

3 May 2019

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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Contents

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We're sorry for the inconvenience.

U.S. MILITARY

- Frustrations mount over lack of progress on preventing veterans' suicide
- 'Something needs to change,' says mom of baby girl who died at babysitter's base home
- There's a new general in charge of the Army's efforts to revamp basic training and fitness

GLOBAL

- California tap water linked to thousands of cancer cases, study suggests
- Can chronic stress cause or worsen cancer? Here's what the evidence shows
- CDC confirms dangerous 'kissing bug' spreading north again
- Children's risk for cavities more likely influenced by environmental factors, not genes
- Dengue fever cases up 3.5 times this year in the Americas
- Dengue outbreak in Dili, Timor-Leste
- Drone successfully delivers kidney for organ transplant in historic flight
- FDA permits sale of Philip Morris IQOS tobacco-heating alternative to cigarettes
- Hay fever and seasonal allergies: Symptoms, causes and treatment
- How do mosquitoes taste DEET? Hint: It's not with their mouthparts
- Kids II recalls nearly 700,000 sleeping rockers after 5 infants die
- Measles quarantine on campus: Controversial but effective
- Measles shots aren't just for kids: Many adults could use a booster too
- New type of dementia identified
- Obesity: Study of 2.8 million shows increased disease and death risks
- Rabies exposure: Santa Barbara County health officials seek individual
- Rift Valley fever: Four more human cases in Mayotte
- Second PCSK9 inhibitor approved for CV prevention
- UNICEF says millions of children miss measles vaccines
- Virtual reality as therapy for pain

INFLUENZA

- AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

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- APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report
- CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report
- ECDC: Flu News Europe
- WHO: Influenza Update

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- Canada: Profiteroles and eclairs linked to Salmonella Outbreak
- Canada received cheese linked to E. coli outbreak in France
- French cheese linked to E. coli outbreak; 13 children developed kidney failure

WELLNESS

- As zero-calorie natural sweeteners such as stevia surge in popularity, here's what you need to know
- To grow up healthy, children need to sit less and play more

USAFRICOM

- Mozambique: Dozens killed after Cyclone Kenneth batters northern Mozambique
- Nigeria: Meningococcal meningitis update

USCENTCOM

- Polio in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Nigeria closes in on polio-free status

USEUCOM

- Sweden: Hepatitis A outbreak- Fresh dates from Iran are the suspected source
- Ukraine: Measles in Ukraine- 100,000 cases and 35 deaths since summer of 2017

USINDOPACOM

- Guam: Shigellosis outbreak- An update
- Philippines: Measles 5-times 2018 numbers
- Thailand: Diphtheria cases

USNORTHCOM

- U.S.: Denver- Gonorrhea cases up 150 percent in four years
- U.S.: Florida reports 70 additional hepatitis A cases in one week
- U.S.: Las Vegas- Reports 1st West Nile virus case of 2019
- U.S.: Louisiana- Hepatitis A outbreak: 1st death reported
- U.S.: North Dakota- Rabies, officials remind the public to be aware of the risk, skunks most common carrier

USSOUTHCOM

- Peru: Peru's commendable strides towards tuberculosis elimination

U.S. MILITARY

Frustrations mount over lack of progress on preventing veterans' suicide

29 April- Just hours before a Capitol Hill hearing Monday on how to address the problem of veterans dying by suicide, a veteran took his own life outside the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center. Lawmakers said that the incident was a painful reminder for all the effort and funding put into suicide prevention in recent years, progress on the issue has been frustratingly inconsistent. "Two weeks ago, three other veterans committed suicide at VA facilities in five days," House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., said. "So far, we have seen seven this year. "It's clear we are not doing enough to support veterans in crisis." Both Democrats and Republicans in the House are pledging to try and fix that in coming months, launching a series of hearings and legislative pushes to address the lingering problem of veteran's suicide. Takano and committee ranking member Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., said they are optimistic they can advance bipartisan legislation on the issue, to include more research and monitoring within VA facilities. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in a press conference ahead of the hearing to highlight the new congressional focus, called the issue an "uncomfortable, urgent crisis" and promised to work closely with Republican Party leaders on finding answers. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

'Something needs to change,' says mom of baby girl who died at babysitter's base home

27 April- The mother of a 7-month-old baby who died at a babysitter's home reported for unauthorized and unlicensed caregiving in Hawaii military housing says officials need to make changes to ensure children are protected. "I had no idea [the caregiver] was being reported for neglect," said Anna, who asked that her last name be withheld for security reasons. "I only found out that day outside the house waiting for the police to release me from the scene," on Feb. 24, the day her child died at Aliamanu Military Reservation. The baby's father is a member of the Army National Guard. Neighbors told her what they had reported previously to authorities. "If I'd known that all those things had happened... I felt so upset. If I had known there were reports of neglect, I would have taken my children out so fast. "Abigail would be alive," she said. "I wanted my children to be safe. That's my main priority." Two months after Abigail's death, the incident is still under investigation by the Honolulu Police Department, which has classified it as an unattended death. No charges have been filed. No one is placing blame on the caregiver; attempts by Military Times to reach her have been unsuccessful. Sources said the caregiver and her family have moved off the installation. The medical examiner's office has not released information about the cause of death. Following the incident, the Army launched an investigation into child care authorizations and procedures on Hawaii bases, and it is ongoing, said Dennis Drake, a

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Executive Summary 2018 Health of the Force

Soldier health is the foundation of our Army's ability to deploy, fight, and win against any adversary. Health of the Force is an evidence-based portrait of the health and well-being of U.S. Army Active Component Soldiers. It communicates information leaders can use to understand and improve Soldier health, medical readiness, and health promotion measures.



