

Epi Update for Friday, March 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

- Vaccine recommendations and food safety for spring break travel
- National increase in pertussis cases in 2024
- Infographic: Food and beverage safety for the international traveler

Vaccine recommendations and food safety for spring break travel

With spring break approaching, travelers should be reminded of the health risks associated with domestic and international travel. CDC offers destination-specific guidelines for international travel. Key points of concern include ongoing disease outbreaks or travel warnings at the destination, vaccines recommended prior to travel, and prophylactic medication to consider packing for the trip.

Remember to check the vaccination guidelines for destinations early in the travel planning process, as some vaccine schedules recommend multiple doses, and it generally takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop post-vaccination to reach full protection.

Examples of vaccines that may be recommended based on destination include hepatitis A, Japanese encephalitis, typhoid, and yellow fever. It is also important to ensure routine vaccines such as MMR, hepatitis B, influenza, Tdap, etc. are up to date before traveling.

There are several important food and water safety tips to keep in mind while traveling internationally:

- Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Consider not eating raw foods. Fruits and vegetables are often safer to eat if you can peel them yourself or wash them with bottled or disinfected water.
- Pre-packaged foods are generally a safer option than food opened or handled by another person.
- Do not drink tap water or use ice in countries where tap water might be contaminated. Avoid swallowing water while showering and brush your teeth with bottled or disinfected water. Tap water can be disinfected by boiling, filtering, or chemically treating.

For more information about travel safety from CDC, including guidelines based on destination, visit wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

For more food safety tips when traveling, visit wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/food-water-safety.

National increase in pertussis cases in 2024

Pertussis case reports have been lower than usual over the past five years. However, the United States is returning to typical patterns where more than 10,000 cases are reported each year. In 2024, reported cases of pertussis increased across the United States and in Iowa, indicating a return to pre-pandemic trends. Preliminary data from CDC shows more than six times as many cases in 2024 than in 2023.

Vaccination remains the best way to prevent pertussis. However, as typical infection patterns return to the United States, CDC expects pertussis cases to continue to increase in both unvaccinated and vaccinated populations. Pertussis can occur in vaccinated people as protection from vaccination fades over time.

For more information regarding pertussis vaccination trends, visit hhs.iowa.gov/data/health/immunization.

For more information on national pertussis trends, visit www.cdc.gov/pertussis/php/surveillance/index.html.

Infographic: Food and beverage safety for the international traveler



To view in full size, visit stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/55282.

Have a healthy and happy week!
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