

Epi Update for Friday, March 28, 2025

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS)

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- Expanded and updated Iowa HHS rabies resources
- *Salmonella* and Easter chicks
- Join the TB Champions network!
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Expanded and updated Iowa HHS rabies resources

Over the past month updates and expansions have been made to the online rabies resources provided by Iowa HHS.

The rabies web page for the public, providers, and veterinarians has been updated and expanded with:

- handouts on how to catch a bat.
- a table of recommended confinement/quarantine periods for animals potentially exposed to rabies.
- information on rabies requirements when traveling internationally with a pet.

The rabies *Epi Manual* chapter was also updated and contains detailed guidance for health care providers regarding:

- assessing the risk of rabies in a patient.
- post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).
- pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- products available in the U.S. for PEP and PrEP.
- where to order rabies titers.

The *Epi Manual* chapter should be the first resource Iowa health care providers reference when making rabies related decisions. For non-urgent questions from the public, an email inbox has been stood up at rabies@hhs.iowa.gov. This inbox is monitored every business day.

The rabies phone consultation process has not changed and is still available 24/7 for local partners, health care providers, and veterinarians during business hours at 800-362-2736 or after hours by calling 515-323-4360 and asking to speak with the on-call epidemiologist.

To view the updated Iowa HHS rabies web page for the public, providers, and veterinarians, visit hhs.iowa.gov/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/rabies-information-public-providers-and-veterinarians.

To view the updated Iowa HHS rabies *Epi Manual* chapter, visit hhs.iowa.gov/center-acute-disease-epidemiology/epi-manual/reportable-diseases/rabies.

Salmonella and Easter chicks

Salmonella is a common cause of acute gastroenteritis, and can range from mild to severe. Most people recover with supportive care, however CDC states that salmonellosis is the leading cause of hospitalizations and deaths linked to foodborne illness.

Salmonella can also be spread by direct contact with animals, especially reptiles and birds. Contact with baby chicks is a known risk factor, and these exposures increase dramatically around Easter.

CDC has a wide variety of educational materials regarding how to stay safe around backyard poultry. Key prevention messages include:

- Children less than five years of age or others at high risk shouldn't handle poultry or items contaminated by poultry.
- Wash hands with soap and water after touching poultry or items contaminated by poultry.
- Don't kiss or snuggle poultry and then touch your face or mouth.
- Do not let poultry live inside your home.
- Do not wash backyard poultry food and water dishes in the kitchen sink.

For more information, visit, www.cdc.gov/healthy-pets/about/backyard-poultry.html.

Join the TB Champions network!

Tuberculosis (TB) reclaimed its position as the deadliest infection in 2024. Thanks to the efforts of our predecessors, tuberculosis is now rarely encountered by frontline health care providers in the U.S., especially in the Midwest and rural areas. However, this low incidence can lead to uncertainty and delays in diagnosis, increasing the risk of transmission and poor patient outcomes. Frontline providers play a crucial role in TB diagnosis and treatment, as patients with TB symptoms often seek care from primary care, ER, urgent care, or general hospitalists before seeing specialists. When primary care providers are confident in managing latent TB infection, they contribute significantly to TB elimination efforts.

We are building a network of frontline clinicians as "TB Champions" to raise awareness, serve as resources, and empower peers to "think TB." The program focuses on recognizing and diagnosing active TB disease and treating latent TB infection in both adults and children. TB Champions will complete training developed by the Mayo Clinic Center for Tuberculosis, a CDC-designated Center of TB Excellence. They will progress through the program as a cohort, completing self-study modules and engaging in virtual meetings for case-based learning. After training, the cohort will stay connected to discuss challenges and share ideas.

No prior TB experience is required; ideal TB champions are eager to learn and committed to TB elimination. Clinicians from primary care, emergency medicine, urgent care, and hospital medicine, including physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, are encouraged to apply. Other roles may be considered if they align with the program's goals.

The pilot program will launch in Kansas and Iowa, where active TB rates are rising.

For more information, visit centerfortuberculosis.mayo.edu/education-and-training/tb-champions-network/.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Epi Intensive, a free virtual training for infection prevention and control (IPC) for acute care workers, will be held April 8 - 10. The course introduces the various roles and responsibilities of the infection preventionist and uses a risk assessment framework for understanding IPC. Scenarios, case studies, digital flashcards, group activities, and open discussion help you practice and apply IPC knowledge to enhance your competency as an IP. The course includes access to five online modules to reinforce learning. Continuing education credits are available. For more information and to register, visit portal.apic.org/s/community-event?id=a1mUd000000Ci5J.

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