UI HealthWorks and WORKSAFE IOWA

Views On Flu

Dr. Nancy Cox, director of the Influenza Division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is concerned that many people now think of “avian flu” and “pandemic flu” as the same thing, when they are not. In a public presentation at the University of Iowa on October 6, she noted that avian flu was a “pandemic threat” but that other flu viruses which already target humans could also break out in epidemic proportions. The CDC is tracking viruses (avian and human) around the world, using sophisticated methods of genetic testing to follow their changes. To view a video of Dr. Cox’s presentation (at no charge), go to www.prepareiowa.com/Public/ and follow the registration steps. To order a DVD or CD of the presentation (with a small charge for reproduction), go to www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icphp/products/videos.asp or contact Nicholas Champagne at 319/384-4114 or nicholas-champagne@uiowa.edu.

In a new training CD entitled “Pandemic Influenza: Protecting Iowa’s First Responders” Dr. Patti Quinlisk of the Iowa Department of Public Health explains that an average of three pandemics per century (in the 20th: 1918, 1957-58, 1968-69) causes her and other epidemiologists to think about a future one in terms of “when” rather than “if.” UI HealthWorks has the training CD, which also features presentations on safety considerations for first responders, public health approaches that are in place in Iowa, and legal issues of disease containment strategies.

Dr. Quinlisk reports that more influenza vaccine should be available this year than ever before, with multiple manufacturers, distributors, and distribution channels. In Iowa, the flu “season” usually begins in December and peaks in February. While November is the best time to be vaccinated (before the virus hits), vaccines will be available during the season as well. Who should receive the vaccine?

- children 6 months to 5 years old
- people 50+
- pregnant women
- individuals with a medical condition for which a physician recommends vaccination
- health care workers, including home health caregivers (only 36% of health care workers get vaccinated according to a 2004 report by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases)
- anyone who wants to reduce their or their loved ones’ chances of getting the flu

CDC (Preventing the Flu) - www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm

For information on availability and scheduling of vaccinations, contact UI HealthWorks at 319/665-2111.

OSHA Harmonizing Chemical Classification

OSHA is at the stage of inviting public comments, either written or electronic, on implementation of a Globally Harmonized System (GHS) for classifying chemicals. A new GHS will likely affect all existing hazard criteria and communication systems (including Safety Data Sheets and employee training).


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).