

Epi Update for Friday, April 4, 2025

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS)

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- Tick prevention, removal, and testing
- Roadway safety tips for motorists during planting season
- In the news: Influenza vaccine composition for the 2025-2026 U.S. influenza season
- Infographic: Traffic safety when driving farm equipment on roadways

Tick prevention, removal, and testing

Increased tick activity as the weather warms also means increased risk of tickborne diseases such as Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and more. Tick bites can be prevented by avoiding wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter, treating clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin, and using EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.

If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove the tick as soon as possible using the following steps:

- Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth easily with tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
- After removing the tick, clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
- Dispose of the tick by flushing it down the toilet. If you would like to bring the tick to your health care provider for identification, put it in rubbing alcohol or place it in a sealed bag/container.

If you develop symptoms such as a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your health care provider and tell them about the recent tick bite, when the bite occurred, and where the tick was most likely acquired.

In general, it is not recommended to test a removed tick for evidence of infection:

- Laboratories that conduct tick testing are not required to have the high standards of quality control used by clinical diagnostic laboratories. Results of tick testing should not be used for treatment decisions.
- Positive results showing that a tick contains a disease-causing organism do not necessarily mean that you have been infected.
- Negative results can lead to false assurance. You may have been unknowingly bitten by a different tick that was infected.
- If you do become ill, you should not wait for tick testing results before beginning appropriate treatment.

For more information from CDC about ticks and health risks to humans, visit www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html.

Roadway safety tips for motorists during planting season

Spring will bring increased farm equipment to Iowa's roadways. Motorists are almost always traveling at a higher speed than farm equipment. When traveling at these speeds, the gap between farm equipment and motorists closes very quickly. Therefore, it is extremely important to remind motorists to slow down early when approaching farm machinery, be patient, pass with care, and avoid inappropriate honking.

Share the following safety tips for motorists to help prevent accidents with farm equipment:

- Be prepared for farm vehicles. Farm vehicles travel significantly slower than automobiles. You may only have a few seconds to react and slow down before overtaking a farm vehicle. Be prepared to slow down and follow; you may not have room to pass.
- Slow down and keep your distance from farm vehicles. Don't assume that the farmer can pull over and let you pass. Shoulder conditions may make it unsafe for the farmer to pull heavy equipment to the side of the road.
- Be sure of the farmer's intentions before passing. Don't assume that a farm vehicle is turning right or pulling over to let you pass if it pulls to the right side of the road. A farmer may have to swing right in order to make a left turn. Wait until you know what the farmer is planning to do.
- Be patient and enjoy the scenery if you find yourself following a farm vehicle. Even if you have to follow a farm vehicle for a couple of miles, it will only take a few minutes of your time.
- Be especially alert in the evenings, as farmers are returning from the fields and dusk makes farm vehicles more difficult to see.

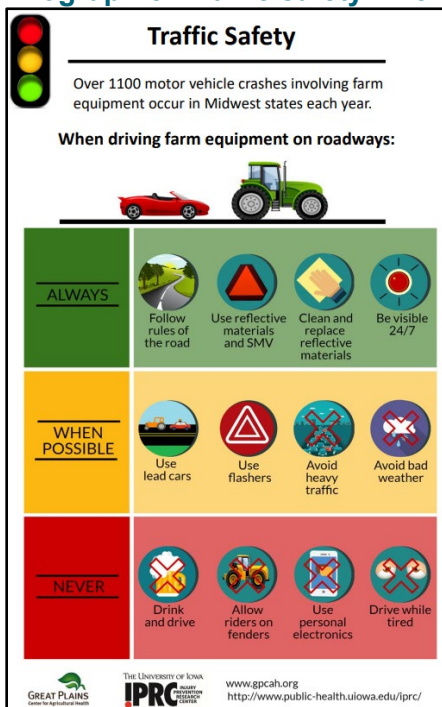
For more road safety tips for farmers and motorists, visit

www.extension.iastate.edu/news/roadway-safety-tips-motorists-and-farmers-during-planting-season.

In the news: Influenza vaccine composition for the 2025-2026 U.S. influenza season

www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/influenza-vaccine-composition-2025-2026-us-influenza-season

Infographic: Traffic safety when driving farm equipment on roadways



To view in full size, visit

gpcah.public-health.uiowa.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Roadway_Safety_11x17.pdf.

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