

Epi Update for Friday, June 16, 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

- Iowa HHS announces first West Nile virus case for 2023
- Request for influenza A positive specimens from seriously ill patients
- Leave wild animals alone
- Infographic: Fight the bite
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Iowa HHS announces first West Nile virus case for 2023

Iowa HHS has announced the first case of West Nile virus (WNV) infection reported in 2023 in an older adult (61-80 years) from Plymouth county. The case was confirmed through a test at SHL. In 2022, nine lowans were diagnosed with West Nile virus, with zero deaths.

Warm summer weather means lowans are spending more time outside which increases the risk of mosquito bites. Bites from infected mosquitos are the primary method in which humans are infected with the virus. For the best protection against the virus, lowans should use an insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, Para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone or IR3535. Insect repellent lowers the risk of mosquito bites.

- Always read and follow label directions. Consult with a health care provider if you have questions when using these types of products on children.
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus and Para-menthane-diol should not be used on children younger than 3 years, and DEET should not be used on infants younger than 2 months.
- If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.

Additional steps lowans can take to protect themselves include:

- If possible, avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, shoes and socks outdoors.
- Clear standing water from around your home where mosquitos reproduce.
- Look for standing water in buckets, cans, pool covers, used tires, pet water dishes, etc.

For more information on West Nile virus, visit hhs.iowa.gov/cade/disease-information/west-nile-virus.

Request for influenza A positive specimens from seriously ill patients

CDC is encouraging influenza testing among persons with severe respiratory illness, including during the summer months. There have been a small number of international, severe cases of human influenza A(H5N1) associated with exposure to avian influenza. While CDC and Iowa HHS agree that influenza A(H5N1) poses a low risk to human health, it is important to monitor this situation. As a result, CDC and Iowa HHS are requesting influenza A positive specimens that are not subtyped or result as unsubtypeable be sent to SHL for typing. Visit www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/avian-flu-summary.htm for the most up-to-date information on A(H5N1) avian influenza.

Recently Iowa HHS and SHL requested that providers continue sending positive influenza specimens during the summer months, and we have noticed a recent increase in specimens submitted. We thank you for your continued support of influenza surveillance. We ask that laboratories prioritize sending influenza A positive specimens among hospitalized patients, and, if possible, ICU patients.

Leave wild animals alone

There are many benefits to spending time outdoors, including seeing wildlife. However, wild animals can be dangerous. Bites and scratches from wild animals can spread illnesses ranging from bacterial infections to parasites to rabies virus, which is almost always fatal.

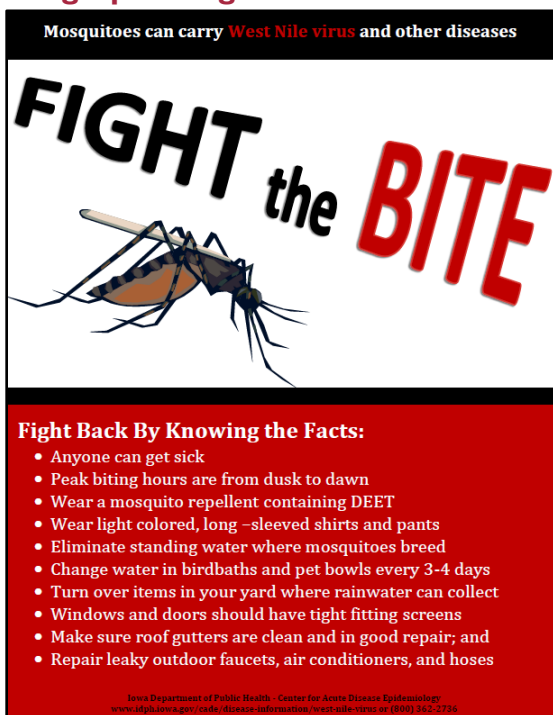
Here are some tips to avoid contact with wild animals:

- Do not approach or touch wild animals.
- Don't feed wild animals.
- Wild animals should not be kept as pets. Don't adopt a wild animal or bring it into your home.
- Don't touch animals that look injured or abandoned. If an animal is badly injured or looks very sick, contact a wildlife rehabilitator.
- Secure garbage and food waste to avoid animal encounters.

If you are bitten by an animal, wash the wound with soap and water immediately and seek medical attention.

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

Infographic: Fight the bite



To view in full size, visit

hhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/portals/1/userfiles/79/poster%20images/fight%20the%20bite%20poster%202%20-%20updated%20url.pdf.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Emory University is hosting a free webinar, *A Case of Candida Auris*, on Thursday, June 29, from 10-11 AM. The objective of the session is to understand the current state, ongoing surveillance measures, infection prevention approaches, and public health implications of *C. Auris*. Continuing education credits are available. For more information and to register, visit zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uiomf6bxT_mxRqpm89AYSg#/registration.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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