



# Epi Update for Friday, October 22, 2021

**Office of the Public Health Medical Director  
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)  
Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis**

**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

Items for this week's Epi Update include:

- **Pumpkin patch and apple orchard safety**
- **Update on Influenza Surveillance Sites**
- **In the news: CDC warns people to throw away onions from Chihuahua, Mexico, after salmonella outbreak**
- **Infographic: Scary Food Habits That Can Make You Sick**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

## **Pumpkin patch and apple orchard safety**

Families and children's groups frequently take field trips to farms, pumpkin patches and apple orchards this time of year. Such field trips are a great opportunity for children but parents and caregivers should be aware of the potential for certain risks. These venues may have animals that carry human illness causing bacteria in their manure. Therefore, it is important to wash hands frequently, ensure that raw foods (like apples) are washed before they are eaten, and confirm that products (like apple juice/cider) have been pasteurized.

Past outbreaks have originated from apple juice/cider that underwent incomplete pasteurization or was not pasteurized at all. Unpasteurized products may be purchased as freshly pressed juices/ciders from local orchards, roadside stands, or farmer's markets. They may also be found on ice or in refrigerated display cases and in produce sections at grocery stores. If product labeling is unclear, ask the location owners or operators whether the products have been pasteurized.

Consumers who decide to purchase unpasteurized apple cider can reduce their risk of illness by heating their unpasteurized apple cider to at least 170 F.

For more information about food-borne illnesses, visit [idph.iowa.gov/cade/foodborne-illness](https://idph.iowa.gov/cade/foodborne-illness).

## **Update on Influenza Surveillance Sites**

The Iowa Department of Public Health monitors influenza activity as well as multiple other respiratory viruses with the help of voluntary surveillance sites. IDPH is still searching for more surveillance sites, including the following:

- Hospitals to report weekly numbers of flu hospitalizations by age group
- K-12 Schools to report weekly student absenteeism due to illness

- Outpatient clinics to report the number of patients seen weekly with influenza-like illness (ILI) by age group
- Laboratories to report the number of respiratory virus tests run and positive results found each week

Contact Andy Weigel at [andy.weigel@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:andy.weigel@idph.iowa.gov) or 515-322-1937 for more information about becoming a surveillance site.

Thank you to all of the sites who have helped IDPH monitor influenza in the current and previous influenza season. One recent success that Iowa has had with influenza surveillance is to greatly increase participation in the National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS). This system allows national, state, and local public health staff to monitor changes in respiratory virus circulation over time and across geographic locations. Iowa went from three participating labs a few seasons ago to over 20 labs this season.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/surveillance/nrevss/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/nrevss/index.html).

**In the news: CDC warns people to throw away onions from Chihuahua, Mexico, after salmonella outbreak** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/10/21/onion-salmonella-outbreak-cdc-prosource/>.

### Infographic: Scary Food Habits That Can Make You Sick

**SCARY FOOD HABITS THAT CAN MAKE YOU SICK:**

**Letting perishable food sit out for more than 2 hours**

To learn about safe food habits, visit [cdc.gov/foodsafety](http://cdc.gov/foodsafety).



To view in full size visit [https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/images/socialmedia/HalloweenFoodSafety\\_FB\\_TW.jpg](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/images/socialmedia/HalloweenFoodSafety_FB_TW.jpg).

**Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

None.

**Have a healthy and happy week!**

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