

# Epi Update for Friday, October 27, 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

- **HHS Announces First Flu Death of Season**
- **CDC HAN: Protecting infants from RSV while nirsevimab supply is limited**
- **Stool testing aids in public health response to gastrointestinal illnesses**
- **Infographic: For a safe plate, don't cross-contaminate**

## **HHS Announces First Flu Death of Season**

The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announces today the first influenza-related death of the 2023-24 respiratory virus season. The individual was an older adult (61 to 80 years) from southern Iowa.

Influenza (flu) strains, along with other respiratory viruses are circulating in the state. Iowa's most recent [Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report](#) shows the virus at a low level of activity, and hospitals are currently reporting low patient admission rates. Although flu activity in Iowa is currently low, Iowans can take a few simple precautions to keep themselves and their families healthy throughout the respiratory virus season.

"During respiratory virus season, it's important for Iowans to prioritize their health and the well-being of their community," said State Medical Director Robert Kruse. "Iowans should practice good hygiene, stay home when they're sick and consult their healthcare providers about vaccines and other preventive measures against influenza and other respiratory diseases."

Vaccination protects from serious illness and death from respiratory diseases like flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). HHS encourages Iowans to talk to their doctor or other trusted health care provider about vaccines, especially those with chronic health conditions who may be at higher risk for serious illness.

Additional Tips to Stay Healthy:

- Stay home if you are sick to keep others safe.
- Clean high touch surfaces in your home frequently with household disinfectants.
- Practice hand hygiene frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or if a tissue is not available, cover them with an upper shirt sleeve, not a hand.
- Avoid social gatherings if you or your children are ill.
- Keep children home from daycare or school who have fever, cough, congestion, runny nose, or sore throat, and until they are fever-free for 24 hours without medications that reduce fever.

If you or a loved one is sick and needs medical care, contact your healthcare provider. Your provider can offer advice on whether you or your child needs to be evaluated in person, tested for flu or other respiratory diseases, and the best location for care. Iowans with questions about vaccines should speak to their health care provider. Locate healthcare providers with vaccines at <https://www.vaccines.gov/>.

## **CDC HAN: Protecting infants from RSV while nirsevimab supply is limited**

CDC has issued a HAN Advisory to provide options for clinicians to protect infants from RSV in the context of a limited supply of nirsevimab, a long-acting monoclonal antibody immunization product recommended for preventing RSV-associated lower respiratory tract disease in infants.

In the context of limited supply during the 2023–2024 RSV season, CDC recommends prioritizing available nirsevimab 100mg doses for infants at the highest risk for severe RSV disease: young infants (age <6 months) and infants with underlying conditions that place them at highest risk for severe RSV disease. Recommendations for using 50mg doses remain unchanged at this time. Avoid using two 50mg doses for infants weighing  $\geq 5$  kilograms ( $\geq 11$  pounds) to preserve supply of 50mg doses for infants weighing <5 kilograms (<11 pounds). Providers should be aware that some insurers may not cover the cost of two 50mg doses for an individual infant.

CDC further recommends that providers suspend using nirsevimab in palivizumab-eligible children aged 8–19 months for the 2023–2024 RSV season. These children should receive palivizumab per AAP recommendations. Nirsevimab should continue to be offered to American Indian and Alaska Native children aged 8–19 months who are not palivizumab-eligible and who live in remote regions, where transporting children with severe RSV for escalation of medical care is more challenging or in communities with known high rates of RSV among older infants and toddlers. Prenatal care providers should discuss potential nirsevimab supply concerns when counseling pregnant people about RSVpreF vaccine (Abrysvo, Pfizer) as maternal vaccination is effective and will reduce the number of infants requiring nirsevimab during the RSV season.

To view the full CDC HAN, visit [emergency.cdc.gov/han/2023/han00499.asp](https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2023/han00499.asp).

## **Stool testing aids in public health response to gastrointestinal illnesses**

Each year, CADE and local public health partners follow-up on thousands of reports of infectious diseases, and gastrointestinal illnesses represent a large proportion of these investigations. In addition to tracking potential common sources of exposure, these investigations allow for education on proper food handling and storage, safe use of recreational water, hand washing, and more.

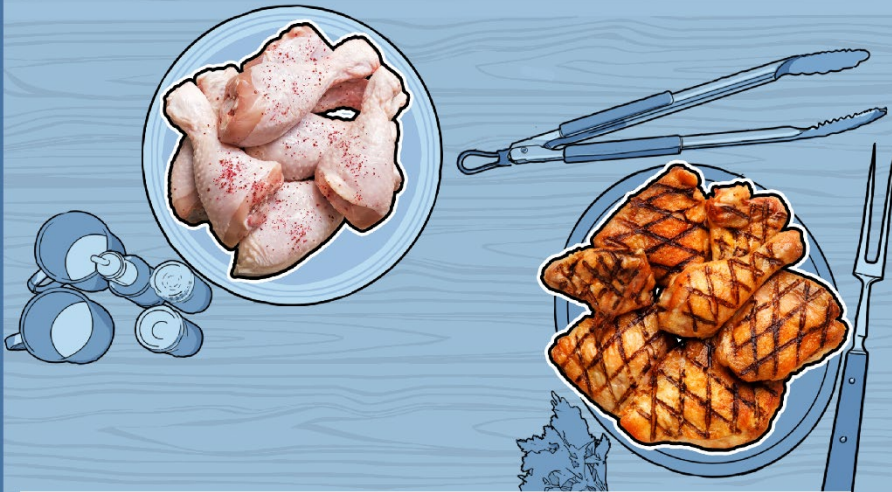
One critical way gastrointestinal illness outbreaks are identified is through public health surveillance. CADE relies on stool specimens collected by health care providers to efficiently monitor disease trends, identify disease clusters, and investigate outbreaks. Many of the specimens are sent to the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) for confirmatory testing and genetic analysis. This additional laboratory information allows public health to efficiently identify disease outbreaks and limit further risk to the public.

CADE encourages health care providers to collect stool specimens on patients with symptoms consistent with gastrointestinal illness.

For the list of reportable diseases and the list of isolates or specimens that are to be sent to SHL, visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/CADE/reportable-diseases>.

## **Infographic: For a safe plate, don't cross-contaminate**

**FOR A SAFE PLATE  
DON'T CROSS-CONTAMINATE**



**Use separate plates for raw meat and cooked meat.** The same advice applies to poultry and seafood.

**LEARN MORE:** [cdc.gov/foodsafety](https://cdc.gov/foodsafety)



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To view in full size, visit [www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/images/fsem/2022/FSEM-2022-1080x1080-07.png](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/images/fsem/2022/FSEM-2022-1080x1080-07.png).

**Have a healthy and happy week!**

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