retired Army colonel who is spokesman for U.S. Army Hawaii. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

There's a new general in charge of the Army's efforts to revamp basic training and fitness

27 April- The command responsible for both Army basic training, and its efforts to field a new fitness test, changed hands Friday. Maj. Gen. Malcolm Frost, who is set to retire later this year, handed over leadership of the Center for Initial Military Training to Brig. Gen. Lonnie Hibbard in a ceremony at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, livestreamed via the command's Facebook page. "He helped me and then other Army senior leaders understand the imbalances and the cumulative risks that had crept into the Army's training mission over almost two decades of continuous combat overseas," Gen. Stephen Townsend, the head of Training and Doctrine Command, said of Frost. "And then he helped us find ways to fix them." Hibbard, a career pilot, is coming in from almost two years as the director of operations, plans and training at TRADOC. "The source of power of the United States Army is the soldier's — the young recruits, America's sons and daughters, who volunteer to join our Army," he said in his remarks. "IMT is the foundation of training civilian volunteers into simply the best soldiers on Earth." The plan, leaders said, is that he carries on CIMT's trajectory. "One of the fears I have, changing out, was the gap that might occur," Frost said. "There was a fear that that momentum that we gained was going to stop." [Army Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

California tap water linked to thousands of cancer cases, study suggests

1 May- Drinking California tap water could increase the number of cancer cases statewide by more than 15,000 over the course of a lifetime, a new study says. Looking at how drinking water pollutants interact to affect human health, rather than looking at each one separately, researchers analyzed data in more than 2,700 California community water systems from 2011 to 2015. The estimated 15,449 added cancer cases over the course of 70 years means 221 annual cancer cases from drinking-water pollution, researchers said in an article published Tuesday in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Health*. The researchers were a team of scientists from the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit advocacy group. "Drinking water rarely contains only one contaminant, yet regulators currently assess the health hazards of tap water pollutants one by one. This ignores the combined effects of multiple pollutants, which is how people ingest them in the real world," the group said in a statement. The group looked at levels of carcinogens and toxic contaminants in the drinking water and found small to midsize communities faced some of the greatest cancer risks. In 495 water systems affecting more than 3 million people, there was a cancer risk greater than 1 additional case per 1,000 people. In 1,177 systems, affecting

The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book

The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level on the APHC SIPRNet site:

<https://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/medcom-g2/SitePages/Home.aspx>

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

more than 28 million people, there was a risk of 1 per 1,000 to 1 per 10,000 people. [USA Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Can chronic stress cause or worsen cancer? Here's what the evidence shows

26 April- The fast-paced world we live in is a perfect driver of stress. The racing heart, knots in the stomach and vague sense of agitation are an unavoidable part of the human condition. But chronic stress can, over time, harm the body, causing everything from inflammation to cardio metabolic disease. In some cases, stress may play a role in cancer. But just how tightly are these two conditions linked? Studies suggest several ways that stress may influence cancer development, said Shelley Tworoger, an associate professor of population science at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. Tworoger spoke about these links during a talk earlier this month at the annual American Association for Cancer Research meeting in Atlanta. In those who already have certain types of cancer, stress can accelerate progression and worsen outcomes, increasing evidence suggests. But "there's more question" about whether or not chronic stress can cause cancer in the first place, Tworoger told Live Science. Indeed, according to the National Cancer Institute, the evidence that stress can cause cancer is weak. Even so, "there's a lot of biologic reasons to think that an association could exist," Tworoger said. [Live Science](#)

[top of page...](#)

CDC confirms dangerous 'kissing bug' spreading north again

25 April- Bloodsucking insects known as "kissing bugs," because of their tendency to bite people around the mouth, are spreading across the country after working their way north from South America. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed last week that a girl in Delaware was bitten by one of the critters, which are formally known as triatomine bugs. The case was reported in July 2018 when a Delaware family requested help from state health and agriculture officials to identify the insect that bit the girl on the face as she watched television in her bedroom. The bugs can spread a parasite that causes Chagas' disease through its feces. The disease can be spread when the bug "poops on or near a person while it is feeding on (their) blood, usually when the person is sleeping," according to the CDC. Transmission occurs "when poop is accidentally rubbed into the bite wound or into a mucous membrane (for example, the eye or mouth), and the parasite enters the body." But the CDC said not all triatomine bugs are infected with the parasite that causes Chagas' disease. The disease can be dangerous, but chances of contracting it are low, according to the agency. [Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About APHC](#)

[Army Public Health
Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance
Monthly Report](#)

[Medical Threat Briefings
\(AKO\)](#)

[Request APHC Services](#)

[APHC Resource Materials](#)

[APHC Homepage](#)

[APHC Training](#)

[Contact APHC](#)

Children's risk for cavities more likely influenced by environmental factors, not genes

28 April- Some children are more likely to develop teeth cavities because of environmental factors rather than anything related to their genes, a new study says. Researchers in Australia examined how genetics can affect the risk of children for teeth cavities. They monitored the development of more than 300 twins, beginning at their 24th week of gestation up to age 6 when they have already had their dental checkups. By the time the kids reached age 6, 32 percent of them showed signs of tooth decay, while 24 percent already had advanced cavities. The investigators looked at how often both children developed tooth cavities among siblings with identical genetic variations (identical twins) and those who share some variations (fraternal twins). They found that both types of twins experience the same likelihood for developing tooth decay or cavities in any form. This suggests that genetics may not influence the risk of children for dental health issues. "Risk factors seem to be mostly environmental and are potentially modifiable," said Mihiri Silva, a pediatric dentist at the University of Melbourne and lead author of the study. "This might debunk the idea that individuals are genetically destined to have poor teeth and should drive us to find ways of addressing the risk factors that we know are important for dental health." [Tech Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

