

**EPI Update for Friday, November 22, 2013
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Last chance! Epi Update reader survey
- *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*
- Give thanks, NOT diarrhea this holiday
- Facts about antibiotic resistance
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Last chance! Epi Update reader survey

If you have not yet done so, please click on the link below to take the survey. It will take only 3 to 4 minutes. Your feedback is critical to help improve upon the content of the newsletter to ensure that it meets your needs. If you have already responded, you do not need to take it again – but thanks for doing it the first time!

To take the survey, visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/P8MYHVV.

Mycoplasma pneumoniae

The State Hygienic Laboratory has recently diagnosed multiple cases of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*. *M. pneumoniae* infection is very common; more than two million cases a year are estimated to occur in the U.S. Unlike similar respiratory diseases that are caused by viruses, such as the cold or the flu, *M. pneumoniae* is a bacterium and may be treated by antibiotics. Treatment may not only reduce symptoms, but also decrease the likelihood of spread. Laboratory testing enables appropriate antibiotic use by providing a confirmed diagnosis.

A diagnostic PCR test is available at SHL and other reference laboratories. If requesting testing from SHL (which will be fee for service), please request *M. pneumoniae* under the PCR column of the test request form. Any of the following specimens may be collected:

- Preferred: One nasal swab PLUS one throat swab in viral transport medium (BOTH swabs in a single tube). Do not remove swabs.
- A nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport medium. This is the specimen type collected for influenza surveillance.
- Lower respiratory tract specimens from patients with pneumonia.
- A dry nasopharyngeal swab. This is the same specimen type that is used for pertussis testing. Collect and transport per pertussis guidelines.

For more testing information, contact SHL at 319-335-4500 or visit www.shl.uiowa.edu/testmenu/clinicaltestmenu.xml.

Symptoms of *M. pneumoniae* include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, and fatigue. Up to 10 percent of cases develop pneumonia, which is sometimes called “walking pneumonia” because it is mild and rarely requires hospitalization. Symptoms may last from a few days to more than a month.

For more information on *M. pneumoniae*, visit
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/mycoplasmapneum_t.htm.

Give thanks, NOT diarrhea this holiday

IDPH often receives increased reports of foodborne illnesses and outbreaks following holidays that involve large family gatherings, such as Thanksgiving. Please encourage ill patients to stay home from gatherings, and not to cook for others for at least two days after their illness stops to prevent spreading their illness to family and friends. Also, please consider ordering stool testing for patients presenting with diarrhea and/or vomiting. Testing aids greatly in outbreak identification and response. While routine stool cultures detect many bacterial foodborne pathogens, the majority of foodborne outbreaks are caused by norovirus that won't be detected on routine culture. Norovirus testing is available at the State Hygienic Laboratory. Remember that in addition to individual diseases, ALL suspected outbreaks are reportable to public health.

Facts about antibiotic resistance

Here are some interesting facts regarding antibiotic resistance, according to the CDC:

- There are over two million cases of antibiotic-resistant infections in the U.S. each year, resulting in 23,000 deaths.
- Tens of millions of antibiotics are unnecessarily prescribed to treat outpatient viral respiratory infections each year.
- 50 percent of inpatients who receive antibiotics receive unnecessary or redundant therapy.

For more information on how healthcare providers can prevent antibiotic resistance, visit
www.cdc.gov/getsmart/campaign-materials/week/downloads/gsw-factsheet-providers.pdf.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

There will be no Epi Update published next week because of the Thanksgiving holiday; the next edition will be published December 6th.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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