

EPI Update for Friday, January 23, 2009
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Healthy travel for lowans**
- **Today only 14 percent of lowans smoke**
- **Update: *Salmonella* Typhimurium national outbreak**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Healthy travel for lowans

As the long Iowa winter settles in, many lowans have begun planning vacations, and the need exists for planning healthy travel, especially if the trip includes international destinations.

First, schedule a visit with your health care provider as soon as possible, since some vaccines and medications need weeks or months to become fully effective. Second, visit CDC's Travelers' Health Web site (www.cdc.gov/travel). It is a good resource for current information on recommended vaccines, prophylactic medications for malaria and other diseases and tips on how to stay well when traveling.

If your travel requires more specialized health planning, visiting a travel clinic may be helpful. Travel clinics are staffed by health care professionals with expertise in travel medicine and can provide pre- and post-travel counselling, immunizations and malaria prevention, and immunization certificates and hard-to-find required vaccines such as yellow fever. There are travel clinics located throughout the state; contact your health care provider or local health department for a referral to the closest clinic.

Other suggestions for healthy travel include:

- 1) Plan for the environment – jet lag, motion sickness, high altitude, and extreme temperature changes
- 2) Protect yourself from disease-carrying insects – wear long sleeves and pants and use insect repellent and bed nets
- 3) Wear comfortable shoes – protect your feet from injury, insect bites, and infection
- 4) Drink purified water – use purified or commercially bottled water; don't forget to make ice cubes from purified water and use bottled water to brush your teeth
- 5) Watch what you eat – make sure food is well cooked and served hot, and wash and peel or cook fruits and vegetables

Today only 14 percent of lowans smoke

Iowans are smoking less than ever before. A recent survey showed that smoking in Iowa has dropped 22 percent since 2006. The decrease is one of the most significant drops experienced by any state in recent years. In 2002, 23 percent of adults in Iowa smoked. That rate dropped to 18 percent in 2006 and today the rate is only 14 percent - one of the lowest in the country.

The Quitline Iowa, at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) and at www.QuitlineIowa.org provides several programs aimed at tobacco use prevention and cessation for youth and adults:

1. A toll-free statewide smoking cessation telephone counseling service in which trained counselors assist callers with an individualized quit plan and on-going support through follow-up calls.
2. Free nicotine patches and gum are available. Iowans who call the hotline prior to Jan. 31 can get a four-week free supply of nicotine patches or gum. (After Jan. 31, a two-week supply will be available).
3. Free medication and counseling to are also available. There are over a dozen clinics across Iowa which provide a 12-week supply of most FDA approved medications, including nicotine patches and Chantix™. For more information and to locate a clinic, contact the Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association at 515-244-9610.

For more information about these and other tobacco control programs, call (515) 281-6225 or visit www.idph.state.ia.us/tobacco/.

Update: *Salmonella* Typhimurium national outbreak

IDPH continues to collaborate with CDC and public health officials in other states to investigate the multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Typhimurium; 487 people in 43 states and Canada have been infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella*; the outbreak is linked to 6 deaths. Iowa has two confirmed cases and a third case is being investigated.

Salmonella Typhimurium infections are associated with contaminated large volume peanut butter sold to institutions such as schools and nursing homes. This brand of peanut butter is not sold directly to consumers. Peanut butter sold to individual customers at grocery stores is not implicated, and should be safe.

Many peanut butter-containing products, such as peanut butter crackers, have also been linked to this outbreak. The FDA is issuing recalls on these products, but the list is expanding daily; an up-to-date list of recalled products can be found at www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/salmonellatyph.html

It is recommended at this time that all peanut butter-containing products (crackers, cookies, etc.) not be eaten. Instead, store them out of the reach of children until the investigation is complete and it is known whether they are safe to eat or should be thrown away.

For more information on *Salmonella* and the current national outbreak, please visit www.cdc.gov/salmonella/typhimurium.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

The University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL) is offering a Wet Workshop at the Ankeny facility. This one day workshop will be offered twice, on Tuesday, March 10 and Wednesday, March 11, 2009. This program is geared for clinical microbiologists and will provide in-depth information and hands-on experience about specific select agents of bioterrorism. Protocols for collecting and handling specimens will be addressed. For more information, contact Rick Bonar at (319) 335-4099 or richard-bonar@uiowa.edu.

Save the date for the Iowa Public Health Conference, April 7-8, 2009 at Scheman Building on the Iowa State University campus in Ames

Have a healthy and happy week!

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