care personnel who provide direct patient care
- household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children aged < 6 months

These groups correspond to tiers 1A--1C in the table of TIV priority groups that was published previously in the event of vaccination supply disruption. Beginning October 24, 2005, all persons will be eligible for vaccination.

Prioritization is NOT being recommended for use of LAIV. LAIV may be used for vaccination of nonpregnant, healthy, 5-49 year-olds, including most health-care personnel, other persons in close contact with groups at high risk for influenza complications and any one else desiring protection against influenza.

To view the MMWR announcement, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5434a4.htm>

For a description of the most recent priority group tiers, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5430a4.htm>

FDA Approval of Fluarix™

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the approval of Fluarix™, a vaccine for adults containing inactivated A and B flu virus. The vaccine is approved for use in adults 18 and older. The approval of this vaccine adds an estimated 8 million doses to the 53 million doses already available from Sanofi Pasteur and MedImmune. Fluarix™ is manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline.

To view the announcement from FDA, visit:

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/news/2005/NEW01227.html>

Favorable Letter Post-Inspection of Chiron Facility

In a separate announcement, the FDA released a statement on the inspection of Chiron vaccine manufacturing facility in England. Chiron manufactures the FLUVIRIN™ vaccine, previously approved for individuals ages 4 and above. Estimates of the amount of vaccine Chiron may provide if approved by FDA range between 18 and 26 million doses.

Before the vaccine is supplied for use in the U.S., Chiron must receive supplemental approvals from the FDA. Chiron's ability to deliver FLUVIRIN™ in time for this flu season will also depend on successful production and final testing of the vaccine. Potential vaccine delays are unknown at this time. To view the press release from the Chiron Corporation, visit:

<http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=105850&p=irol.newsArticle&ID=750989&highlight>
<<http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=105850&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=750989&highlight>>

Hurricane Katrina: Public Health Concerns

As members of the state public health response teams prepare to depart for Louisiana to assist with Hurricane Katrina response efforts, a review of some of the public health hazards facing them is warranted.

Water Quality:

Flooding raises concerns about the integrity of the drinking water supply and wastewater treatment facilities. As individuals consume or come in contact with chemicals and human waste that have mixed with floodwaters, gastrointestinal illnesses, skin conditions, allergies, and other health conditions may arise. Access to adequate safe drinking water minimizes the risk for conditions such as dehydration, and allows for proper personal hygiene, including handwashing when preparing foods. If there is no clean water for handwashing, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can provide some protection and should be used when available.

Safe Food:

Mass power outages throughout the affected area prevent proper temperature maintenance of foods that generally require refrigeration or cooking (such as meats, eggs, and milk). When these foods are held in the temperature danger zone (41°-140°F) for extended periods of time, like during a lengthy power outage, the potential for rapid bacterial growth and spoilage makes them unsafe for consumption.

Safe Air:

During power-outages, individuals that have generators may use them to provide electricity to homes or other structures. These generators must be used properly to prevent exhaust fumes from entering an enclosed structure. During the hurricanes in Florida in 2004, a number of deaths occurred from carbon monoxide poisoning due to improper generator use. Generators must be used ONLY in well-ventilated areas. They should not be used inside the home, basement or garage, or near a window, door, or vent.

Mold

A long-term air quality concern is mold that grows in structures following flooding. While proper flood clean-up methods may reduce the potential for mold growth, its full impact may not be realized for a long time.

Vector and Pest Control:

Natural disasters often result in an increase in vector or nuisance species, usually insects or rodents. Flooding creates stagnant water that provides breeding grounds for mosquitoes. While not an immediate threat, within a few weeks significant increases in mosquitoes are often noted. Rats and other rodents are often forced out of their usual habitats and are more likely to come into contact with humans. These and other vectors can present a range of risks from fever and skin irritations to West Nile virus and salmonellosis, to name a few.

Animals:

Just like people, animals are displaced in disasters. These animals may be family pets whose owners are not able to care for them and wild animals whose habitats have been flooded or destroyed. Contact with stray animals should be avoided. If possible, authorities should be notified, especially if an animal appears aggressive or is acting in a threatening manner. Anyone bitten by an animal should contact a health care provider or public health, since it is possible that rabies prophylaxis will be needed.

Shelter needs:

Displaced persons must be given special consideration when being placed in emergency shelters. The need for adequate space, general sanitation, safe water, wastewater and solid waste disposal, safe food, and adequate amounts of fresh air must all be considered when emergency shelters are provided. Without these assurances the risk for disease/illness increases.

Application in Iowa

While the likelihood of a hurricane occurring in Iowa is virtually non-existent, the types of public health hazards facing those responding are very similar to those that may be encountered in Iowa. Many significant lessons can be learned from this disaster. First, epidemiology and environmental public health are linked. As with hurricane Katrina, the response to many of the public health threats arising from a natural disaster Iowans may face necessitates a public health system that involves both environmental health and disease surveillance and prevention. Epidemiology provides information gathered from past experience to help determine what types of threats may arise from the natural disaster. Surveillance efforts can then be modified or enhanced to ensure that measures are in place to capture cases of illness. In many instances, this information is used to determine the effectiveness of the environmental public health mitigation and recovery efforts. Ensuring safe air, food, water, and the appropriate removal or disposal of solid and liquid wastes becomes the focus of public health prevention efforts.

Second, public health response planning needs to involve all disciplines within public health. Granted, having a written plan forces one to think through how one might respond, but an additional benefit of planning lies in the collaboration and relationships that develop as a part of the process of determining how we as a public health community will respond. As both state and local agencies begin to determine equipment or training needs essential to public health response in Iowa, we must think to involve all disciplines within public health.

Meeting Announcement and Training Opportunities

The brochure for the fall *Epidemiology Updates* is now online at the Iowa Department of Public Health's Web site:

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/common/pdf/conferences/disease_prevention_fall.pdf

Have a healthy and happy week!
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