Dengue fever cases up 3.5 times this year in the Americas

28 April- The number of dengue fever cases in the Americas in 2019 to date—North, Central and South America and the Caribbean islands—has nearly quadrupled the number of cases reported during the same period in 2018. Through April 7, 526,550 dengue cases have been reported, compared to 146,436 cases reported this period in 2018. Large increases have been reported in Brazil (439,422 vs 81,141), Colombia (25,974 vs 7,276) and the Dominican Republic (1391 vs 326). In addition, the number of dengue related fatalities are up this year in the hemisphere (171 vs 51). The following countries have reported all four dengue virus serotypes circulating—Guatemala and Mexico. Dengue infects nearly 400 million people across more than 120 countries each year. Most survive with few or no symptoms, but more than two million annually develop what can be a dangerous dengue hemorrhagic fever, which kills more than 25,000 people each year. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Dengue outbreak in Dili, Timor-Leste

29 April- Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL), or the Red Cross is reporting a dengue fever outbreak in the capital city of Dili. In addition, other districts/municipalities also experienced higher rates of dengue infection since the beginning of year. The official data showed that a total of 532 new cases have been confirmed since the beginning of 2019, with 5 resulting in fatalities. The highest number of dengue cases is in Dili municipality (382 cases), followed by Liquica (113), Viqueque (15 cases), Covalima (14 cases) and Baucau (12 cases). The rest cases

are spread in other districts/municipalities. The outbreak occurred after heavy rains during extended monsoon season, increasing the breeding grounds of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito as the main vector. CVTL estimates indicate a 50% increase in infection rates. Dengue infects nearly 400 million people across more than 120 countries each year. Most survive with few or no symptoms, but more than two million annually develop what can be a dangerous dengue hemorrhagic fever, which kills more than 25,000 people each year.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Drone successfully delivers kidney for organ transplant in historic flight

30 April- According to a news release from University of Maryland Medical Center, researchers used an unmanned aircraft to bring a donor kidney to surgeons at the medical center for the transplantation to a patient. WKYT reports that the drone carried its precious cargo from West Baltimore to the medical center 2.8 miles (4.5 kilometers) away. Before getting the transplant, the 44-year-old patient with kidney failure spent eight years on dialysis. Describing the achievement as "amazing," she got discharged from the hospital on Tuesday, April 23. It took the collaboration of numerous transplant physicians, researchers, aviation experts, engineers, and multiple other supporters to get the project off the ground. The custom-built drone sports eight rotors and multiple powertrains to ensure top performance, even in possible component failure. "We had to create a new system that was still within the regulatory structure of the FAA, but also capable of carrying the additional weight of the organ, cameras, and organ tracking, communications, and safety systems over an urban, densely populated area—for a longer distance and with more endurance," explained Matthew Scassero, who is the director of the University of Maryland UAS Test Site. The drone has already previously transported various medical-related cargo, including blood tubes and saline. [Tech Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

FDA permits sale of Philip Morris IQOS tobacco-heating alternative to cigarettes

30 April- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday said it would allow Philip Morris to sell a heated tobacco product called IQOS in the United States, a major victory for the international tobacco giant as it looks to sell more alternatives to traditional cigarettes. Following a review of about two years, the FDA determined that authorizing the device for sale in the U.S. market was "appropriate for the protection of public health" because the products produce "fewer or lower levels of some toxins than combustible cigarettes." Unlike combustible cigarettes, the IQOS devices heat tobacco-filled sticks wrapped in paper, which generates an aerosol that contains nicotine. They are different from e-cigarettes such as the popular Juul device, which vaporizes a nicotine-filled liquid. The FDA's move is certain to add fuel to a growing debate among public health advocates on whether such smoking

alternatives shift lifelong smokers to less harmful products or risk addicting a new generation to nicotine. E-cigarette use among middle- and high-school students surged last year, according to federal data, sparking a crackdown on the device makers by the FDA.

[Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

Hay fever and seasonal allergies: Symptoms, causes and treatment

30 April- Itchy eyes, a congested nose, sneezing, wheezing and hives: these are symptoms of an allergic reaction caused when plants release pollen into the air, usually in the spring or fall. Many people use hay fever as a colloquial term for these seasonal allergies and the inflammation of the nose and airways. But hay fever is a misnomer, said Dr. Jordan Josephson, an ear, nose and throat doctor and sinus specialist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. "It is not an allergy to hay," Josephson, author of the book "Sinus Relief Now" (Perigee Trade, 2006), told Live Science. "Rather, it is an allergy to weeds that pollinate." Doctors and researchers prefer the phrase allergic rhinitis to describe the condition. More than 50 million people experience some type of allergy each year, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. In 2017, 8.1% of adults and 7.7% of children reported have allergic rhinitis symptoms, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Worldwide, between 10 and 30% of people are affected by allergic rhinitis, Josephson said. In 2019, spring arrived early in some parts of the country and later in others, according to the National Phenology Network (NPN). Spring brings blooming plants and, for some, lots of sneezing, itchy, watery eyes and runny noses. According to NPN data, spring reared its head about two weeks early in areas of California, Nevada and many of the Southern and Southeastern states. Much of California, for example, is preparing for a brutal allergy season due to the large amount of winter rain. On the other hand, spring ranged from about one to two weeks late in the Northwest, the Midwest and the Mid-Atlantic U.S.

