

Epi Update for Monday, July 29, 2024

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- Alpha-gal syndrome is a reportable condition in Iowa
- Measles cases identified in Minneapolis area
- Do you know all the immediately reportable diseases in Iowa?
- West Nile virus detected in Iowa mosquito samples
- Infographic: Mosquito bites can make you sick

Alpha-gal syndrome is a reportable condition in Iowa

Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) is a serious, potentially life-threatening allergic condition that can occur after a tick bite. It's named for a molecule, galactose- α -1,3-galactose, found in most mammals. Symptoms occur after people eat red meat or are exposed to other products made from mammals. Because of this, AGS is also known as red meat allergy or tick bite meat allergy.

In the United States, AGS is primarily associated with the bite of a lone star tick, but other kinds of ticks have not been ruled out. Most reported cases of AGS in the United States occur in the South, East, and Central states, which are the areas where most lone star ticks are found.

A health care provider may diagnose AGS by physical examination, detailed patient history, or testing for antibodies to alpha-gal. A health care provider may also recommend allergy skin testing.

AGS is a reportable condition in Iowa. Case reports help to characterize disease burden and monitor trends in patient demographics, morbidity, and mortality.

For more information on alpha-gal syndrome, visit www.cdc.gov/alpha-gal-syndrome.

Measles cases identified in Minneapolis area

On July 25, the Minnesota Department of Health announced three confirmed cases of measles in the Minneapolis metro area in the past week. The cases are not directly linked to each other and have not traveled, raising concerns about the potential spread of measles in the Minneapolis area

Measles is characterized by a prodrome of fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis (the three "C"s), followed by a maculopapular rash that spreads from the head to the trunk to the lower extremities. Consider measles in patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible measles symptoms, especially if the person recently traveled internationally, or was exposed to a person with febrile rash illness.

Health care providers who suspect measles should immediately notify CADE while the patient is still at the health care facility by calling 515-242-5935 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours.

Health care providers should also routinely evaluate patient vaccination status and promote measles containing vaccines (MMR or MMRV) for patients who do not have presumptive evidence of immunity.

For more information about measles, visit

hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/epi-manual/reportable-diseases/measles.

Do you know all the immediately reportable diseases in Iowa?

There are certain diseases that are required by Iowa Administrative Code [641] Chapter 1 to be reported to Iowa HHS immediately. The reporting of these diseases allows Iowa HHS to respond to issues that could impact the public's health in a timely manner. To report diseases immediately, call the 24/7 disease reporting hotline at 1-800-362-2736.

The immediately reportable diseases are:

- Anthrax
- Botulism (including infant botulism)
- Diphtheria
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type B invasive disease
- Measles (rubeola)
- Meningococcal invasive disease
- Plague
- Poliomyelitis
- Rabies, human
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)
- Smallpox
- Viral hemorrhagic fever (e.g., Lassa, Marburg, Ebola, Crimean-Congo)
- Yellow Fever

In addition, laboratories are to send an isolate or specimen for the diseases listed below to the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) for confirmation and genotyping.

- Cholera
- *Cyclospora*
- Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC)
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type B invasive disease
- *Listeria monocytogenes* invasive disease
- Meningococcal invasive disease
- Salmonellosis (*Salmonella*)
- Shigellosis (*Shigella*)
- Vancomycin intermediate *Staphylococcus aureus* (VISA) and vancomycin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (VRSA)

For the list of reportable diseases in Iowa, visit

hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/reportable-communicable-diseases-and-infectious-conditions.

West Nile virus detected in Iowa mosquito samples

Fourteen West Nile virus positive mosquito samples have been detected in Iowa. The mosquito samples were collected at surveillance sites throughout the state and were tested at Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory.

There have been no reported human cases in Iowa thus far in 2024. In 2023, seventeen human cases of West Nile virus were identified, with one death.

Bites from infected mosquitoes are the primary method in which humans are infected West Nile virus. Iowans 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 Iowans 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, and other areas water may collect.

For more information on West Nile virus, visit

hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/tick-borne-and-mosquito-borne-disease.

Infographic: Mosquito bites can make you sick

MOSQUITO BITES CAN MAKE YOU SICK
Mosquitoes spread germs

Mosquitoes bite day and night.
Mosquitoes that spread viruses bite during the day and night and live indoors and outdoors.

Use insect repellent. It works!
Look for the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
For extra protection, treat clothing with permethrin.

Mosquito-proof your home.
Use screens on windows and doors. Use air conditioning if available. Keep mosquitoes from laying eggs in or near standing water.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For more information: www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes

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To view in full size, visit www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/pdfs/Infographic_MosquitoBites-P.pdf.

Have a healthy and happy week!
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
800-362-2736