

The Winnebago County Health Department Presents

# Communicable Disease Bulletin

Winter Edition 2013



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



401 Division St,  
P.O. BOX 4009  
Rockford, IL 61110-0509  
Fax: 815-962-5161

Kara Biery, M.S.,  
Disease Control Supervisor  
Phone: 815-720-4075

E-mail: [kbiery@wchd.org](mailto:kbiery@wchd.org)

Dee Dunnett, M.S.,  
Director of Center for HPP  
Phone: 815-720-4063  
E-mail: [ddunnett@wchd.org](mailto:ddunnett@wchd.org)

Patty Goodin, RN, Public Health Nurse  
Phone: 815-720-4076  
E-mail: [pgoodin@wchd.org](mailto:pgoodin@wchd.org)

## **WCHD Mission Statement:**

**To prevent disease, promote health and enlist the community in efforts to improve the health of all Winnebago County residents.**

## **What is a Coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are common viruses that many individuals will experience in their lifetime. These viruses typically cause mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illnesses, including the common cold. They are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface.

Coronaviruses can infect not only humans, but animals. In fact, animals may present with respiratory, gastrointestinal, liver, and neurologic diseases. Most of the coronaviruses usually infect one animal species or closely related species. SARS (severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) was a coronavirus that was identified in 2003 in humans.

This year a novel coronavirus was identified as the cause of a severe respiratory illness in adults from the Middle East. This newly identified coronavirus caused illness in nine adults from Qatar, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The onset of illness was between April and November of 2012. Five of the nine cases were associated with two clusters of illness. The first cluster was associated with cases of illness among workers in a hospital and both cases were fatal. The second cluster of cases, which occurred in October of 2012, involved four individuals in a household. Two of the individuals died. In total, five people from Saudi Arabia were infected, two from Qatar, and two from Jordan. Individuals who became ill had symptoms that included shortness of breath, cough, and pneumonia.

Currently, The World Health Organization (WHO) and The Center for Disease Control (CDC) are learning more about this novel coronavirus. It is uncertain if the virus spreads from person to person, but is likely that it is of animal origin. Genetic sequencing has determined the virus is closely related to coronaviruses detected in bats.

At this time, there are no reports of anyone in the United States having the novel coronavirus and the risk of infection is low. No travel alerts have been issued for countries in the Arabian Peninsula. However, if you develop symptoms of a respiratory illness within 10 days after returning from the area, seek consultation from a medical provider. A laboratory test is available at the CDC but there is no specific medical treatment available for the novel coronavirus. More information is available at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



WE'RE ON THE WEB:: [HTTP://WWW.WCHD.ORG/](http://www.wchd.org/)

## Herpes Zoster (Shingles)

Shingles is a painful skin disease caused by a reactivation of the chickenpox virus. In people who have had the chickenpox, the virus never fully clears from the body and lays dormant in the nerve tissues. When the immune system is weakened this reactivation can occur and spread along the nerve fibers. The early signs of shingles usually develop in three stages: severe pain or tingling, possibly itchy rash, and blisters that look like chickenpox. It is distinctive because it affects only one side of the body. Outbreaks that start on the face or eyes can cause vision or hearing problems. Even permanent blindness can result if the cornea of the eye is affected. In a very small number of cases, bacteria can cause serious conditions, including toxic shock syndrome and necrotizing fasciitis, a severe infection that destroys the soft tissue under the skin. Additionally, the burning waves of pain, loss of sleep, and interference with even basic life activities can cause serious depression. In patients with immune deficiency, the rash can be much more extensive than usual and the illness can be complicated by pneumonia. These cases are more serious, but they are rarely fatal. Finally, the pain of shingles can be debilitating and can last for months or years. This long term pain is called postherpetic neuralgia and is common symptom in people over 60. While shingles occurs in people of all ages, it is most common in 60- to 80-year-olds. Fifty percent of all Americans will have had shingles by the time they are 80.



There is a vaccine, Zostavax, which contains a weakened chickenpox virus (varicella-zoster). The vaccine does provide stimulation to the immune system to battle the disease. The vaccine is approved for persons aged 50 and older. Since the majority of older Americans had chickenpox as a child millions of people are vulnerable to shingles.

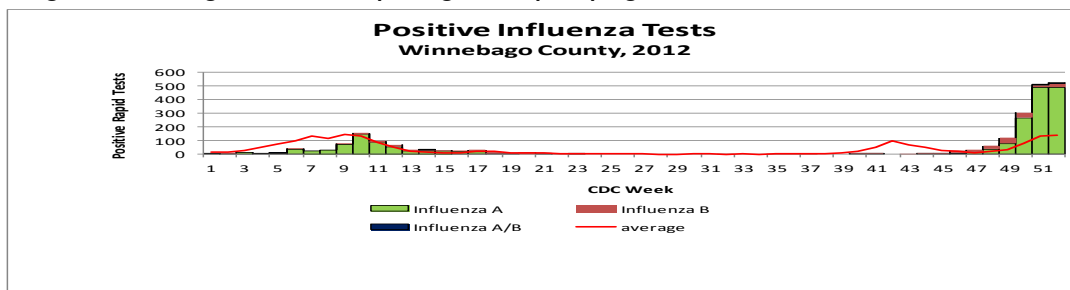
The vaccine is expensive and many insurance plans do not cover the cost. Zostavax is available at the Winnebago County Health Department for \$190. To schedule an appointment, call 815.720.4264. It is always recommended that consultation take place with the health provider prior to obtaining the vaccine.

## Influenza Update

Influenza exploded onto the scene just in time for the holidays. Evidence of influenza began to surface just before Thanksgiving and came on fast and furious by mid-December and is continuing to mount. Though influenza is not a reportable infection, providers have voluntarily kept public health informed of the breadth of this communicable infection.

Until relief comes, it is recommended that everyone practice the 3 C's for flu prevention this year: clean your hands, cover your cough or sneezing, and contain your germs by staying home if ill. If someone does contract the flu, antiviral

drugs can milder, possible and time one should be the first symptoms.



make illness prevent complications, shorten the is sick but used within 48 hours of

## Communicable Disease Statistics

| Disease Type                   | 2011 | 2012* | Disease Type                    | 2011 | 2012* |
|--------------------------------|------|-------|---------------------------------|------|-------|
| Chickenpox                     | 24   | 34    | Hepatitis C-chronic             | 240  | 221   |
| Cryptosporidiosis              | 5    | 6     | Histoplasmosis                  | 0    | 0     |
| Ehrlichiosis                   | 2    | 0     | Lyme disease                    | 23   | 33    |
| Enteric e. coli                | 17   | 3     | Neisseria Meningitis            | 4    | 0     |
| Giardiasis                     | 17   | 11    | Pertussis (whooping cough)      | 35   | 24    |
| Haemophilus Influenzae, inv.   | 2    | 4     | Potential Human Rabies Exposure | 3    | 2     |
| Hepatitis A                    | 5    | 4     | Rubella                         | 1    | 0     |
| Hepatitis B-acute              | 5    | 5     | Salmonellosis                   | 48   | 55    |
| Hepatitis B-chronic            | 39   | 28    | Shigellosis                     | 3    | 4     |
| *Preliminary year to date data |      |       | West Nile Virus                 | 1    | 3     |