[Live Science](#)

[top of page...](#)

How do mosquitoes taste DEET? Hint: It's not with their mouthparts

25 April- Emily Dennis has spent hours, if not days, watching mosquitoes buzz around her bare, outstretched arm. Carefully, she's observed the insects land, stab their mouthparts through her skin and feed. But if her arm is slathered with DEET — shorthand for the chemical N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, the active ingredient in many insect repellents — mosquitoes stay away. "DEET works better than any other insect repellent, and despite it being around since the late 1940s, we still don't really understand why," says Dennis, a neuroscientist currently at Princeton University who endured many bug bites while studying how DEET repels insects en route to her Ph.D. at Rockefeller University. Those bug bites paid off. In a paper published Thursday in Current Biology, she and her colleagues show that

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, common transmitters of diseases such as dengue and Zika, sense DEET through their feet, not their mouthparts. According to the authors, the finding narrows the path for future research that could potentially help scientists develop more desirable alternatives to DEET — for example, repellents that don't need to be reapplied as often as DEET. "This is an exciting result and a very elegant study," says Walter Leal, an entomologist at the University of California, Davis, who was not involved in the work. "It's elegant because it relied only on simple behavioral experiments." [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

Kids II recalls nearly 700,000 sleeping rockers after 5 infants die

27 April- Just weeks after Fisher-Price recalled nearly 5 million sleeping rockers due to infant deaths, another brand — Kids II — has issued a similar recall. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) posted a notice Friday announcing the recall, which affects roughly 694,000 Rocking Sleepers. Five infants died after rolling "from their back to their stomach while unrestrained, or under other circumstances," since 2012, per the notice. Fisher-Price also recalled their product for a similar reason..."Consumers should immediately stop using the product and contact Kids II for a refund or voucher," the notice reads. [Fox News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Measles quarantine on campus: Controversial but effective

26 April- You've been quarantined. Those scary words upended the lives of more than 1,000 students and faculty at UCLA and California State University in Los Angeles over the past few days as authorities raced to contain a potential measles outbreak. As of Friday morning, 628 people were still under individual quarantine at Cal State LA, with another 46 still in isolation at UCLA, said Dr. Barbara Ferrer, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Those are just the people the health department has been able to identify, Ferrer said. A blanket quarantine has been issued for anyone who visited the North Library on the Cal State LA campus during the time of exposure, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on April 11, Ferrer said. Those people, she said, are being asked to self-identify, stay home and reach out to public health authorities to verify their immunization status. [CNN](#)

[top of page...](#)

Measles shots aren't just for kids: Many adults could use a booster too

29 April- Measles is on the rise again, all around the globe. Though the number of people affected in the U.S. is still relatively low compared with the countries hardest hit, there are a record number of U.S. measles cases — the highest since the disease was eliminated in the U.S. back in 2000. Measles has been documented in more than a third of states, with large outbreaks in New York and Washington. And although the majority of people getting the illness now were never vaccinated, the expanding outbreaks have raised new questions about whether some older adults — including many of those born before the mid-1960s — should be revaccinated, along with some younger people uncertain of their immunization status. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people who were vaccinated prior to 1968 with an early version of the vaccine, which was made from an inactivated (killed) virus, "should be revaccinated" with at least one dose of live attenuated measles vaccine. Today's recommended vaccine is known as MMR and protects against measles, mumps and rubella. [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

New type of dementia identified

30 April- One expert called it the most important dementia finding in years. The condition, limbic-predominant age-related TDP-43 encephalopathy, or Late, shares similar symptoms to Alzheimer's, but it is a distinct disease, the journal *Brain* reports. It may partly explain why finding a dementia cure has failed so far. [BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Obesity: Study of 2.8 million shows increased disease and death risks

29 April- A major study has highlighted the scale of the obesity problem in the UK, with a significant risk of death and disease attached to weight gain. People with a body mass index (BMI) of 30-35 were at 70% higher risk of developing heart failure than their healthy weight peers (18.5-25 BMI). The study of 2.8 million adults showed even slightly overweight people were twice as likely to get Type 2 diabetes. Public Health England said "sustained action" was needed to tackle obesity. The study, to be presented at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in Glasgow, also showed:

-For those with a BMI of 35-40, the risk of Type 2 diabetes was almost nine times higher, and 12 times higher for sleep apnoea

-People with severe obesity (BMI of 40-45) were 12 times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and had a risk of sleep apnoea that was 22 times greater

-People with a BMI of 40-45 had triple the risk of heart failure, high blood pressure, and dyslipidaemia (abnormal levels of cholesterol and other fats in the blood)

-BMI of 40-45 was also linked to a 50% higher risk of dying prematurely from any cause

The study's author, Christiane Haase, of healthcare firm Novo Nordisk which funded the work, said: "With the number of people living with obesity almost tripling worldwide over the past 30 years (105 million people in 1975 to 650 million in 2016), our findings have serious implications for public health." [BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Rabies exposure: Santa Barbara County health officials seek individual

28 April- The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is seeking the public's help in locating a person believed to be exposed to a rabid bat earlier this week in Santa Barbara. The person is described as a tall, slender, Caucasian female between the ages of 45 and 70 years old with short gray hair. At 10 a.m. on Tuesday, April 23, 2019 two male individuals were approached by the woman at the corner of Sola Street and Anacapa Street in Santa Barbara near Alameda Park. She handed them a box containing a bat that had been captured and asked them to take the bat to Animal Services, which the two men did. The bat was sent for testing by County Animal Services and tested positive for the rabies virus. If you are the person who captured the bat or have information regarding this incident, you are urged to call the Public Health Department at 805-681-5280 during or after business hours. There is no threat to the public as this is an isolated incident. The Public Health Department advises the public to be aware of wild animals. Do not approach, handle, or feed wild and unfamiliar animals, even if they appear tame. Any bite from a wild or unknown animal should be considered as a possible source of rabies. Rabies is a very serious disease and is almost always fatal in humans if not treated before symptoms appear.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Rift Valley fever: Four more human cases in Mayotte

