

EPI Update for Friday, March 12th, 2010
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Campylobacter activity rising, but why?**
- **Multi-state mumps outbreak among Hasidic (Jewish) population**
- **Iowa Prescription Drug Donation Repository grows**
- **National Weather Service predicting minor to moderate flooding**
- **Influenza weekly surveillance report condensed**
- **Iowa Disease Surveillance System upgraded**
- **Prepare to spring forward**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Campylobacter activity rising, but why?

Since November 2009, there has been an unexpected and unexplainable increase in the number of reported campylobacter (campy) illnesses in Iowa. Possible hypotheses include an actual increase in illness or an increase in positive tests due to the use of a new laboratory test approved in June 2009.

There is concern that this new test (non-culture, lateral-flow monoclonal antibody immunoassay) has a low positive predictive value (remember predictive value is determined by the sensitivity and specificity of the test as well as the prevalence in the population). There are national efforts to address the gaps between non-culture methods and the current gold standard, bacterial culture (culture does have its own challenges of very low sensitivity because campy is very difficult to grow).

Because of these concerns, between March 15th and May 15th, IDPH epidemiologists will be interviewing all Iowans reported with campy (using either type of test) about their symptoms and potential exposures. Health care providers should alert their patients with campy that they may receive a call from IDPH. We will report our findings and recommendations this summer.

Multi-state mumps outbreak among Hasidic (Jewish) population

A multi-state mumps outbreak is occurring primarily among the Hasidic (Jewish) population residing or attending school in the New York and New Jersey areas. A mumps outbreak affecting this same population is also ongoing in Israel. The onset of Pesach (Passover) may allow spread of mumps as people travel for the holiday, especially March 30th through April 5th. A couple cases related to this outbreak occurred in Iowa last year.

Iowa Prescription Drug Donation Repository grows

In its second full year of operation, the Iowa Prescription Drug Donation Repository program has helped more than 5,300 low-income Iowans receive needed prescription medications. The majority of donations come from long-term care pharmacies, physician's medication samples and individual donations. Any single-unit dosed medication or medications in their original sealed packaging (except for controlled substances and medications that require refrigeration) can be donated. Patients who are uninsured, underinsured or have a family income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive medications.

The program is administered by the Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation, a not-for-profit corporation, with funding from IDPH and the Iowa collaborative Safety Net Provider Network. For more information call 1-866-282-5817.

National Weather Service predicting minor to moderate flooding

The National Weather Service is predicting minor to moderate flooding in many areas of the state. However, water levels shouldn't come near the levels we saw in 1993 or 2008. The IDPH Flood Web page has been updated with new fact sheets and information at www.idph.state.ia.us/EmergencyResponse/Flooding.aspx

During times of flooding, people are often concerned about receiving a booster dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. Generally, there is no need for mass tetanus immunization programs, but media attention on potential flooding predictions may remind people to get a tetanus booster shot. Current flooding predictions offer a good opportunity to provide the new tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis booster (Tdap vaccine). For information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/immunization.asp.

Influenza weekly surveillance report condensed

Because of the reduction in flu activity, the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network (IISN) weekly report will be condensed and will only include statewide data. All of the surveillance systems will continue throughout the spring and summer, and if activity increases, more data will be provided. RSV and influenza rapid laboratory results will continue to be reported by region until activity wanes. For more information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/IdphArchive/Archive.aspx?channel=FluReports.

Iowa Disease Surveillance System Upgraded

An upgrade to the Iowa Disease Surveillance System (IDSS) occurred on Monday, March 8th. The most significant enhancement incorporated an electronic laboratory reporting link between the University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL), Iowa's state public health lab, and IDPH.

Prepare to spring forward

When daylight savings time changes, it is a good time go through a home checklist to be sure your home is safe:

- ? Change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.
- ? Perform a pressure check on fire extinguishers and replace if necessary.

See www.fire-extinguisher101.com/careandmaintenance.html .

- ? Check your home emergency stockpile (supplies such as food, water and batteries). If you don't have a stockpile, take some time to create one. See www.getreadyforflu.org/clocksstocks/.
- ? Re-familiarize yourself and your family with your community's emergency preparedness plan. See www.bereadyiowa.org/
- ? Update your family communication plan outlining how to get in touch with one another during an emergency.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy (and hopefully non-flooding) week!

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