

**EPI Update for Friday, May 11, 2007**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health**

**Items for this week's EPI Update include:**

- **West Nile virus changes for 2007**
- **It's hepatitis awareness month – *One Minute Consult* answers the top hepatitis vaccination question**
- **Respiratory disease in workers at industries that manufacture or use flavorings**
- **Melamine plastic ware**
- **IDPH newsletter now available**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

**West Nile virus changes for 2007**

- Dead bird testing will no longer be performed.
  - Please advise callers to dispose of dead birds properly, avoiding direct contact with the skin. Wear gloves and use an inverted plastic bag, shovel, or other device to pick up the bird. Wrap the bird in a plastic bag, and place the bag in outdoor trash, or bury it deep enough that the carcass will not be dug up by other animals.
  - United States Geological Survey (USGS) is not testing birds but would be interested in being contacted about mass die-offs of birds. Although these aren't typically related to West Nile virus, they could be associated with another wildlife disease. Call USGS at 608-270-2443.
  - The public does have the option of paying for their dead birds to be tested. The Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory will do testing of dead birds for a fee of \$45.00 per test plus a \$10.00 submission fee.
  - IDPH is no longer collecting 'reports' of dead birds. If a mass bird die off is observed, please contact the USGS as described above.
- The West Nile virus hotline for the public is no longer in service (866-WNV-IOWA). Please remove this phone number from any West Nile virus material you may be distributing.
- Surveillance through sentinel chicken flocks and mosquito traps will be maintained in the following counties: Woodbury, Pottawattamie, Dubuque, Black Hawk, Linn, Scott and Polk. Story County will run mosquito traps, but not have sentinel chickens. Surveillance is set to run the first week in June through the first week in October.

For more information on West Nile virus, go to [www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/wnv\\_surveillance.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/wnv_surveillance.asp) or [www.uhl.uiowa.edu/services/diseases/mosquitoborne/wnv/](http://www.uhl.uiowa.edu/services/diseases/mosquitoborne/wnv/).

### **It's hepatitis awareness month – *One Minute Consult* answers the top hepatitis vaccination question**

The Immunization Action Coalition receives hundreds of questions via email and phone every month. Approximately half relate to hepatitis B vaccination, and many of these questions concern restarting an interrupted vaccination series. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Viral Hepatitis has posted a *One Minute Consult* published in the Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine and written by Miriam J. Alter, PhD. Titled "Do patients who fail to complete a hepatitis A or hepatitis B vaccination series have to restart it?" the one-page response answers this common question once and for all. To access this document, go to [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/a/quick\\_faq.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/a/quick_faq.pdf).

### **Respiratory disease in workers at industries that manufacture or use flavorings**

The April 27 issue of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report discussed seven cases of bronchiolitis obliterans, also known as "popcorn worker's lung" reported between 2004 and 2007 in California food flavoring workers. Bronchiolitis obliterans has occurred in workers employed at flavoring chemical manufacturing facilities and in microwave popcorn plants where employees were exposed to diacetyl, a butter flavoring ingredient. Although diacetyl and other food flavorings are considered safe to eat, the ingredients may be harmful to breathe in the forms and concentrations to which food manufacturing workers may be exposed.

Bronchiolitis obliterans is a serious lung disease in which the bronchioles (very small tubes in the lungs) are plugged with granulation tissue, which is made up of new capillaries formed on the surface of a wound in healing. This disease is irreversible. The main respiratory symptoms experienced by workers affected by bronchiolitis obliterans include cough (usually without phlegm) and shortness of breath upon exertion. These symptoms typically do not improve when the worker goes home at the end of the workday or on weekends or vacations. Usually these symptoms are gradual in onset and progressive, but severe symptoms can occur suddenly. Some workers have experienced fever, night sweats and weight loss. Symptoms have been confused with other diseases such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, pneumonia or the health effects of smoking.

Workers in industries that use or make flavorings should be promptly referred for further medical evaluation if they have persistent cough; persistent shortness of breath on exertion; frequent or persistent symptoms of eye, nose, throat or skin irritation; abnormal lung function; or accelerated decline in lung function. Patients with bronchiolitis obliterans associated with occupational exposure should be reported to the Iowa Department of Public Health. Standard occupational health

practices such as appropriate ventilation and use of respirators are in place in Iowa to minimize occupational exposures to flavorings or flavoring ingredients.

Further information regarding prevention of lung disease in workers who use or make flavorings can be obtained through National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health at [www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-110](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-110).

### **Melamine plastic ware**

Melamine plastic was very popular in the 1950s and 1960s for dishware before Tupperware took its place. Melamine plastic is currently making a comeback. The plastic dishes were originally designed for the U.S. Navy during World War II. In the early 1950s, porcelain manufacturers launched a campaign against the plastic dishes stating that they were giving off toxic fumes. They began this campaign because the lighter plastic dishes were selling much better than their heavier porcelain dishes.

Melamine plastic is strong, lightweight, and hard, but it can be scratched, broken or cracked. It cannot be used in microwaves because it absorbs heat and softens. Melamine is used for many different items such as:

- Adhesives
- Appliances
- Electrical parts
- Food service applications
- Household goods
- Housings
- Laminates
- Lawn and garden equipment
- Tools

Melamine is considered a low health risk by the EPA and the United National Environment Program but it should not be ingested by humans or pets. According to an assessment by federal scientists, there is very low risk to humans from eating pork, chicken and eggs from animals that eat animal feed supplemented with pet food scraps that contained melamine and related compounds,

For more information about the risk to humans, see the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Melamine and analogues safety/risk assessment," release number 0129.07 at [www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2007/05/0129.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2007/05/0129.xml).

**IDPH newsletter now available**

The May 2007 issue of the Iowa Health Focus newsletter, published by the Iowa Department of Public Health, is now available online at [www.idph.state.ia.us/do/focus.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/do/focus.asp).

In this issue you will find:

- Newton named new director
- Planned and 'real' challenges part of exercise
- Preparedness messages delivered across Iowa
- Online license renewal, verification now available for more professions
- Stroke: a young family's story
- New directions discussed at Public Health Conference
- Innovative approaches to reach Iowa teens during Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Month
- Reporting system gets positive test results
- IDPH Team Voices: Office of Multicultural Health
- Special pictorial feature: Iowa's Mobile Health Care Facility
- Governor's Homeland Security Conference, July 16-18

Please send your comments on this issue or suggestions for future articles to [focus.editor@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:focus.editor@idph.state.ia.us). To subscribe to this mailing list, send a blank e-mail to [join-iahealthfocus@lists.ia.gov](mailto:join-iahealthfocus@lists.ia.gov).

### **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

#### **Barn Raising VI**

Mark your calendars for the Governor's Conference on Public Health: Celebrating Healthy Communities, also known as Barn Raising VI, on August 2 and 3 at Drake University in Des Moines. This conference, held once every two years, brings together cutting-edge experts from several health care arenas. The conference objectives are to share community health successes, develop strategies for strengthening the public health system, and to recognize and respond to new forces shaping healthy communities. The registration fee is \$50.00. For more information, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/barn\\_raising.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/barn_raising.asp).

#### **Have a healthy and happy week!**

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
800-362-2736