30 April- Health authorities with ARS Indian Ocean have reported four additional human cases of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) during the past week, bringing the total cases to 126 since the first cases occurred at the end of November 2018. After a steady decline in cases during the last 3 weeks of March, a new increase has been observed since the beginning of April. Since the beginning of the health alert, human cases have remained mainly in the center and north-west of the island. In addition, five new animal foci have been reported, for a total of 109, including 86 bovines, since November. Animal foci are mainly located in the center and north-west of the island. Additional outbreaks have appeared since the end of March in the communes of Dembeni, as well as on Petite Terre. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Second PCSK9 inhibitor approved for CV prevention

29 April- The PCSK9 inhibitor alirocumab (Praluent) gained an indication for cardiovascular secondary prevention, Sanofi and Regeneron announced. Late Friday, the FDA approved label language saying the drug reduces risk of heart attack, stroke, and unstable angina requiring hospitalization in adults with established cardiovascular disease. The agency also OK'd the monoclonal antibody drug for use as monotherapy or in combination with other lipid-lowering therapies, such as ezetimibe (Zetia), for adults who need LDL lowering but can't or won't take statins. In 2015, alirocumab became the first PCSK9 inhibitor approved for heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia and clinical atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease as an addition to diet and maximally-tolerated statin therapy in adults who require additional LDL cholesterol lowering. [Med Page Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

UNICEF says millions of children miss measles vaccines

25 April- More than 20 million children a year missed out on measles vaccines across the world in the past eight years, laying a path of exposure to a virus that is now causing disease outbreaks globally, a United Nations report has stated. "The measles virus will always find unvaccinated children," said Henrietta Fore, executive director of the United Nations children's fund UNICEF, adding: "The ground for the global measles outbreaks we are witnessing today was laid years ago." The UNICEF report said an estimated 169 million children missed out on the first dose of the measles vaccine between 2010 and 2017 - equating to 21.1 million children a year on average. [Aljazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

Virtual reality as therapy for pain

29 April- It's more than a distraction, researchers say. It's more like a brain hack that occupies the brain so fully that it has no room to process pain sensations at the same time...The method, called Virtual Reality Therapy, goes beyond simple distraction, as might result from watching television. Rather, it totally immerses the patient in an entertaining, relaxing, interactive environment that so occupies the brain, it has no room to process pain sensations at the same time. "It's not just a distraction — it's like an endogenous narcotic providing a physiological and chemical burst that causes you to feel good," said Jeffrey I. Gold, director of the pediatric pain management clinic at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. "It's different from reading a book or playing with a toy. It's a multisensory experience that engages a person's attention on a much deeper level." Virtual Reality Therapy is the new kid on the block for pain management, now gradually growing in use as the opioid epidemic continues to soar and the price of the needed equipment has plummeted. VR, as it is called, has been most widely and successfully used so far to help children and adults weather acute pain, as can accompany an IV insertion or debridement of burns. But it can also enhance the effectiveness of established techniques like physical therapy, hypnosis and cognitive behavioral therapy to treat debilitating chronic pain. [New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary - Week 16

NORTHCOM-Influenza activity was minimal to low across NORTHCOM, with the exception of Puerto Rico and Massachusetts, which had moderate activity.

EUCOM-Influenza activity remained minimal across EUCOM.

PACOM-Influenza activity was minimal across PACOM.

CENTCOM-Influenza activity was minimal in CENTCOM countries with available data, except for Jordan which had low activity.

AFRICOM-In Djibouti, influenza activity remained minimal.

SOUTHCOM-Influenza activity was minimal in CENTCOM countries with available data, except for Jordan which had low activity. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

[top of page...](#)

APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

Week ending 20 April 2019 (week 16): In week 16, a 46% decrease in the number of positive specimens was noted when compared to week 15; there were 293 samples in week 15 and 158 samples in week 16. The largest decrease was seen in positive specimens of influenza A (56%), with only 99 positives reported in week 16 compared to the 223 reported in week 15. The number of positive specimens of respiratory syncytial virus and adenovirus increased by 86% and 38%, respectively, when compared to the previous week. One influenza-associated hospitalization with an onset date in week 16 was reported in the Disease Reporting System internet. The patient was a vaccinated, non-Active Duty beneficiary. This brings this flu season's total hospitalizations to 167, a 19% decrease from the 207 total cases reported at this point in the 2017-2018 season. [APHC](#)

[top of page...](#)

CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report

2018-2019 Influenza Season Week 16 ending April 20, 2019

-Viral Surveillance: The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza viruses in clinical laboratories decreased. During the most recent three weeks, influenza A(H3) viruses were reported more frequently than influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses nationally, and in all 10 HHS Regions.

-Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and

influenza (P&I) was below the system-specific epidemic threshold in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Mortality Surveillance System.

-Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: Five influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to CDC during week 16. [CDC](#)

[top of page...](#)

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 16/2019 (15-21 April 2019)

-Of 43 countries reporting on geographic spread, only 4 reported widespread activity. Specimens collected from individuals presenting with ILI or ARI to sentinel primary health care sites yielded an influenza virus positivity rate of 17%, a further decrease for the sixth week in a row. The majority of influenza positive viruses was reported from a few countries.

-For week 16/2019, all countries reporting ILI or ARI thresholds reported activity below baseline levels, indicating that the season is nearing its conclusion.

-Influenza type A viruses dominated with more A(H3N2) than A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses being detected among sentinel and non-sentinel source specimens. Very few influenza B viruses were detected were type A.

-Of the subset of specimens from patients with severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) collected in week 16/2019 that were tested for influenza viruses, 6% were positive and all almost viruses detected were type A.

