

Epi Update for Monday, June 26, 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

- **COVID-19 specimens requested for sequencing**
- **CDC: Get vaccinated for measles before travel**
- **4th of July safety**
- **Infographic: Heat-related illnesses**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

COVID-19 specimens requested for sequencing

In Iowa, the number of COVID-19 specimens submitted for whole genome sequencing has dramatically fallen over the last year. As COVID-19 tests and positive results decrease, a larger proportion of positive results need to be sequenced to monitor how the virus is changing. During the last several months, the number of specimens submitted to SHL has been too small to reliably detect the emergence of new strains of SARS-CoV-2.

We request that facilities submit up to their first 10 positive SARS-CoV-2 samples to SHL each week for variant surveillance. Facilities can submit positive samples with a Ct value less than 28. If the Ct value is unknown, submit the sample and SHL will determine the Ct value before performing the sequencing. To order sequencing, use the SHL *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sequencing Test Request Form* available at www.shl.uiowa.edu/testmenu/formgenerator.xml.

CDC: Get vaccinated for measles before travel

CDC has issued a Health Advisory to remind clinicians and public health officials to provide guidance for measles prevention to international travelers and to be on alert for cases of measles. Guidance is also provided for people planning international travel.

As of June 8, 16 confirmed cases have been identified in the U.S., with 14 (88%) linked to international travel. No cases of measles have been identified in Iowa. Twice as many Americans are planning to travel internationally in 2023 compared with 2022. Many countries and popular travel destinations, such as London, England, have experienced measles outbreaks in recent years.

Most U.S. cases have been among children who had not received MMR vaccine. To prevent measles infection and spread from importation, all U.S. residents should be up to date on their MMR vaccinations, especially prior to international travel, regardless of the destination.

Health care providers who suspect a patient may have measles should contact CADE at 515-242-5935 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours.

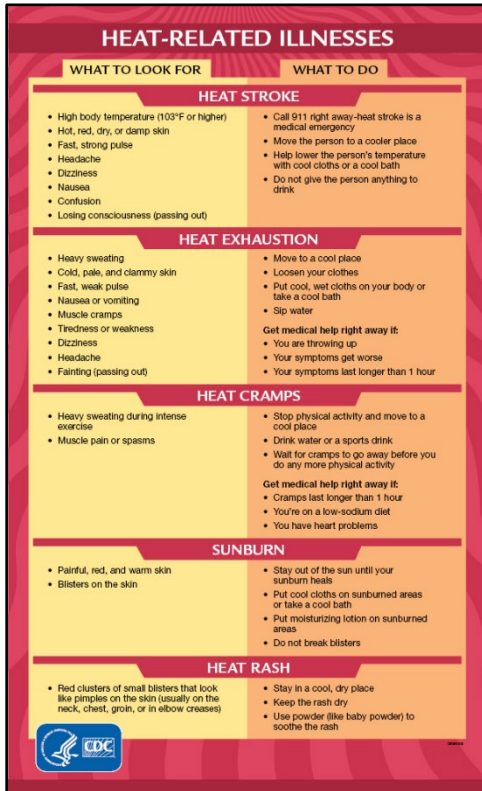
To view the full CDC HAN, visit <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2023/han00493.asp>.

4th of July safety

This 4th of July, make sure to remember the following tips to celebrate safely!

- Stay hydrated and cool. Make sure to drink plenty of fluids.
- Closely supervise children around fireworks. Do not light fireworks near people or houses. Keep a bucket of water nearby to extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire.
- Choose a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Reapply every two hours, more often if you are swimming.
- Use an insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, Para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone or IR3535. Always read and follow label directions. Consult with a health care provider if you have questions.
- If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.

Infographic: Heat-related illnesses



To view in full size, visit www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Iowa HHS is hosting a free webinar, *Infection Prevention Best Practices: Environmental Services*, on July 12 from noon to 1 PM. Environmental cleaning is crucial to curb the spread of infection in health care settings. Contaminated surfaces play an important role in the transmission of germs and antibiotic-resistant organisms. Understanding recommended cleaning and disinfection practices, the effectiveness of disinfectants, and how to identify gaps in environmental cleaning practices is vital to prevent potential infections. Continuing education credits are available. To register, visit ecri.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AOLPTxb6Qtq6cjIES7PPUw.

Note: There will be no Epi Update released next week.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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