

The Public Health Lab: Infectious Disease Laboratory (2:34)

Female Narrator: The Infectious Disease Laboratory monitors our communities for pathogens that make us sick. We track common diseases, detect and investigate outbreaks, monitor for emerging diseases, and prepare for public health emergencies.

Most of our work deals with testing samples sent to us from hospital labs across Minnesota. When you see a doctor because you are sick, you sometimes submit a sample to help find out what is causing you to feel ill. Your sample may be sent to the Infectious Disease Laboratory for further testing.

Depending on the sample, we may test for an antibiotic-resistant superbug, vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and the flu, rabies, or foodborne diseases like salmonella. The data we collect from testing samples are used in a variety of ways, such as determining what antibiotics will or will not work when treating an illness caused by an antibiotic-resistant superbug, or picking the right flu vaccine for the upcoming year.

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Sometimes the Infectious Disease Lab receives samples from different people that all contain the same unique pathogen, like a certain strain of *E. coli*. When an outbreak of disease like this occurs, we work with disease detectives called epidemiologists at the Department of Health to investigate and plan a public health intervention.

For an outbreak of a foodborne illness like *E. coli*, that intervention might be working with the Department of Agriculture to help find the food that's making people sick, and continuing to test samples from those who were sick, to ensure they won't get others sick.

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In some cases, outbreaks and emerging disease turn into public health emergencies. When that happens, the Infectious Disease Lab responds by working with the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Health, and clinical partners to determine the best testing strategy for samples, to find out how many people are sick, and the develop the best plan to limit or stop the spread of the disease.

Every day, the goal of the Infectious Disease Lab is to detect and prevent the spread of disease so that we can keep Minnesota's communities healthy.

(End 2:34)