-Pooled data from 23 Member States and areas reporting to the EuroMOMO project indicated that all-cause mortality remained at levels expected for this time of year. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

WHO: Influenza Update

29 April 2019 - Update number 340, based on data up to 14 April 2019

-In North America, influenza activity continued to decrease with influenza A(H3N2) the dominant virus, followed by influenza B.

-In Europe, influenza activity decreased across the continent. Both influenza A viruses co-circulated; influenza A(H3N2) was the most frequently identified subtype.

-In North Africa, influenza detections were low across reporting countries.

-In Western Asia, influenza activity appeared to decrease overall, with exception of Saudi Arabia where activity remained elevated.

-In East Asia, influenza activity was reported in some countries, with influenza B viruses most frequently detected, followed by influenza A(H3N2). A second wave of influenza activity was reported in the Republic of Korea.

-In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low overall.

-In the Caribbean, Central American countries, and the tropical countries of South America, influenza and RSV activity were low in general.

-In West and Middle Africa, influenza activity was low across reporting countries. Influenza activity continued to be reported from Eastern Africa although in decreasing trend with predominantly influenza A(H3N2) followed by B detections.

-In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza detections increased in southern Australia and South Africa. The influenza activity in South America remained at inter-seasonal levels.

-Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections. [WHO top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Canada: Profiteroles and eclairs linked to Salmonella Outbreak

28 April- Celebrate frozen profiteroles and eclairs are being recalled in the wake of Salmonella outbreak in Canada. 73 confirmed cases of Salmonella infection have been linked to frozen profiteroles and eclairs. 27 people are sick in British Columbia, 12 in Alberta, 9 in Saskatchewan, 10 in Manitoba, 13 in Ontario, and 2 in Quebec. People became ill between November 2018 and March 2019. 19 people have been hospitalized. 2 people have died, although it has not yet been determined whether the Salmonella infection contributed to these deaths. The Public Health Agency of Canada advises that, "Many of the individuals who became sick reported eating Celebrate brand classic/classical or eggnog flavored profiteroles or mini chocolate eclairs purchased at various grocery stores before their illnesses occurred." [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Canada received cheese linked to E. coli outbreak in France

1 May- Canada is one of a number of countries that has received raw milk cheese linked to an outbreak of E. coli O26 in France. French authorities reported 13 cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) in young children since March 21. HUS is a severe complication of E. coli infection that causes kidney failure and can occur a week or more after the onset of diarrhea. Several children ate Saint-Félicien and Saint Marcellin cheeses before onset of their symptoms. Three of them have a possible link with the consumption of these cheeses manufactured by Fromagerie Alpine. Saint-Félicien 180-gram and Saint Marcellin 80-gram packages with lot numbers from 032 to 116 have been recalled in France. A spokesperson from Santé publique France told Food Safety News the agency is looking into reported

cases and will communicate in more detail about the investigation when data is consolidated at a later stage. However, French media reported some of the children are still in hospital. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has warned that vulnerable groups should not drink unpasteurized, raw milk or eat cheese made with it. This advice applies to children younger than 5 years old, pregnant women, older adults and immunocompromised people such as cancer patients. The agency said after the age of five the risk still exists but on a decreasing scale. [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

French cheese linked to E. coli outbreak; 13 children developed kidney failure

29 April- French authorities are investigating an E. coli outbreak linked to cheese after young children developed hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Some Saint-Félicien and Saint Marcellin cheese has been recalled. The 13 cases of HUS that developed after E. coli O26 infection have occurred in young children since March 21. The patients are from several regions in the country. HUS is a severe complication of E. coli infection that causes kidney failure and can occur a week or more after the onset of diarrhea. Notification of Shiga toxin producing E. coli (STEC) infections is voluntary in France and based on HUS surveillance in children under 15 years old. STEC identification in stool samples is not routinely performed by medical labs. French authorities said preliminary investigations found several children ate Saint-Félicien and Saint Marcellin cheeses before onset of their symptoms. Among these, three have a possible link with the consumption of Saint Félicien and Saint Marcellin cheese manufactured by Fromagerie Alpine, based in Romans-sur-Isère, a town in the Drôme department in South-eastern France in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. Epidemiological, microbiological and food traceability investigations are continuing to determine the source of infection. Santé publique France, the national public health agency, and the National Reference Center (CNR) for E. coli, Shigella and Salmonella at the Pasteur Institute are continuing enhanced surveillance of HUS to detect possible new cases. [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

As zero-calorie natural sweeteners such as stevia surge in popularity, here's what you need to know

29 April- ...A systematic review last year found that natural and artificial sweeteners are often reviewed as one group instead of separate compounds, which makes it challenging to tease out whether some are better than others. Stevia has been determined to be safe for use by the general population, including children. The Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) has been set at four milligrams per kilogram of body weight. So, according to the Food and Drug Administration, if you weigh 150 pounds, you can have up to 273 milligrams of stevia — the equivalent of about 10 packets of stevia sweetener a day. Animal studies suggest

stevia extracts are nontoxic. There also haven't been any negative reactions reported in humans to date. And a study of the effect of stevia extracts on fecal bacteria showed the bacteria balance wasn't significantly affected. Research also shows stevia doesn't raise blood sugar and doesn't cause cavities the way sugars do. It may also help reduce insulin levels compared to artificial sweeteners: A study of 19 lean and 12 obese adults found that having stevia before a meal significantly lowered insulin levels after the meal compared with having aspartame, a sugar-free artificial sweetener. [The Washington Post](#)

[top of page...](#)

