

Epi Update for Friday, January 24, 2025

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- Avian influenza A(H5N1) screening, testing guidelines
- Updated *Listeria* guidelines regarding unheated queso fresco-type cheeses
- Infographic: Protect your pregnancy from *Listeria*

Avian influenza A(H5N1) screening, testing guidelines

Clinicians should consider avian influenza in patients with relevant exposure history and symptoms of acute respiratory illness or conjunctivitis. Determining exposure risk is vital when evaluating the need for testing for avian influenza in symptomatic individuals. Those with highest risk are individuals with a history of working directly with infected animals or at facilities where avian influenza has been identified. No known person-to-person spread has been identified in the United States.

Avian influenza should be considered when a patient with acute respiratory illness or conjunctivitis reports one of the following exposures within 10 days of symptom onset:

- close contact with sick poultry, sick wild waterfowl, or sick dairy cattle
- direct exposure to unpasteurized milk or dairy products
- attendance at an event where live birds are sold or traded

Health care facilities should perform routine influenza testing on any patient that is under consideration for avian influenza. Molecular testing is preferred, and influenza subtyping should be performed if available at the testing facility. If routine influenza testing on a patient under consideration for avian influenza is positive for influenza A and results as unsubtypeable or is unable to be subtyped, the specimen should be forwarded to SHL for subtyping.

CADE is available 24/7 at 1-800-362-2736 for consultation regarding patients who meet criteria for avian influenza testing.

There are currently no sites in Iowa with identified avian influenza infected poultry or dairy cattle. When sites are identified, Iowa HHS will contact hospitals in the impacted county regarding enhanced influenza surveillance testing.

For updates on avian influenza nationally, visit www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/situation-summary/index.html.

Updated *Listeria* guidelines regarding unheated queso fresco-type cheeses

CDC and FDA recently updated *Listeria* guidelines, now recommending groups at higher risk (including pregnant women and their newborns, people who are 65 years or older, and people with weakened immune systems) avoid any unheated queso fresco-type cheeses, even if made with pasteurized milk. Examples include queso fresco, queso blanco, and requesón. People at higher *Listeria* risk can still safely enjoy these cheeses if they are heated, cooked, or grilled before eating to 165°F or until steaming hot.

Those at higher risk for *Listeria* infection should continue to avoid:

- any type of cheese when made with (raw) unpasteurized milk
- unheated deli meat, cold cuts, hot dogs, and fermented or dry sausages
- premade deli salads, such as coleslaw and potato, tuna, or chicken salad
- refrigerated pâté or meat spreads
- refrigerated smoked fish
- raw or lightly cooked sprouts
- cut melon left out for more than 2 hours (1 hour if it's exposed to temperatures hotter than 90°F)
- cut melon in refrigerator for more than a week
- raw (unpasteurized) milk, yogurt, and ice cream

For full *Listeria* guidelines, including safer alternatives to foods recommended to avoid, visit www.cdc.gov/listeria/prevention/index.html#cdc_prevention_pre-choose-safer-foods.

Infographic: Protect your pregnancy from *Listeria*



Pregnant women are **10 times** more likely to get a *Listeria* infection. *Listeria* can cause pregnancy loss, premature birth, or a life-threatening infection in their newborn.

Protect yourself and your baby from food poisoning by making safer food choices:
www.cdc.gov/foodsafety

 

CS 339368-C

To view in full size, visit [339368-C Social-Media-Graphics Pregnant-Women-1080-x-1080.jpg \(2048x2048\)](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/social-media-graphics/pregnant-women-1080-x-1080.jpg)

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