

EPI Update for Friday January 6, 2006

Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

Items for this week's EPI update

- Influenza update
- Using Rapid Influenza Tests as confirmation of influenza infection
- 2005 Iowa rabies summary
- Pursuing the ultimate hand washing jingle...
- It's time to Lighten Up, Iowa!
- Meetings and announcements

Influenza update

Seasonal influenza: Iowa and the United States

Iowa is experiencing regional levels of influenza activity. This means that we are seeing confirmed positives in nearly every region of the state and that we are also seeing an increase in influenza-like illness. Both type A and B strains are being identified and all have matched the strains covered by this year's vaccine. School, child care, long term care data and mortality data are not available for this past week due to the holiday break. For more information on the IISN or to view our activity map, visit our Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp <<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp>>

Avian influenza

Please check the CDC travel advisory page before traveling to areas with avian influenza activity. The Web site address is www.cdc.gov/travel/outbreaks.htm <<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/outbreaks.htm>>.

On Jan. 5 Turkey confirmed its first two human cases of H5N1 avian influenza. Both cases were fatal. These two cases of avian influenza in humans are the first to be identified outside East Asia. The first case was a 14-year-old boy from the Dogubayazit district. He was hospitalized on Jan. 1 and died that same day. The second case was the boy's 15-year-old sister who was also hospitalized on Jan. 1. She died on Jan. 5. Initial investigation of these cases indicates the individuals had very close contact with ill and dying poultry. Other family members and close contacts of these cases are undergoing medical evaluation and observation. The Dogubayazit district has been placed under quarantine and culling of poultry has been instituted.

This brings the number of WHO confirmed human cases of H5N1 avian influenza to 144, which includes 76 deaths. For the most up-to-date information on H5N1 avian influenza,

visit WHO's Web site at www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/
<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/>

Pandemic influenza planning efforts

Planning activities continue to progress. Please continue to check the pandemic influenza Web pages for updated information at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp
<<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp>>.

Using Rapid Influenza Tests as confirmation of influenza infection

We have reached the point in the influenza season where rapid influenza tests will accurately determine whether a patient has influenza A. Rapid tests should not yet be used to diagnose influenza B.

The positive predictive value of these tests is highest when there is consistent influenza activity throughout the state. Iowa now has confirmed consistent activity for influenza A. This means that rapid tests results for influenza A can be used without sending in specimens to UHL for confirmation. However, we have not recorded enough cases of influenza B to know that the rapid tests will be accurate. We will keep you updated as to when our activity levels change.

If a patient has symptoms of influenza-like illness and the rapid test is negative, a specimen should be submitted to UHL for additional viral testing.

2005 Iowa rabies summary

A total of 108 cases of animal rabies were reported in Iowa during 2005. Among them, **93 (86 percent) were wildlife species and included 60 bats and 33 skunks.** The remaining 15 positive animals (14 percent) were various domestic animal species and included five cats, one horse, two dogs and seven bovines (cattle).

The clinical signs of rabies may be exhibited in two different "forms." One form is the "furious" or aggressive form. With this form, the animal becomes restless, excitable, aggressive, and often will attack. In the United States, the "furious" form occurs most often in cats and horses. Due to the widespread use of rabies immunization in dogs and effective animal control measures since the 1950's, the canine strain of rabies has been eradicated from the United States. As a result, the furious form of rabies is now rare in dogs in the United States. However, the furious form is still the most common form in dogs (canines) worldwide where the canine strain of rabies is still prevalent. (This was the type portrayed in the movie "Old Yeller.")

The other form of rabies is the "dumb" or paralytic form. The animal will become extremely mentally depressed, experience paralysis of the jaw and throat muscles, and typically cannot eat or bite. This form typically occurs in livestock (cattle, sheep, goats), and is now the common form seen in dogs in the United States.

All five cats reported in 2005 exhibited the "furious form" of rabies. They had **not been vaccinated**, and were from outdoor, rural / farm environments. The one horse, two dogs,

and seven bovines all exhibited the “dumb” form of rabies. They had **not been vaccinated**, and also from outdoor, rural / farm environments.

It is very important for all Iowans who own livestock and domestic animals to have their animals properly immunized against rabies and keep their animals’ rabies immunization current. Owners should consult with their veterinarian for a rabies immunization and / or booster if their livestock or domestic animals are exposed to wildlife such as skunks or bats. The occurrence of rabies in domestic animals that are properly immunized is rare. As a result, immunizing domestic animals against rabies reduces human exposure to the virus.

Pursuing the ultimate hand washing jingle...

Do you think washing your hands during the time you sing the song Happy Birthday ensures they are clean? Think again. Twice is right. You can also sing the ABC song. Either equals approximately 15 seconds.

It’s time to Lighten Up, Iowa!

Feel like those holiday goodies have parked around your waist? It’s time to Lighten Up, Iowa! Lighten Up Iowa (LUI) is a team-based program designed to help Iowans make positive changes during the course of five months to help them move towards a healthier lifestyle. Lighten Up Iowa will encourage participants during the program by giving them physical activity ideas and tips on healthy eating and proper nutrition. This includes such things as:

Weight Loss Division

1. ‘Honor system’ team weight is submitted and reported monthly
2. Winning teams are those who lose the highest percentage of weight over the five-month program
3. **“Minutes of Activity Division” - NEW FOR 2006*** (Teams track activity minutes and report monthly.)
4. Winning teams are those who log the most minutes per team member over the five-month program

For more information, visit the Lighten Up Iowa website at www.lightenupiowa.org <<http://www.lightenupiowa.org>>.

Meetings and Announcements

None