To grow up healthy, children need to sit less and play more

24 April- Children under five must spend less time sitting watching screens, or restrained in prams and seats, get better quality sleep and have more time for active play if they are to grow up healthy, according to new guidelines issued by the World Health Organization (WHO). "Achieving health for all means doing what is best for health right from the beginning of people's lives," says WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "Early childhood is a period of rapid development and a time when family lifestyle patterns can be adapted to boost health gains." The new guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age were developed by a WHO panel of experts. They assessed the effects on young children of inadequate sleep, and time spent sitting watching screens or restrained in chairs and prams. They also reviewed evidence around the benefits of increased activity levels. "Improving physical activity, reducing sedentary time and ensuring quality sleep in young children will improve their physical, mental health and wellbeing, and help prevent childhood obesity and associated diseases later in life," says Dr Fiona Bull, programme manager for surveillance and population-based prevention of noncommunicable diseases, at WHO. Failure to meet current physical activity recommendations is responsible for more than 5 million deaths globally each year across all age groups. Currently, over 23% of adults and 80% of adolescents are not sufficiently physically active. If healthy physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep habits are established early in life, this helps shape habits through childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. "What we really need to do is bring back play for children," says Dr. Juana Willumsen, WHO focal point for childhood obesity and physical activity. "This is about making the shift from sedentary time to playtime, while protecting sleep." The pattern of overall 24-hour activity is key: replacing prolonged restrained or sedentary screen time with more active play, while making sure young children get enough good-quality sleep. Quality sedentary time spent in interactive non-screen-based activities with a caregiver, such as reading, storytelling, singing and puzzles, is very important for child development. The important interactions between physical activity, sedentary behaviour and adequate sleep time, and their impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing, were recognized by the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity, which called for clear guidance on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep in young children. Applying the recommendations in these guidelines during the first five years of life will contribute to children's motor and

cognitive development and lifelong health. [WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Mozambique: Dozens killed after Cyclone Kenneth batters northern Mozambique

29 April- The death toll in storm-hit northern Mozambique has jumped to 38 after Cyclone Kenneth battered the country last week, according to officials, with aid workers struggling to reach some of the worst-affected areas. Mozambique's National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC) announced in its latest update on Monday that an earlier death toll of five had been revised up, adding that about 35,000 homes were damaged or wiped out by the cyclone and the rising floodwaters unleashed in its wake. The cyclone made landfall on Thursday in the country's northernmost Cabo Delgado province, bringing with it torrential rains and wind gusts of more than 200 kilometres per hour. The devastation has affected more than 160,000 people to date, according to INGC estimates. Before battering Mozambique's shores it slammed into the Comoros, an archipelago off Africa's southeastern coast, killing four people, according to an update by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). [Aljazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

Nigeria: Meningococcal meningitis update

28 April- Of the 36 states in Nigeria, 25 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are in the African meningitis belt. States in the meningitis belt were formally placed on alert on the 8th of November 2018 as during the dry season ((i.e. November through May)), high temperatures and low humidity increase the likelihood of transmission of organisms causing Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM) in Nigeria. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) reported in a recent situation report that 760 suspected CSM cases have been reported from 15 states from Oct. 1, 2018-Apr. 19, 2019. Ninety of the cases were culture confirmed. 58 deaths (CFR=7.6%) have been recorded among all suspected cases. Neisseria meningitidis serogroup C (NmC) accounted for 28.9% (26) of the positive cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Polio in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Nigeria closes in on polio-free status

27 April- There was a number of wild poliovirus and circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus cases reported this past week, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). In Afghanistan, three wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) cases have been reported in the past week, all with onset of paralysis in March: one each from Sangin and Washer districts in Hilmand province and one from Chora district in Uruzgan province. This brings the total cases in 2019 to six in Afghanistan. There is advance notification of two wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) cases in Pakistan; one from Bannu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and one from North Waziristan district in KPTD. The cases have onset of paralysis reported on 2 and 4 April 2019 respectively. Once confirmed, this will bring the total number of WPV1 cases in Pakistan to eight so far this year. In addition, three African countries reported circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus cases—Nigeria—two circulating vaccine-derived type 2 (cVDPV2) cases and six cVDPV2-positive environmental samples; Democratic Republic of Congo — one cVDPV2 case and two cVDPV2 community isolates; Somalia—one cVDPV2 case and one cVDPV2 contact isolate. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

Sweden: Hepatitis A outbreak- Fresh dates from Iran are the suspected source

27 April- The Sweden The Public Health Authority, or Folkhälsomyndigheten are reporting an outbreak of hepatitis A where the suspected source of infection is fresh dates from Iran. Of the nine cases reported since late February, eight of the cases are confirmed and have the same type of hepatitis A virus (genotype IIIA) and one case is suspected. The cases are between the ages of 28 and 73, five are men and four are women. The cases are from seven different counties (Örebro, Stockholm, Uppsala, Skåne, Södermanland, Kalmar and Halland). The latest case fell on April 16. Common to the cases is that they regularly eat fresh dates.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Ukraine: Measles in Ukraine- 100,000 cases and 35 deaths since summer of 2017

28 April- More than 2,000 measles cases were reported in the latest update from the Center for Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. During the week ending Apr. 20, health authorities saw an additional 2,141 cases of measles—1,106 adults and 1,035 children. This brings the outbreak total for 2019 to 41,640 people – 19,271 adults and 22,369 children. In addition, one more individual died bringing the measles death toll to 15 since the beginning of the year. Kharkiv (290 patients: 216 adults and 74 children), Ternopil (219: 57 adults and 162 children), Kiev (187: 116 adults and 71 children), Lviv (161: 41 adult and 120 children) regions, and in Kyiv (170:88 adults and 82 children) regions saw the most cases during the week. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USINDOPACOM

