Seasonal Flu Update

Jackson County Public Health officials have declared that influenza is circulating widely in Jackson County. Jackson County Public Health encourages healthcare settings to begin implementing influenza control measures to prevent the spread of the flu, protecting vulnerable populations and staff, which are similar to COVID-19 prevention measures.

Other infections can cause influenza-like symptoms or COVID-19-like symptoms, so it remains essential that medical providers continue to diagnose respiratory infections by testing the patient. People can have COVID-19 and influenza at the same time.

Preventing the transmission of influenza viruses and other infectious agents within healthcare settings requires a multi-faceted approach.¹ The spread of influenza viruses can occur among patients, healthcare workers, and visitors; additionally, healthcare workers may acquire influenza from persons in their household or community. The core prevention strategies include:¹

- administration of influenza vaccine
- implementation of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- appropriate management of ill health care providers
- adherence to infection control precautions for all patient-care activities and aerosol-generating procedures
- implementation of environmental and engineering infection control measures

For week 17, April 24 – April 30, Emergency Department (ED) visits for influenza-like-illness (ILI) were at 1.3% of the total ED visits in Jackson County, which is similar to Oregon overall (1.2%).² The test positivity rate for influenza has steadily increased during April. For week 17, the test positivity rate for Jackson County was 13.2%, compared to 12% the previous week [Table 1]. The majority of the lab results have been positive for influenza A this flu season.

RESOURCES
- ILI outbreak guidance for long-term care facilities in Oregon (see Step 5): http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/CommunicableDisease/Outbreaks/Pages/respdisease.aspx
- CDC Interim Guidance for Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care
Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

Jackson County Public Health is seeing an increase in hand, foot, and mouth disease among daycare, elementary and middle school-aged children. Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common mild childhood illness. This virus spreads very easily through personal contact such as kissing or hugging, coughing and sneezing, contact with feces, and touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them, then putting your fingers in your eyes, nose, or mouth. It typically affects children under five years of age, but older children and adults may also become infected.

Initial symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease include fever, poor appetite, general discomfort, and often a sore throat. Approximately two days after the onset of initial symptoms, painful sores develop in the mouth. They begin as small, red spots that often become ulcers. A non-itchy rash with flat or raised red spots with a blister-like appearance develops one to two days after initial symptoms begin. The rash typically appears on the hands and feet. Most people recover without complications within 7 to 10 days.

Students with symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease, particularly a rash illness with fever, should be excluded from daycare or school until at least 24 hours after the fever has resolved and blisters are gone.

You can help to prevent and control the spread of hand, foot, and mouth disease by:

- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm running water, including cleaning under fingernails. Always wash your hands after changing...
Recommendations for Adenovirus Testing and Reporting of Children with Acute Hepatitis of Unknown Etiology

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Health Advisory to notify clinicians and public health authorities of a cluster of children identified with hepatitis and adenovirus infection.

The investigation is focusing on collecting information to describe the epidemiology, etiology, clinical presentation, severity, and risk factors related to illness and to identify any relationship between adenovirus infection or other factors and hepatitis. As of May 5, 2022, CDC and state partners are investigating 109 children with hepatitis of unknown origin across 25 states and territories, more than half of whom have tested positive for adenovirus with more than 90% hospitalized, 14% with liver transplants, and five deaths under investigation. Because this investigation is ongoing and includes reviewing cases of hepatitis of unknown cause with onset since October 2021, patients under investigation are not limited to current or newly diagnosed pediatric hepatitis illnesses.

For more information on the investigation and recommendations for testing specimens from patients under investigation, please read the HAN Health Advisory that CDC issued on April 21, 2022.

Public Comment: FDA Proposed Rules for Prohibiting Menthol as a Characterizing Flavor in Cigarettes

The FDA recently proposed rules prohibiting menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes and all characterizing flavors (other than tobacco) in cigars. These rules are based on clear science and evidence establishing the addictiveness and harm of these products and build on the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which prohibited all characterizing flavors (other than tobacco and menthol) in cigarettes in 2009.

The proposed rules will be a historic step towards protecting young people, advancing health equity, and saving lives, especially for Black Americans and other populations that have been historically targeted by the tobacco industry.

Beginning May 4th, the public can provide either electronic or written comments on these proposed rules. Public comments will be open for only sixty days, following further review by the FDA before being finalized.
Avoid Antibiotic Use for Viral Infections

Antibiotics are not an effective treatment for viral infections, including COVID-19. However, in a recently released *JAMA* research letter, *Antibiotic prescriptions associated with COVID-19 outpatient visits among Medicare beneficiaries, April 2020–April 2021*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) authors found that during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020-April 2021), 30% of outpatient visits for COVID-19 among Medicare beneficiaries were associated with an antibiotic prescription. Azithromycin was the most frequently prescribed antibiotic (50.7%), followed by doxycycline (13.0%), amoxicillin (9.4%), and levofloxacin (6.7%). Prescribing rates were highest for emergency departments (33.9%) and telehealth encounters (28.4%). Non-Hispanic, White beneficiaries were prescribed antibiotics at a higher rate than African-American or Black beneficiaries.

Antibiotics, including azithromycin, are not an effective treatment for COVID-19 and should not be prescribed to most outpatients with viral infections. Anytime antibiotics are prescribed, they can lead to adverse drug events and contribute to antibiotic resistance, an urgent public health threat. Findings from this study reinforce the importance of improving appropriate antibiotic prescribing in outpatient settings and avoiding unnecessary antibiotic use for viral infections, including COVID-19, in older adult populations.

For more information on improving antibiotic prescribing and use, visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).

Training & Conferences

- **Building Immunity by Building Community**: Would you like to feel more confident in talking with your patients about vaccinations? The Oregon Academy of Family Physicians, Boost Oregon, and the Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network have partnered to provide a culturally relevant and scientifically based vaccination education program in support of communities most affected by COVID-19. You will learn specific motivational interviewing techniques to provide a safe place for your patients to talk about their questions and concerns around vaccination.
Date: May 16, 2022  
Time: 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm  
Registration: Click Here

- **STI & PrEP Guidelines Update for Jackson County:** Join fellow providers, share cases, and get up to date on guidelines changes that impact emergency and primary care. Dinner will be provided, and CME is available at no cost to the attendees.  
  
  When: Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm  
  Where: Jacksonville Inn. 175 East California St. Jacksonville, OR. 97530  
  Registration: Registration is required; click [HERE](#) to register.

"The mission of Jackson County Health and Human Services is to plan, coordinate and provide public services that protect and promote the health and well-being of county residents.

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REFERENCES
