

EPI Update for Friday, April 14, 2006
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

Mumps update

Influenza update

UHL request for *Fusarium sp.* isolates from eye infections

Fatal cases of childhood lead poisoning – could it happen in Iowa?

Celebrating Easter: Enjoying eggs, animals, and avoiding illness

Meetings announcements and training opportunities

Mumps update

The mumps outbreak continues to expand throughout Iowa. As of the end of Wednesday, April 12, 605 cases have been reported to IDPH. Sixty counties are now affected. Activity in several neighboring states has been identified as well. IDPH will be releasing additional tools and guidance throughout next week. Please continue to check the mumps Web site for new information at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/mumps.asp.

The MMR vaccine is our best defense against mumps disease; however, personal protective measures can have a significant impact on the spread of disease in an outbreak situation. All Iowans should be diligent in taking personal protective measures such as:

- Staying home when ill and encouraging others to do the same
- Covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with tissue, or elbow.
- Not sharing cups or glasses or objects that might have another's saliva on them (e.g., sharing drinks)
- Hand washing or using hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable

Influenza update

Influenza activity has subsided for the season. One week of surveillance remains for Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network participants. Surveillance reports will continue to be posted for the next two weeks.

UHL request for *Fusarium sp.* isolates from eye infections

The University Hygienic Lab (UHL) is assisting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in their investigation of the recent outbreak of *Fusarium* keratitis by collecting all ophthalmic-related *Fusarium* species isolates. UHL is requesting that all laboratories isolating *Fusarium* species from corneal scrapings or other eye-related sources submit these isolates to UHL via the same method you submit all fungal isolates for identification. Complete the mycology test requisition, being sure to include a notation that this isolate is possibly related to a *Fusarium* keratitis case.

In addition to isolate submission you **must** report the case to IDPH at (800) 362-2736.

Fatal cases of childhood lead poisoning – could it happen in Iowa?

Last week's update described three U.S. cases since 1990 in which a child died from lead poisoning. It is well known that childhood lead poisoning is still a significant problem in Iowa. So, is it possible that an Iowa child could die from lead poisoning?

Since 1992, 26 Iowa children have had venous blood lead levels greater than or equal to 70 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$), the level at which children are considered to be at risk for lead encephalopathy and death.

The highest venous blood lead level reported in an Iowa child was 360 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. This child was 18 months old and was seen in the emergency room of the local community hospital for severe vomiting. Physicians in this Iowa community had begun a blood lead testing program, so the child was immediately tested for lead poisoning. When the results were received, the child was immediately sent to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics for chelation treatment. Note that the fatal cases from New Hampshire and Minneapolis mentioned in last week's EPI Update were seen with similar symptoms, but were not immediately tested for lead poisoning.

More importantly, most lead-poisoned children, even those with blood lead levels greater than or equal to 70 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, do not have obvious symptoms. For this reason, IDPH recommends that all Iowa children receive routine blood lead testing. This testing is required for children who are enrolled in Medicaid, Head Start, and other programs funded by the state and federal government. Testing is recommended for all other children. The routine blood lead testing schedules are detailed in Iowa's statewide blood lead testing plan. To view the plan, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/common/pdf/lead/testplan.pdf. Readers with questions about childhood lead poisoning should contact the Bureau of Lead Poisoning Prevention at 800-972-2026.

Next week's EPI Update will contain case reports in which unusual sources of lead have caused lead poisoning in Iowa children.

Celebrating Easter: Enjoying eggs, animals, and avoiding illness

With the Easter holiday just around the corner, IDPH would like everyone to observe some basic recommendations regarding food safety and baby animals to avoid illness. Here are four simple steps to follow with all your food preparation activities:

- **Clean up.** Always wash your hands with hot soapy water before and after preparing food, especially when handling raw animal products like uncooked eggs.
- **Avoid cross-contamination.** Always wash surfaces, cooking equipment, and utensils in hot soapy water before and after food preparation.
- **Cook.** Cook cheesecakes and egg dishes to an internal temperature of at least 160° F; use a food thermometer. Also, although it is always very tempting, licking a spoon or tasting raw cookie dough from the mixing bowl is risky because bacteria can be present in raw eggs.
- **Keep cool.** Bacteria can grow and multiply quickly in “moist” foods such as desserts and salads that contain eggs. Refrigerating eggs and egg-containing foods promptly will slow down any bacteria that might be growing. **Remember the “2-hour rule.” That is, don’t leave perishable food out at room temperature for more than two hours.**

For more information about food safety and proper food preparation and cooking visit www.fightbac.org/spring_fact.cfm

Baby animals, such as baby chicks and ducklings, are often given to children as gifts for Easter. Although these critters are very cute and cuddly, they often have a harmful bacterium known as *Salmonella* in their stool. Every spring there are reports of children in the U.S. infected with *Salmonella* after receiving a baby chick or duckling for Easter. (See www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046940.htm.) Children can be exposed to *Salmonella* just by holding or kissing the animal. IDPH follows the recommendations from CDC to prevent exposure to *Salmonella* from baby chicks and ducklings, which include:

- Do NOT purchase live animals as Easter gifts.
- Do NOT let children less than 5 years old handle baby chicks or ducklings.
- If you handle baby chicks or ducklings, or enter the animal’s environment, make sure to wash your hands right away
- Do not eat or drink in the same area with baby chicks or ducklings.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/healthypets/easter_chicks.htm

Meetings announcements and training opportunities:

Pandemic Influenza Planning for Iowa Schools – new session added!

Presented by IDPH and the Iowa Department of Education

April 17, 2006

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM & 3:15 PM to 4:15 PM

OR

April 24, 2006

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM & 11:15 AM to 12:15 PM

Broadcast via Iowa Communications Network (ICN)

Presented by State Public Health Medical Director, Dr. Patricia Quinlisk; IDPH Influenza Surveillance Officer, Meghan Harris; and IDPH Chief Planning Officer, Rebecca Curtiss R.N.

No registration is required. Program materials, agenda and ICN locations will be posted by April 11, 2006 at www.idph.state.ia.us/pandemic and www.state.ia.us/educate/

Tuberculosis: Diagnosed in 24 Hours

This conference will be presented Tuesday, May 9, 2006 via audio teleconference from Noon – 1:00 PM.

Join the UHL, IDPH, and University of Iowa College of Medicine to learn about the epidemiology of tuberculosis in Iowa and the MTD testing now available from UHL for a more rapid diagnosis. There is no charge for this teleconference. Click on the link below for more information and to register. Deadline for registration is April 28, 2006.

www.uhl.uiowa.edu/educationoutreach/conferencesevents/tuberculosis_teleconference/index.html

Have a healthy and happy week

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

800-362-2736