

Epi Update for Friday, February 7, 2025

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS)

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- Influenza activity high, increase in schools reporting 10% or more absenteeism due to illness
- Super Bowl food safety
- Ebola outbreak caused by Sudan virus in Uganda

Influenza activity high, increase in schools reporting 10% or more absenteeism due to illness

Influenza activity in Iowa continues to increase. Several tracked measures have reached highs for the 2024 - 2025 season (September 29, 2024 - September 27, 2025) and may continue to rise. From January 26 - February 1:

- Over 33% of molecular influenza tests reported on the Iowa lab survey were positive.
- Over 10% of emergency visits reported to Iowa's syndromic surveillance system were for influenza.
- A total of 139 schools reported at least 10% percent absenteeism due to illness.

Local public health agencies follow-up with schools that report 10% or more absenteeism due to illness to provide disease prevention education. Respiratory illnesses caused most of the absenteeism, but gastrointestinal illnesses that peak in winter such as norovirus were also common. Frequent hand washing, staying home while ill, and proper environmental cleaning/sanitation are effective against both.

Vaccination remains the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against serious outcomes of viral respiratory illnesses.

To view the weekly Iowa *Respiratory Virus Report*, visit hhs.iowa.gov/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/iowa-influenza-surveillance.

Super Bowl food safety

Keep these food safety tips in mind when gathering this Sunday for the big game:

- Wash hands before and after preparing food or handling takeout and before eating.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure food reaches a safe internal temperature.
 - Whole beef, pork and lamb: 145 F
 - Ground meat: 160 F
 - Poultry (ground and whole): 165 F
 - Eggs: 160 F
 - Fish and shellfish: 145 F
 - Leftovers and casseroles: 165 F
- Use a food thermometer on several chicken wings to gauge the doneness of the entire batch.
 - If one is under 165 F, continue cooking all wings until they reach that safe internal temperature.
- Perishable food should be refrigerated/frozen or discarded within two hours of serving.
 - Bring out one set of servings during the first half of the game, and a second set of servings for the second half to ensure your food doesn't stay out for more than two hours.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure leftovers are reheated to safe internal temperatures.

For more Super Bowl food safety tips, visit www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/01/27/dont-run-out-clock-food-safety-super-bowl.

Ebola outbreak caused by Sudan virus in Uganda

CDC has released a Health Advisory for a recently identified outbreak of Ebola in Uganda caused by the Sudan virus. One confirmed case in a health care provider has been identified in the capital city of Kampala. Health authorities in Uganda are working to identify infected people and sources of transmission. No cases related to this outbreak have been reported in the United States, or outside of Uganda. The risk to Iowans remains very low.

Health care providers should be vigilant for and evaluate any patients suspected of having Ebola, particularly those who have been to an area with an active outbreak in the past 21 days and have compatible risk factors and symptoms.

Symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Unexplained bleeding

Many illnesses associated with travel can have similar symptoms, including influenza, malaria, or typhoid fever.

Ebola risk factors for those who have travelled to impacted areas include:

- direct contact with sick or deceased individuals or objects contaminated by their body fluids
- attending or participating in funeral rituals
- visiting or working in a health care facility or laboratory
- contact with cave-dwelling bats or non-human primates
- working or visiting a mine or cave

Health care providers who suspect a patient may have Ebola should:

- Isolate the patient.
- Use appropriate PPE
- Immediately contact CADE at 800-362-2736.

To view the full CDC HAN, visit www.cdc.gov/han/2025/han00521.html.

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