

EPI Update for Friday, January 29, 2010
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **UHL first to confirm Salmonella in nationwide outbreak**
- **Antacids can reduce stomach acid defenses**
- **Sitting is bad**
- **Face masks, hand hygiene reduce the spread of respiratory illness**
- **Acyclovir shortage**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

UHL first to confirm Salmonella in nationwide outbreak

An investigation of a national outbreak of *Salmonella Montevideo* has identified 187 cases in 39 states, including one case in Iowa, since July 1, 2009. Thirty-five people have been hospitalized; fortunately no deaths have been reported. The Iowa case was not hospitalized and has recovered.

During the investigation of the Iowa case, the Iowa Department of Public Health and public health officials in Plymouth County found leftover meat product (suspected as being associated with this outbreak) in the case's freezer. It was immediately sent to the University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL) for testing. On Monday, January 25, using DNA fingerprinting, UHL confirmed that this meat product contained the same *Salmonella Montevideo* strain as the outbreak. This meat product was recalled. See

[www.fsis.usda.gov/News & Events/Recall 006 2010 Release/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Recall_006_2010_Release/index.asp)

Antacids can reduce stomach acid defenses

More than 60 million Americans suffer from heartburn at least once per month and many will take antacids. The stomach normally has a pH of about 2 which assists in digestion. If the pH of the stomach acid is increased (becoming more neutral) by taking antacids or a similar medication, it can increase the risk for acquiring a food-borne illness (from bacteria such as *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter*) since these bacteria normally would be killed by the acid in the stomach. Thus, those taking medications which increase the pH of the stomach should be extra careful when preparing and handling food.

Sitting is bad

Reported in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, prolonged periods of sitting may be detrimental to good health, and more focus should be on the harm caused by daily inactivity, rather than just on the lack of regular exercise alone. This research indicates that prolonged periods of sitting and lack of whole body muscular movement are strongly linked to [obesity](#), [diabetes](#), heart disease, [cancer](#), and an overall higher risk of death regardless of whether moderate to vigorous

exercise is performed at another time. Further investigation is needed to establish a causal relationship between prolonged sitting and ill health.

The authors argue that the focus in clinical practice and guidelines should not only be to promote and prescribe exercise, but also to encourage people to maintain their intermittent levels of daily activities (such as climbing the stairs, rather than using elevators and escalators, five minutes of break during sedentary work, or walking to the store rather than taking the car). For more information visit: press.psprings.co.uk/bjasm/january/sm67702.pdf

Face masks, hand hygiene reduce the spread of respiratory illness

The use of face masks and hand hygiene may help reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses and may diminish the impact of the influenza A(H1N1) pandemic. This study found a significant reduction of influenza-like symptoms in the group using hand sanitizer and masks, and in the mask alone group, compared with a control group that used neither. In the hand sanitizer/mask group, there was a reduction of influenza-like symptoms ranging from 35 percent to 51 percent when compared with the control group. For more information visit: www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/650396

Acyclovir shortage

On January 21, 2010, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reported a shortage of acyclovir, a recommended therapy for genital herpes. CDC has published an alert on its Web site at www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2010/acyclovir-shortage.htm with referrals for additional information and other recommended therapies. CDC will continue to publish updates as new information becomes available.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Long Term Care Infection Prevention and Control Conference at Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluffs, IA on April 8, 2010. For more information, visit: www.goapic.org/brochures/10/10LTC.pdf

Have a healthy and happy week!

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