

Epi Update for Friday, November 15, 2024

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- Lassa fever response in Iowa
- *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* activity remains high
- Infographic: Show your lungs some love

Lassa fever response in Iowa

In October, a confirmed case of Lassa fever was identified in Iowa. An individual returning to Eastern Iowa from West Africa was hospitalized, diagnosed with Lassa fever, and later died.

Lassa fever is an acute viral illness. It can take 2 to 21 days for symptoms to appear after exposure. Infected individuals are not contagious until after their symptoms begin. Early symptoms may include fever, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, fatigue, nausea, or vomiting. As the disease advances, symptoms can become more severe. More serious symptoms include liver failure, delirium, shock, hemorrhage, and multi-organ dysfunction.

In West Africa, a rodent called the multimammate rat naturally carries the Lassa virus. People in West Africa mostly get Lassa fever from exposure to infected rodents and their droppings. There are no rodents that carry Lassa virus outside of West Africa.

Lassa fever can also spread from person to person through direct contact (through unprotected skin or mucous membranes) with:

- blood and body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of a person who is sick or died from Lassa fever.
- objects (like needles, clothing, bedding and equipment) that have been contaminated with the blood or body fluids of a person sick or who died from Lassa fever.

Iowa HHS, health care facilities, and local partners have been conducting daily symptom check-ins with those potentially exposed to the patient with Lassa fever. Public health completes detailed assessments and closely monitors individuals who report any symptom during this period. Monitoring will continue through day 21 after their most recent potential exposure. Iowa HHS provides daily updates to all counties who have residents that are being monitored.

Monitored individuals are asked to first contact CADE if they develop symptoms, prior to seeking care in an urgent care, emergency department, or another health care provider. No individuals being monitored have tested positive for Lassa fever.

Health care providers who suspect a patient may have Lassa fever should isolate the patient in a single room with a private bathroom/covered bedside commode. Contact CADE at 800-362-2736 immediately and adhere to infection prevention and control procedures to prevent transmission; PPE should include at minimum a gown, gloves, eye protection, and an N95.

For more information about Lassa fever visit www.cdc.gov/lassa-fever/about/index.html and repository.netecweb.org/exhibits/show/lassa/lassa.

***Mycoplasma pneumoniae* activity remains high**

Mycoplasma pneumoniae activity has increased since late spring and early summer across the United States. Iowa has experienced a similar increase in the percentage of emergency departments visits with *M. pneumoniae* diagnoses, with the largest increase beginning in mid-August and levelling off mid-September.

M. pneumoniae infection generally results in mild respiratory symptoms. However, the infection may also present as pneumonia or with serious complications that can require hospitalization. *M. pneumoniae* is spread by respiratory droplets, so it can be prevented using the same strategies that prevent other respiratory illnesses, such as washing hands, covering coughs, and staying home while sick.

Health care providers should be aware of the increase in *M. pneumoniae* and consider it as a possible cause of community-acquired pneumonia when performing laboratory testing and selecting treatments. Macrolides are the treatment of choice for *M. pneumoniae*, as some antibiotics such as beta-lactams are known to be ineffective.

For more information, visit

www.cdc.gov/ncird/whats-new/mycoplasma-pneumoniae-infections-have-been-increasing.html.

Infographic: Show your lungs some love

**Show Your Lungs
Some Love**

November 12 is World Pneumonia Day.

Protect yourself from pneumonia!

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs that can be especially dangerous for children younger than 5, adults 65 and older, and individuals with certain conditions like diabetes and lung disease.

**Ask your family's
healthcare providers about
pneumonia prevention.**

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Human Services

Source: cdc.gov

To view in full size, visit

content.govdelivery.com/attachments/IACIO/2024/10/31/file_attachments/3054487/296-9530_HHS_Immunization_FY24_November_Poster_8.5x11_vD.pdf.

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