

EPI Update for Friday, March 18, 2011
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Assessing a person's ability to drive**
- **Workers at risk of exposure to anti-neoplastic agents**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Assessing a person's ability to drive

Medical providers may be asked if a person is capable of driving safely when there is a medical or physical limitations. See resources below:

- The *Physician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers – 2010* provides information to assist physicians in evaluating their older patient's ability to operate personal motor vehicles safely. See www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/433/older-drivers-guide.pdf or www.iowasafeandmobileseniors.com/home/index.cfm.
- *Driver Fitness Medical Guidelines – 2009* provides guidance to assist licensing agencies about an individual's fitness for driving, and has educational guidance for medical providers. See ntl.bts.gov/lib/31000/31100/31148/6061_MedicalReviewGuide_10-1_v2a.pdf
 - or www.dps.state.ia.us/commis/gtsb/links.shtml.

Workers at risk of exposure to anti-neoplastic agents

A recent -article highlighted health care workers risk for exposure when working with anti-neoplastic medications or patients who are using these medications. Anti-neoplastic medications are those that inhibit and combat the development of cancer. However, with the use of anti-neoplastic medications expanding into other arenas, the number of workers who are potentially exposed to hazardous drugs has increased. Rheumatology, dermatology, surgery, and other medical specialties now use anti-neoplastic and other hazardous drugs to treat patients. Workers in these areas may not be aware of the risks or may not be properly trained in safe handling of these agents.

Workers potentially exposed to hazardous drugs include the following:

- Shipping and receiving personnel -- when handling contaminated medication vials and/or spills;
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians -- when compounding and checking drug preparations or counting out tablets;
- Nursing personnel -- when administering agents and handling contaminated wastes;
- Physicians -- when treating patients with or administering hazardous drugs;
- Operating room personnel -- when administering medications in the operating room;

- Home health care personnel -- when transporting drugs, treating patients, and handling wastes;
- Workers in nursing home and long-term care facilities;
- Environmental services personnel -- when removing contaminated waste and cleaning contaminated areas or dealing with medication spills;
- Research laboratory personnel -- during drug research and development; and
- Personnel in veterinary practices -- when hazardous agents are administered to animals.

NIOSH guidance is available at www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/antineoplastic. For the complete article (which requires a free Medscape subscription) see “Hazardous Drugs in Healthcare – Occupational Risk of Anti-neoplastic Drugs” at www.medscape.com/viewarticle/738076_2.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

The Iowa Food Safety Task Force will present a *Fresh Cut Produce and Light Processing in Iowa* webinar. The free presentation will be held on April 7, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. and will cover fresh cut produce and light processing, best practices, product packaging and labeling requirements, and licensing requirements. For more information contact the Iowa Department of Inspections at (515) 281-6538 or go to www1.gotomeeting.com/register/498168616.

The Iowa School Nurse Organization’s Annual Meeting, titled “School Nurses: Our Business is Health Young People,” will be held on April 7-8 in West Des Moines. The meeting will cover topics of importance to school nurses, but other interested nurses may attend. For more information go to [www.isno.org/11pdf/ceu/2011_ISNO_Conference_Brochure_-_FINAL\[1\].pdf](http://www.isno.org/11pdf/ceu/2011_ISNO_Conference_Brochure_-_FINAL[1].pdf).

Have a healthy and happy (and warmer) week!

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