

Epi Update for Friday, December 8, 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

- **Salmonella outbreak linked to cantaloupes**
- **Increased respiratory virus activity in Iowa**
- **As influenza activity increases, many Iowans still need vaccination**
- **Infographic: Stop the spread**

Salmonella outbreak linked to cantaloupes

As of December 7, 230 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* have been reported from 38 states. Epidemiologic and laboratory data show that cantaloupes are the likely source of the outbreak. Several recalls of cantaloupes that may be contaminated with *Salmonella* have been announced as a result of this investigation. Eight cases have been reported in Iowa.

CDC and Iowa HHS recommend not eating, selling or serving pre-cut cantaloupes unless it is known that neither Malichita or Rudy brand cantaloupes were used. It can be hard to know what brand of whole cantaloupes were used in pre-cut fruit products. If the product brand is not known, the safest choice is to not eat it.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/salmonella/sundsvall-11-23/index.html.

Increased respiratory virus activity in Iowa

Increases in influenza, COVID-19, and RSV activity have been observed in the last several weeks. Iowa clinical laboratories that respond to the Iowa Respiratory Virus Survey have reported an increased percentage of positive test results for influenza, COVID-19, and RSV since early November. The percentage of inpatient and emergency department visits identified via syndromic surveillance has increased for influenza, COVID-19, and RSV over the last few weeks.

As respiratory virus activity increases, Iowa HHS recommends:

- getting recommended vaccines. For the first time ever, immunizations are available for all three major fall and winter respiratory diseases. Note: Select groups are recommended for RSV vaccination.
- considering available treatments and testing. Treatments are available for influenza and COVID-19 that can reduce severity, and the chances for hospitalization and death. Early detection of respiratory viruses allows for prompt treatment, as appropriate.
- using general preventive measures like staying home when ill, washing hands, and improving airflow in the places where people live and work to provide an additional layer of protection.

For more information on Iowa respiratory virus activity, see the weekly *Iowa Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report* at hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/flu-report.

As influenza activity increases, many Iowans still need vaccination

Influenza activity is increasing in Iowa, following the trend in many other areas of the United States. Influenza vaccination coverage among Iowans remains low compared to levels before 2020. According to Iowa HHS immunization data, influenza vaccination coverage for Iowans through October was about 3% lower than the same time period last season and 7% lower than in 2020. Persons 65 years of age and older have the highest proportion of influenza vaccination so far, with over 53% vaccinated.

Many Iowans who receive influenza vaccines do so by the end of October. While this timing is consistent with CDC and Iowa HHS recommendations, vaccination is recommended as long as influenza viruses are circulating. It is not too late to get vaccinated for influenza.

Nationally, most of the influenza viruses circulating so far this season are well-matched to the vaccine, which suggests vaccination will offer substantial protection. Influenza vaccines are designed to protect against four different influenza viruses, so even if you already got influenza this season, vaccination can still protect you from other circulating influenza viruses.

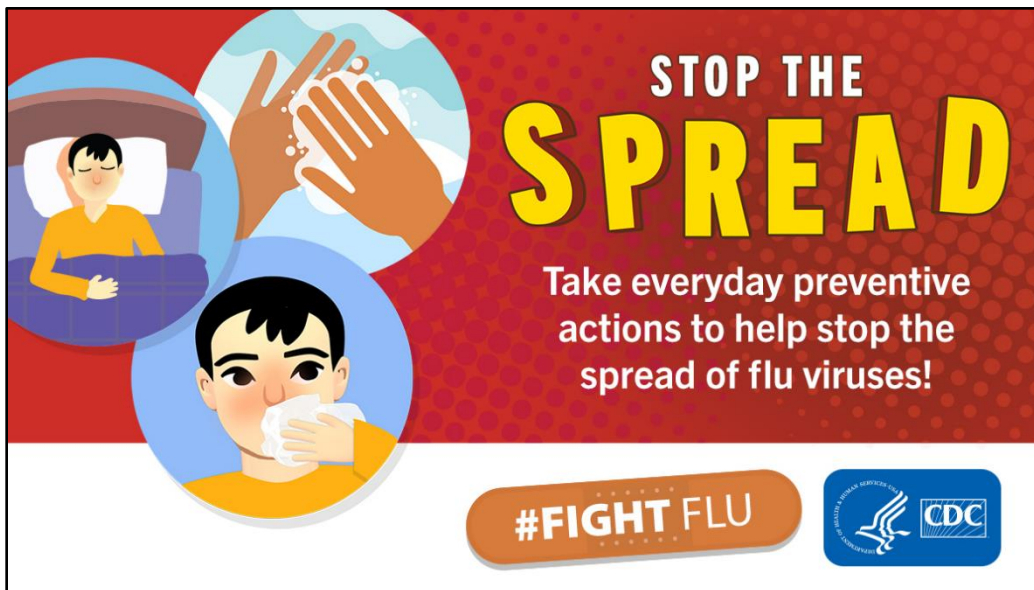
For more Iowa influenza vaccination data, visit

tracking.idph.iowa.gov/Health/Immunization/Influenza-Vaccine/Influenza-Vaccine-Data.

For more information on national influenza activity and vaccination levels visit,

www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2023-2024/flu-increases-vaccination-lags.htm.

Infographic: Stop the spread



To view in full size, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/social-media-graphics.htm.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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