

Epi Update for Friday, May 9, 2025

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS)

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **Reminder: Measles testing at SHL via CADE with quick turnaround**
- **Common childhood rash conditions that can mimic measles**
- **Emergency kits and tornado season**
- **Infographic: Measles is more than just a rash.**

Reminder: Measles testing at SHL via CADE with quick turnaround

Health care providers should remain vigilant for suspected cases of measles, as the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. continues to rise. Over 90% of cases reported nationally have been outbreak-associated, and over 95% of cases were unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccination status. No measles cases have been reported in Iowa since 2019.

Measles is characterized by a prodrome of fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis (the three "C"s), followed by a maculopapular rash that spreads from the head to the trunk to the lower extremities. Consider measles in patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible symptoms, especially if they recently traveled to an area impacted by an outbreak or were exposed to a person with febrile rash illness.

Health care providers who suspect measles should immediately notify CADE while the patient is still at the health care facility by calling 515-242-5935 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours. During the consultation CADE epidemiologists will ask for patient information including the progression of symptoms, vaccination status and ask about any known exposures. This information will help the epidemiologists to determine the testing priority for each patient. CADE will then help facilitate measles PCR testing at Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) free of charge with a 24-48 hour turnaround time. Sending measles testing to reference laboratories may significantly delay results, and therefore time-sensitive public health actions, if necessary.

Health care providers should routinely evaluate patient vaccination status and promote measles containing vaccines (MMR or MMRV) for patients who do not have presumptive evidence of immunity.

For updates from CDC about measles in the U.S., visit www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html.

Common childhood rash conditions that can mimic measles

While staying vigilant for measles, health care providers should also consider other rash conditions in their differential diagnosis, especially in patients who are vaccinated for measles, have no fever (without fever reducing medication), and/or who do not exhibit the three "C"s: cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.

Children who are prescribed antibiotics such as amoxicillin may develop a rash during or shortly after the treatment course. This rash may occur while symptoms the antibiotic was prescribed to treat are still present, complicating the diagnosis.

Late spring marks the start of peak season for hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD). Most common in children under five years old, hallmarks of HFMD include fever, sore throat, painful mouth sores that blister, and rash on the hands and feet. The disease is usually not serious, and most people recover in 7-10 days.

Parvovirus B19 often presents as Fifth disease, featuring a red “slapped cheek” rash on the face a few days after fever or influenza-like symptoms. It can also cause a general rash on the chest, back, buttocks, arms, or legs. The rash may be itchy. Parvovirus B19 infections are usually mild and will go away on their own.

For more information from CDC on HFMD and other childhood conditions, visit www.cdc.gov/parents/children/diseases-and-conditions.html.

Emergency kits and tornado season

As we enter tornado season, take a few minutes to create an emergency kit or check your existing kit for expired items. Your emergency kit should have everything you need to sustain your family for three to five days.

Here are a few key items to consider stocking in your emergency supply kit:

- Water: Each person needs one gallon per day.
- Non-perishable food: Don't forget a can opener!
- Bottles, formula, diapers, and other infant supplies
- First-aid kit and medication: Check expiration dates!
- Flashlights and batteries
- AM/FM radio
- Important documents

For a complete checklist, visit ready.iowa.gov/be-prepared/build-kit.

Infographic: Measles is more than just a rash.

Measles is more than just a rash.

It is a dangerous disease for everyone, especially babies and young children that can cause symptoms that might lead to hospitalization.



High fever



Cough



Rash



Red, watery eyes or “pink eye”

To view in full size, visit

content.govdelivery.com/attachments/IACIO/2025/04/18/file_attachments/3235075/Measles%20social%203.png.

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