

Epi Update for Friday, May 12, 2023

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)
BUREAU OF HIV, STD, AND HEPATITIS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month**
- **Rabid animals don't always show symptoms**
- **Mpox cases low nationally, but virus still poses a risk**
- **In the news: Rise of mpox cases in Chicago raises concern about possible summer spread**
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May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

Lyme disease is the most common vector-borne disease in the U.S. In 2022, 154 cases were identified in Iowa. Lyme disease is caused by bacteria transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks (also known as deer ticks). Ticks are most likely to spread the bacteria during their pre-adult stage (nymph). They are most common between May and July and found in tall grasses and brush of wooded areas.

In addition to Lyme disease, other tickborne diseases in Iowa include babesiosis, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis, spotted fever group rickettsiosis, and tularemia. To protect yourself from tickborne illnesses:

- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone. Always follow product instructions.
- Wear clothing treated with permethrin.
- Shower as soon as possible after spending time outdoors.
- Check for ticks daily. Ticks can hide under the armpits, behind the knees, in the hair, and in the groin.
- Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.

For more information about tickborne diseases, visit

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/cade/vectorborne-illness#Tick-borne%20diseases>.

For Iowa Lyme disease case data, visit tracking.idph.iowa.gov/Health/Lyme-Disease.

Rabid animals don't always show symptoms

Rabies can infect any mammal, including humans, but about 90% of animals that test positive in the U.S. are wild. Common examples include skunks, foxes, and raccoons. Bats are also a rabies reservoir and account for most of the human deaths due to rabies in the U.S.

You can't tell if an animal has rabies by just looking at it – testing is the only way to know for sure. Animals with rabies may act strangely. Some (but not all) may be aggressive or drool more than normal. Other rabid animals may act timid or shy, move slowly, act tame, or let you get close to them. Some animals with rabies may not appear ill at all.

For the health and safety of wildlife, your pets, and yourself, it is best to leave wild animals alone, including baby animals.

Rabies is almost 100% fatal in humans, but is also 100% preventable through prompt post-exposure prophylaxis. For this reason, it is critical to reach out to a health care provider or public health if you are bitten by a mammal. Any direct contact with a bat is also considered a possible exposure, and even being in the same room as a bat and unable to say you weren't bitten (i.e. a sleeping person or small child) could be considered a possible exposure.

As always, Iowa HHS is available 24/7/365 for rabies consultation by calling 515-242-5935 or 515-323-4360 after hours.

For more information about rabies, including prevention and post-exposure prophylaxis guidelines, visit hhs.iowa.gov/rabies.

Mpox cases low nationally, but virus still poses a risk

At the peak of the mpox outbreak last summer, over 600 cases were reported in the U.S. in a single week. Cases dropped steadily through the fall, and just a few cases per week were reported nationwide from winter through spring. However, there remains a risk for mpox outbreaks and clusters. Chicago recently reported a new cluster, for example.

No cases of mpox have been reported in Iowa since January 2023. SHL offers mpox PCR testing with no pre-approval required. Iowa HHS and local public health partners will continue to follow-up on confirmed cases to make isolation and treatment recommendations and educate contacts about post-exposure prophylaxis, as needed.

For test request forms and specimen guidelines for mpox testing at SHL, visit www.shl.uiowa.edu/testmenu/menupages/mpox.xml.

For more information about mpox, including weekly national case counts, visit www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html.

In the news: Rise of mpox cases in Chicago raises concern about possible summer spread
www.nbcnews.com/health/mens-health/rise-mpox-cases-chicago-raises-concern-possible-summer-spread-rcna83315





Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Reminder: The *2023 Iowa Infection Prevention and Control Conference* will be held May 23 – 24 at Gateway Hotel and Conference Center in Ames. Cost is \$75 for two-day registration and \$40 for one-day registration. Nursing Contact Hours have been applied for. For more information about the conference and to register, visit www.regcytes.extension.iastate.edu/infectionprevention2022/.

Infographic: Recommendations for managing human rabies exposure

Recommendations for Managing Human Rabies Exposure*

For **Bat** Exposures see *Rabies Exposure Management for Bat-related Incidents Flow Chart*, available at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/cade/rabies_exposure_bats.pdf

Animal Species	Situation	Rabies Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Recommendations
 Dogs, cats, ferrets	Animal available for testing or 10 day confinement and observation	If the animal is exhibiting symptoms consistent with rabies, immediately euthanize and test. If the animal is not exhibiting symptoms, a 10 day confinement period can be instituted. If the animal exhibits signs of rabies during the 10 day confinement period, it should be euthanized immediately and tested. If results are positive, unsuitable or indeterminate administer PEP immediately. If the animal does not exhibit clinical signs during the 10 day confinement period, PEP is not recommended, since the animal was not excreting virus at the time of the bite or saliva exposure.
	Animal unavailable (waiting up to 72 hours to capture the animal may be reasonable, assuming the correct animal can be identified)	If the animal is not available for confinement or testing, administer PEP. (If the animal is captured later contact IDPH at 800-362-2736.)
 Horses or other farm animals	If the animal exhibits signs of rabies or dies suddenly, test the animal for rabies.	Defer administration of PEP until outcome of testing. If results are positive, unsuitable or indeterminate, administer PEP.
	All other cases, contact IDPH for guidance.	Contact IDPH at 800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours.
 Skunk, raccoon, fox, coyote	Euthanize and test animal	Defer administration of PEP until outcome of testing. If results are positive, unsuitable or indeterminate, administer PEP.
	Animal unavailable for testing	Administer PEP immediately.
 Large rodents: such as beavers, muskrats, or groundhogs	Euthanize and test animal	Defer administration of PEP until outcome of testing. If results are positive, unsuitable or indeterminate administer PEP.
	Animal unavailable for testing	Contact IDPH for consultation at 800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours.
Small rodent: such as squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice, rabbits, or opossum	Provoked bite and animal behaving normal	No PEP is recommended, as these species almost never carry rabies.
	Unprovoked bite or animal behaving abnormal	Contact IDPH for consultation at 800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours.

* Exposure: a bite or saliva/nervous tissue contact to an open wound or mucous membrane

NOTE: If the patient was **bitten above the shoulders**, IDPH recommends that the health care provider consider starting PEP immediately. PEP can be discontinued if the animal tests negative for rabies or is healthy at the end of the quarantine period.

Thoroughly wash all wounds with soap and water and, if available, flush with povidone iodine solution (or other virucidal solution). Evaluate tetanus vaccination status, update if needed.

(Updated 6/18/2010)

If questions arise on any of the above information or circumstances related to the exposure are unusual, please contact IDPH for consultation at:

During business hours: **800-362-2736**
 After hours: **515-323-4360**



Iowa Department of Public Health,
 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/CADE/DiseaseIndex.aspx?disease=Rabies>
<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>



<http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu>

To view in full size, visit hhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/portals/1/files/rabies/animal%20_rabies_chart_130618.pdf.

Have a healthy and happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
 800-362-2736

Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis
 515-281-6801