



A health and safety bulletin from

UI HealthWorks and WORKSAFE IOWA

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The Big Picture

Let's not forget the need for seasonal flu protection in the midst of all the attention on the H1N1 virus. The need for separate vaccinations, differentiation of priority groups, and other concerns should be clearly communicated. The Iowa Department of Public Health covers both H1N1 and seasonal flu issues on the "flu.gov" mapping project. A specific link for businesses provides actions steps, fact sheet for employees, a poster, and communications templates.

"The Current Flu Situation" - www.flu.gov/individualfamily/about/current/index.html#learn

"Seasonal Flu" - www.flu.gov/individualfamily/about/seasonalflu/index.html

"Flu News, Information, and Resources" - www.flu.gov/wherelive/healthmap/

Value of RIDTs for H1N1

Rapid Influenza Diagnostic Tests (RIDTs) have been useful for patient care during the normal flu season largely because they usually provide results within 30 minutes. The performance of an RIDT in patients infected with 2009 H1N1 virus was analyzed in Greenwich (CT)-where students and teachers in 2 schools were infected-and found to detect fewer than half the cases that had been confirmed by other testing. Although this study involved a limited number of patients from two small outbreaks, the results were comparable to other recently reported observations, and they support current recommendations not to use negative RIDT results to rule out pandemic H1N1 or to make infection control decisions.

CDC (MMWR) - www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5837a1.htm?s_cid=mm5837a1_e

Transmission Risk to Healthcare Workers

Personal protection equipment (PPE) is an important component of infection prevention efforts in healthcare facilities. A 2009 report by an independent committee of the Institute of Medicine provides background on flu transmission, current CDC and WHO infection control guidelines, and other topics. The committee recommended that 1) all healthcare workers in contact with H1N1 influenza use (at a minimum) fit-tested N95 respirators, and 2) increased research be funded on the various routes of influenza transmission, the effectiveness of PPE in a variety of clinical settings, and the next generation of PPE technologies.

Respiratory Protection for Healthcare Workers in the Workplace Against Novel H1N1 Influenza A: A Letter Report (free pdf - National Academies Press) - www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12748

A Bleak History

On September 28, 1918, a Liberty Loan parade (part of the national drive for the sale of liberty bonds) prompted an outbreak of influenza in Philadelphia, the US city that was the hardest hit during the worldwide epidemic. The entire city was quarantined and nearly 12,000 residents died. Overall, 5 out of every 1,000 people in the US fell victim to the flu. The death toll was much worse in the rest of the world: in Latin America, 10 out of every 1,000 people died, in Africa, 15/1,000, and in Asia it was as high as 35/1,000. By the time the epidemic ended, an estimated 30 million people were dead worldwide.

photo - Liberty Loan parade - <http://z.about.com/d/history1900s/1/0/w/E/1/flu2.jpg>

UI HealthWorks is a member of the WORKSAFE IOWA Occupational Medicine Associate Network, the only university-affiliated network of occupational health providers. WORKSAFE IOWA is an outreach program of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa (www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe).

October, 2009

CLINICAL SERVICES



UI HealthWorks Forum Dr. Henri Cuddihy and Tracie Abbott, ARNP

Q: What are the symptoms of seasonal influenza or 2009 H1N1 influenza?

A: The symptoms of seasonal and 2009 H1N1 influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. Some people may be infected with the flu, including 2009 H1N1, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever. Like seasonal flu, 2009 H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Q: What are suitable disinfectants for the flu virus?

A: Influenza A viruses can be effectively killed by many common disinfectants including bleach or ammonia based cleaning products. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains a list of commercial disinfecting products that are effective against influenza A viruses on hard non-porous surfaces (<http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/influenza-a-product-list.pdf>). Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for use, dilution, and contact time. If an EPA listed product is not available, an effective disinfecting solution can be made using household bleach (sodium hypochlorite). To use chlorine bleach for general surface area disinfection, use a mixture of ¼ cup of household bleach (5.25 percent concentration) with one gallon of water. Apply to surfaces. Leave wet for 2 minutes, then rinse and air dry. Perhaps you have a question(s) regarding occupational health and safety. If you will forward your question(s) to UI HealthWorks, an answer will be addressed in a future newsletter. Please e-mail your question(s) to nancy-maehl@uihealthworks.org.

[Contact UI HealthWorks today to reserve your onsite flu vaccinations for this fall's 2009-2010 season!](#)

Make arrangements to ensure your vaccinations are set at \$19 per immunization. Arrange it today by e-mailing Nancy at nancy-maehl@uihealthworks.org.

"Working Drug-Free Works!", October 19-25

Mark your calendars! This year's *Drug-Free Work Week* is October 19-25, and organizations of all sizes and in all industries are encouraged to take part and help spread the message that "Working Drug Free Works!" Now in its 4th year, this national campaign highlights the importance of being drug free to workplace safety and encourages workers with alcohol and drug problems to seek help. For help in planning, check out the *Drug-Free Work Week* Web site's lists of ideas for [employers and employees](#). *Drug-Free Work Week* is led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Working Partners for an Alcohol- and Drug-Free Workplace program. For more information about steps you can take to ensure your workplace is safe and drug free -- every week -- visit the [Working Partners Web site](#).

US Department of Labor - www.dol.gov/drugfreeworkweek

[Register for "Case Management: Care of Work-Related Injuries"](#)

Friday, October 16, 8 am – 4:15pm at the Holiday Inn, 1220 First Avenue, Coralville.

Sponsored by UI Heartland Center for Occupational Health & Safety and WORKSAFE IOWA, UI HealthWorks, and Work-Related Health Care Services at UI Hospitals & Clinics.

<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/heartland/ce/file.asp?ID=167>

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