

Epi Update for Friday, March 14, 2025

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS)

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- Prevent mosquito-borne diseases while traveling internationally
- Factors contributing to foodborne illness outbreaks in the U.S.
- Infographic: Stay safe from shingles

Prevent mosquito-borne diseases while traveling internationally

Iowans traveling internationally should review the risks of mosquito-borne diseases at their destination(s) and plan ahead to prevent mosquito bites during their trip. Mosquitoes at many destinations can spread diseases not common or not present in the continental United States.

Those traveling to an area where malaria is found should speak to their health care provider about malaria prevention medication. Don't forget them when packing!

If traveling to an area with a risk of chikungunya, Japanese encephalitis, or yellow fever, travelers should speak to their health care provider to determine if a vaccine is recommended prior to travel. Peak protection isn't generally reached until a couple weeks post-vaccination, so be sure to schedule appointments far enough in advance of departure.

Regardless of the destination, the best way to prevent mosquito bites is to use an EPA-registered insect repellent with one of the following active ingredients:

- DEET
- Picaridin (known as KBR 3023 or icaridin outside the United States)
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE)
- Para-menthane-diol (PMD)

After returning, travelers should monitor for symptoms and seek health care if they experience fever, headache, muscle / joint pain, or rash.

For more information about preventing mosquito bites while traveling, visit www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/prevention/preventing-mosquito-bites-while-traveling.html.

Factors contributing to foodborne illness outbreaks in the U.S.

A recent CDC MMWR reviewed the factors that contributed to foodborne outbreaks identified in the U.S. from 2014 - 2022.

Overall, the most common contributing factor across all foodborne outbreaks was contamination by an animal or environmental source prior to arriving at the final point of preparation, occurring in nearly a third of outbreaks by the end of the study period. The second most common contributing factor was barehand contact by food workers, especially viral outbreaks.

Bacterial foodborne outbreaks were most often linked to improper time/temperature control during cooking and allowing foods to remain at unsafe temperatures for prolonged periods following cooking. Viral foodborne outbreaks were most often linked to ill food workers.

Iowa HHS partners with local public health agencies, Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL), and the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL) to investigate foodborne outbreaks. In 2024, 53 gastrointestinal outbreaks were identified in Iowa across a variety of settings, with norovirus being the most commonly identified cause.

To view the full CDC MMWR, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/74/ss/ss7401a1.htm?s_cid=ss7401a1_w.

Infographic: Stay safe from shingles

Stay Safe From Shingles

1 in 3 people will get shingles.
Prevention is possible.

Say no to shingles (herpes zoster virus). Shingles can cause a painful skin rash and lead to serious health problems, such as long-term nerve pain and vision loss.

Shingles stays dormant in your nervous system after you recover from chickenpox. Your risk of shingles increases with age.

The shingles vaccine is the best way to protect against the virus and its complications. The shingles vaccine is recommended for:

- Adults 50 and older.
- Adults 19 and older with weakened immune systems.

Ask your healthcare provider about the shingles vaccine.

Source: cdc.gov

To view in full size, visit

content.govdelivery.com/attachments/IACIO/2025/03/05/file_attachments/3184138/296-9708_FY25_MonthlyToolkits_March_Shingles_Poster%20%281%29.pdf.

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