

# Epi Update for Friday, October 20, 2023

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

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **TB screening, testing recommended for persons from Pacific Island communities**
- **Human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) given when starting PEP for previously unvaccinated**
- **Pumpkin patch and apple orchard safety – Pasteurization**
- **Infographic: 5 ways to prevent kids' tooth decay**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

## **TB screening, testing recommended for persons from Pacific Island communities**

There has been a significant increase in the number of tuberculosis cases occurring in Iowa amongst persons from Pacific Island communities. Pacific Island communities include the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), which includes the island states of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae. Citizens of these communities do not have the benefit of medical screening for communicable diseases, including TB, upon entry to the U.S. TB case rates in these regions are amongst the highest in the world.

In Iowa, reported verified cases of TB disease in persons from these Pacific Island communities continue to rise and represent a significant percentage of the current TB morbidity in Iowa. It is important for health care providers to include baseline TB screening and testing as part of routine care for persons from these communities.

Contact the Iowa HHS TB Control Program at 515-281-7504 or 515-281-8636 with any questions.

For more information about TB in Iowa, visit [hhs.iowa.gov/immmtb/tb](https://hhs.iowa.gov/immmtb/tb).

## **Human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) given when starting PEP for previously unvaccinated**

Human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) is administered only once, at the beginning of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to previously unvaccinated persons. HRIG provides antibodies until the body responds to the vaccine by producing antibodies of its own. Those that have completed the rabies pre-exposure or post-exposure series in the past should not receive HRIG as part of PEP.

The recommended dose of HRIG for all age groups is 20 IU/kg body weight. If possible, HRIG should be administered into and around the wounds, and remaining volume should be injected intramuscularly at a site distant from vaccine administration. HRIG should never be given in the same anatomical site as the vaccine dose.

If HRIG was not administered when PEP began, it can be administered up to seven days after the first dose of vaccine. Beyond the seventh day, HRIG is not recommended since an antibody response to the vaccine is presumed to have occurred. This seven-day window is in reference to the date PEP started, not the date the patient was potentially exposed to rabies. HRIG should be given at the beginning of anti-rabies prophylaxis to previously unvaccinated persons regardless of how long ago the potential exposure was.

For full rabies PEP guidelines, visit [hhs.iowa.gov/rabies/information-for-providers](https://hhs.iowa.gov/rabies/information-for-providers).

## Pumpkin patch and apple orchard safety - Pasteurization

For many families, fall traditions include visits to farms, pumpkin patches, and apple orchards. These settings provide a great opportunity for fall fun, but there can be health risks parents and caregivers should be aware of. Farm animals may carry germs in their manure that can make humans sick. 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.

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.

## Infographic: 5 ways to prevent kids' tooth decay



To view in full size, visit

[www.mouthhealthy.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/mouthhealthy/files/ada\\_mh\\_5ways.pdf](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/mouthhealthy/files/ada_mh_5ways.pdf).

## Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Antibiotics are among the most frequently prescribed medications in nursing homes, with up to 70% of residents receiving one or more courses of systemic antibiotics over the course of a year. Studies have shown that 40 - 75% of antibiotics prescribed in nursing homes may be unnecessary or inappropriate. Harms from overuse include risk of serious diarrheal infections from *C. difficile*, increased adverse drug events and drug interactions, and colonization and/or infection with antibiotic-resistant organisms. The Iowa HHS Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Program will be hosting a free webinar, *Using Data to Drive Antimicrobial Stewardship Programs in Nursing Homes*, on Thursday, October 26, at 12:00 noon. Continuing education credits will be provided. For more information and to register, visit [www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_devMwt03Soe-C7VvV29I2Q](http://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_devMwt03Soe-C7VvV29I2Q).

**Have a healthy and happy week!**

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