

EPI Update for Friday, March 17, 2006
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Mumps update**
- **Mumps guidance for health care facilities**
- **Influenza update**
- **USDA announces second domestic BSE case**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Mumps update

A total of 67 probable and confirmed cases of mumps have been reported to IDPH as of the end of day Wednesday, March 15th. Reports of mumps cases have increased significantly in the last two weeks. Activity is slowly spreading from eastern Iowa to the central and western regions of the state. IDPH continues to work with local public health and health care providers and facilities to provide guidance and information. For the most recent mumps updates, tools and documents check the HAN or our Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/cade.asp.

Mumps guidance for health care facilities

Over five health care facilities have been affected by mumps already; either in patients or employees. IDPH sent a HAN alert yesterday with a letter to health care facilities (specifically hospital administrators and infection control practitioners) and local public health agencies emphasizing the need to take action to ensure health care workers are immunized for mumps (MMR vaccine). Bringing staff up to date on mumps immunizations and other vaccinations prevents disease in both workers and patients, and may result in less disruption and lower cost if exposures occur in a health care setting. To view the letter addressed to health care facilities and other mumps information, visit our Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/cade.asp. For consultation on unique exposure situations, contact CADE at (800) 362-2736 or the Bureau of Immunization and Disease Prevention at (800) 831-6293.

Serologic testing for mumps

Specimen submission and the interpretation of test results are somewhat different for patients with mumps-like symptoms and for non-symptomatic individuals. The following guidelines should be used when deciding where to send specimens and how to interpret results:

- **Non-symptomatic person:** If testing is performed to check immunologic status to mumps, IgG mumps serology can be performed at a person's own lab (please do not use the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory for routine immunity check). If the IgG is positive, the person is immune to mumps, either through vaccination or past disease. Remember, each lab has its own reference ranges for interpreting whether the results are positive or negative.

- **Person with mumps-like symptoms:** Laboratory specimens should be collected and sent to the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory (UHL). It is recommended that three types of specimens be obtained – blood specimens for serology to determine IgM & IgG, and saliva and urine specimens for mumps virus isolation. A positive IgM indicates current or very recent infection. In the symptomatic person the IgG is not diagnostic UNLESS you obtain both an acute specimen (as soon after onset as the patient is seen, but ideally four to five days after onset of symptoms) and convalescent blood specimen (from two to four weeks after onset) for serologic tests to determine if a four-fold rise in titer has occurred (e.g., from 1:40 to 1:320). The acute specimen can be drawn as soon after onset as the patient is seen, but ideally four to five days after onset, and the convalescent specimen should be drawn from 2 to 4 weeks after onset. As with any disease, lab work should be used in conjunction with clinical presentation (signs and symptoms).

Persons who have an “indeterminate” or “equivocal” level of immunity upon testing should be considered nonimmune and, if no contraindication to vaccination exists, vaccinated accordingly.

Influenza update

In Iowa

Influenza continues to be widespread throughout Iowa. Cases of influenza B are increasing; type B activity late in the flu season is not unusual for Iowa. Several reports of deaths in children due to bacterial infections secondary to influenza have been received by IDPH in the last two weeks. For more information on influenza activity or disease, visit our Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp.

Avian influenza

Cases of H5N1 continue to be confirmed in birds throughout Europe and in Africa. As of March 13th, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports 177 cases and 98 deaths. To view the WHO reports, visit www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html.

Pandemic influenza preparedness activities

Recent media reports have emphasized the need for individuals to prepare for pandemic influenza and the Iowa Department of Public Health would like to also stress that preparedness for any emergency is important. For more information on personal preparedness, visit the Protect Iowa Health Web site at www.protectionahealth.org.

USDA announces second domestic BSE case

On March 13, 2006 the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA-APHIS) announced that a non-ambulatory cow from a farm in Alabama tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), sometimes called mad cow disease. Based on the wear pattern of the cow's teeth, it was determined the cow was at least 10 years old, indicating that this cow was born before the FDA feed ban was implemented in 1997 (the possible route of exposure for the cow).

USDA has confirmed this cow did NOT enter the human food supply or animal feed chain. In January 2004 after the “BSE cow that stole Christmas 2003”, USDA-APHIS-FSIS established additional regulations to ensure the safety of our food and the health of the public. One such regulation is the policy on removal of specified risk material (SRM) from all animals slaughtered for human food, and prohibiting the use of these tissues in the human food supply. Specified risk material includes the skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia, eyes, vertebral column, spinal cord and dorsal root ganglia of cattle 30 months of age or older and the small intestine of all cattle. **The removal of SRM is internationally recognized as the most effective public health measure to prevent humans from becoming infected with BSE.**

For the full press release and more information on BSE, visit the USDA’s Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/bse.shtml.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Thirtieth Annual Iowa Infection Control Seminar.

Registration is now available. The meeting this year is being held at the Gateway Center in Ames, Iowa on May 2 and 3, 2006. The information is valuable to infection control professionals in all settings from long-term care to acute care as well as public health staff involved with infection control issues. Click on the following link for a copy of the brochure with the complete roster of speakers, mail-in registration form or a link for on-line registration:

www.uihealthcare.com/depts/corm/news/announcements/BROCHURE%202006.pdf.

Terrorist Threats to our Food Supply: Food Protection and Defense--Science, Ethics & Law

This conference will be presented Friday, April 21, 2006 at Cowles Auditorium, Humphrey Center, at the University of Minnesota. Topics include:

- From Food Safety to Food Protection and Defense
- Role of Regulation: Information, Incentives & Penalties
- Industry Concerns: Cost, Liability & Competition
- Consumer Perspectives on Food Protection and Defense
- Public Health Response to Threats
- Modeling the Public Health System Response to a Terrorist Event
- Moving Forward in Food Protection and Defense

For more information about registration, continuing education credits, agenda and speakers, visit the conference Web site at

www.lifesci.consortium.umn.edu/conferences/foodsafety.php.

NEHA offers avian flu pandemic online course

To assist public and environmental health professionals preparing for a possible flu pandemic, the National Environmental Health Association will offer two online-training courses on avian influenza. The first course, *Avian Flu Pandemic: Awareness for the Public Health Professional* is now available. The second course, *Avian Flu Pandemic:*

Preventive Measures Awareness will be available on March 24, 2006. Go to www.neha.org for more information.

Happy St. Pat's Day

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

800-362-2736