

EPI Update for Friday, October 10, 2008
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **International Infection Prevention week October 19-25**
- **Salmonellosis and undercooked frozen chicken dishes**
- **Updated rabies vaccine shortage information**
- **Flu vaccination during pregnancy protects mothers and newborns**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

International Infection Prevention week October 19-25

A facility's Infection Preventionist is uniquely positioned to prevent infection by connecting the science of infection prevention to the people most deeply and personally affected—patients, visitors, volunteers, employees and health care workers. An Infection Preventionist can be found in a variety of health care settings, including: hospitals, long-term care, ambulatory care, acute care, home care, hospices, public health, behavioral health, emergency preparedness and more. Areas of focus for an Infection Preventionist include:

Prevention—Prevention of health care-associated infections: such as methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE), *Clostridium difficile*, surgical site infections, Hepatitis B virus, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, and all other transmittable infections.

Procedures—Environmental factors: such as hand hygiene, facility cleanliness, adherence to policies and regulations for infection prevention, infection control risk assessment for construction and renovation projects.

Positive Results—Financial effectiveness: working to ensure that infection outbreaks are minimized or eliminated in order to diminish their effect on an institution's bottom line.

Do your part to support Infection Preventionists. This includes giving them the recognition they deserve and doing the simple prevention measures they recommend such as hand hygiene, cough etiquette and getting an annual influenza vaccine.

Salmonellosis and undercooked frozen chicken dishes

Recently, the Minnesota Department of Health identified an outbreak of salmonellosis attributed to uncooked, frozen chicken dishes. No cases have been identified in Iowa, but IDPH is investigating reported salmonella cases for possible connections to this outbreak.

Many confirmed cases reportedly did not follow the package's cooking instructions and microwaved the chicken despite the absence of microwave cooking instructions on the package. The USA Department of Agriculture (USDA) cited frozen dishes in which the chicken is raw, but is breaded or pre-browned, giving the appearance of being cooked.

IDPH is reminding consumers of the critical importance of following package cooking instructions for frozen raw chicken products and general food safety guidelines when handling and preparing any raw meat or poultry. It is especially important to use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of these chicken products such that all points of measurement are at least 165 F.

Salmonellosis is one of the most common bacterial food-borne illnesses. Salmonella infections can be life-threatening, especially to infants and the elderly. The most common symptoms of salmonellosis are diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever within 8 to 72 hours. Additional symptoms may be chills, headache, nausea, and vomiting that can last up to seven days.

Updated rabies vaccine shortage information

As you have read in previous editions of the Friday Update, rabies vaccine is currently in short supply. The guidance for acquiring rabies vaccine is changing on a frequent basis. For this reason, IDPH has added a link at the top of the Rabies Page on the IDPH Web site. This link will provide current information on product availability and guidelines for ordering product. Please visit the link at:
www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/cade/rabies_vaccine_ordering_instructions.pdf

Please be aware that Novartis has just announced that RabAvert will again be available for post exposure treatment only. Current vaccine procurement guidelines are summarized below:

Rabies vaccine is now available from both suppliers (for post exposure only)

Sanofi-Pasteur: Sanofi-Pasteur requires that health care providers confer with state public health officials to obtain a confirmation code (that changes often) before processing vaccine orders. Please contact IDPH at 800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours to obtain the confirmation code required by Sanofi-Pasteur to order rabies vaccine.

Novartis: Effective 10/09/08 RabAvert is again available for rabies post exposure treatment. No password is required to place orders for vaccine. Contact Novartis at 800-244-7668 to order vaccine.

IDPH is available 24/7 for consultation. During business hours, please call 800-362-2736 or after hours call 515-323-4360 (this will connect you to the Iowa State Patrol who will page the on-call staff).

Flu vaccination during pregnancy protects mothers and newborns

A recent study published in the October 2008 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) found that mothers who were immunized against the flu during pregnancy reduced the chance of their newborn baby contracting a respiratory illness with fever by 29 percent.

Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommend that all women who are pregnant during the flu season or recently gave birth be immunized against the flu. The flu vaccine may be

given in any trimester; and it is recommended that pregnant women be given the inactivated injected vaccine, not the live nasal spray vaccine.

Pregnant women are more likely to be hospitalized from complications of influenza, especially in their third trimester, than non-pregnant women of the same age. Infants under 6 months of age have the highest rate of hospitalization from influenza among children in the U.S. That rate is even higher than in elderly and other high-risk groups, noted the October 2008 NEJM study.

To view the entire article in the NEJM, go to content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/359/15/1555.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Influenza Teleconferences: We apologize for confusion surrounding the dates of the influenza teleconferences announced in last week's update. The correct information is now available at www.uhl.uiowa.edu/educationoutreach/conferencesevents/influenza/. These influenza teleconferences, presented by UHL and IDPH, will cover testing, surveillance, educational resources, infection control, and the impact of other respiratory pathogens. The teleconference is free, but you must register at the above Web site.

Influenza Teleconference for Health Professionals

Date/time: Tuesday, November 4th from 12-1 p.m.

Target audience: Clinicians, infection control professionals, clinic staff and directors, public health professionals

Influenza Teleconference for Laboratories

Date/time: Tuesday, November 11th from 12-1 p.m.

Target audience: Laboratory staff, lab directors, and infection control professionals

Influenza Teleconference for Schools, Child Care and Social Settings

Date/time: Tuesday, November 18th from 3-4 p.m.

Target audience: School nurses, school administrators, child care providers, persons supervising or coordinating social gatherings

UHL Fall Professional Forum

The University Hygienic Laboratory is hosting a series of Fall Professional Forums throughout Iowa. The purpose of the forums is to present valuable educational information and discuss current preparedness activities. For more information and to register, go to www.uhl.uiowa.edu/educationoutreach/conferencesevents/forum/.

Region 3 - Wednesday, October 29 Morningside College Room 315 Lewis Hall, Sioux City, Iowa

Region 4 - Tuesday, October 28 Cass County Community Center Cass County Fairgrounds 10 Street and, Palm Atlantic, Iowa

Region 5 - Thursday, October 9 Washington County Fair Building Conference Room 2225 250th Street, Washington, Iowa

Region 6 - Thursday, November 13 Scott Community College Strident Life Center
Room 2300 Davenport, Iowa

Have a healthy and happy week! Enjoy the beautiful fall weather.

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800-362-2736