Guam: Shigellosis outbreak- An update

1 May- In a follow-up on the outbreak of Shigella infections in Guam, The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) reports the outbreak continues to grow. In 2019, in only four months, Guam has already reached one-half of the total number of cases from all of last year. In 2018, a total of 29 cases of Shigellosis were reported (with 23 cases or 79% confirmed). So far in 2019, a total of 15 cases have been reported (with 53% confirmed). Approximately two-thirds (66.6%) of the 2019 cases involved children who have been taken to the emergency rooms for treatment with some being hospitalized. Five of the 15 cases are children less than five years old; another five cases are among children less than 15 years old and the other five are adults. The public is asked to be vigilant about hygiene and sanitation, especially for people living in crowded housing situations or housing where there is a lack of indoor plumbing and where contact with fecal matter is possible. Shigellosis is an infectious disease caused by a group of bacteria called Shigella. Most individuals who are infected with Shigella develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps starting a day or two after they are exposed to the bacteria. Shigellosis usually resolves in five to seven days. Some people who are infected may have no symptoms at all, but may still pass the Shigella bacteria to others. The spread of Shigella can be stopped by frequent and careful handwashing with soap and taking other hygiene measures. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Philippines: Measles 5-times 2018 numbers

30 April- In a follow-up on the measles outbreak in the Philippines, health officials report that the outbreak tally through Apr. 13 is now 31,056. This is five times more than the figures in 2018 when 6,641 cases were reported at this time. In addition, the measles death toll this year dwarfs 2018. To date, more than 400 measles related deaths have been reported, compared to 59 in 2018. The good news is health officials are saying the outbreak is coming to a close. Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said during the celebration of World Immunization Week in Manila, "It is probably safer to assume that the number of cases is going down and in many areas but we need to validate our figures, many localities have zero new cases". Health officials ramped up immunizations across the country vaccinating some 3.8 million of six to 59 months old children against measles since February. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Thailand: Diphtheria cases

30 April- The Thailand Department of Disease Control (DDC) with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reports a diphtheria incidence rate that is 2 times higher than the same period of last year (2018) and also the median of the past 5 years (2014 – 2018). Through Apr. 27, there had been nine confirmed diphtheria cases of which two died. The patients were found in 6 provinces including Uttaradit, Tak, Suratthani, Sonkhla, Satun, and Yala. The highest incidence rates occurred among infants and young children less than 5 years olds followed by the 10 – 19 years age group. Officials say there is a continued risk of sporadic diphtheria in crowded places such as child day-care centers and boarding schools especially in some areas with low diphtheria vaccination coverage. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Denver- Gonorrhea cases up 150 percent in four years

1 May- Three of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)—chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis have risen sharply in Denver, Colorado in recent years, health officials report. The rate of gonorrhea infections grew most sharply, up 150 percent in 2018 from four years earlier to an estimated 2,703 Denver cases, according to preliminary data. Increases in gonorrhea cases have been seen in both men and women with increases seen highest in Latinos. Concerning syphilis, cases have climbed 75 percent in the last four years to 405 new cases in 2018, according to preliminary estimates. Communities of color, such as Latino and African American, have seen a more than two-fold increase in syphilis diagnoses. More than one in 100 people, or 7,317 Denver residents in 2018 were affected by chlamydia. Decreasing condom use and other factors are linked to the increases in these

STDs. Health officials encourage people to get tested and treated if applicable. It is easy to detect and easy to treat and testing at the STD Clinic is free or low-cost and 100 percent confidential. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S.: Florida reports 70 additional hepatitis A cases in one week

30 April- The hepatitis A outbreak in the State of Florida continues to set new records, with Week #17 (4/21/19–4/27/19) reporting 70 new cases. These new cases increase the total number of hepatitis A cases confirmed in 2019 to 954. During 2018, the Florida Department of Health (FDH) only reported 549 cases. Most of these hepatitis A cases reported in 2019 are from the Florida counties of Pinellas (319), Pasco (267), and Orange (179). [Precision Vaccinations](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S.: Las Vegas- Reports 1st West Nile virus case of 2019

28 April- The Southern Nevada Health District is reporting its first human case of West Nile virus in Southern Nevada in 2019. The individual, a female over the age of 50, had the more serious neuroinvasive form of the illness and has recovered. There were no reported human cases of West Nile virus in Clark County last year. "West Nile virus is a preventable illness, and it is important to remind everyone to take steps to prevent mosquito bites, especially as we start to spend more time outside," said Dr. Joe Iser, Chief Health Officer for the Southern Nevada Health District. "There are simple things you can do to prevent bites and to prevent mosquito breeding around your home to protect yourself, your family, and your community." West Nile virus is spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes that have acquired the virus by feeding on infected birds. The illness is not spread person to person. Many people with the virus will have no symptoms or very mild clinical symptoms of illness. Mild symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach, and back. In some cases, the virus can cause severe neurologic illness and even death. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S.: Louisiana- Hepatitis A outbreak: 1st death reported

28 April- In a follow-up on the hepatitis A outbreak in Louisiana, state health officials have reported 136 hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections since the outbreak was declared in December. Of this total, 66 percent of the cases required hospitalization and the first HAV related death was reported...The best way to prevent hepatitis A is through vaccination with the hepatitis A vaccine. Unvaccinated people who have been exposed recently (within two weeks) to the hepatitis A virus should get the hepatitis A vaccine or a shot of immune globulin to prevent severe illness. Practicing good hand hygiene – including thoroughly washing hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating

food – plays an important role in preventing the spread of hepatitis A. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S.: North Dakota- Rabies, officials remind the public to be aware of the risk, skunks most common carrier

28 April- The North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) and the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) are reminding the public to be aware of the risk of rabies. Rabies is a viral infection that affects mammals, including humans. In the United States, the virus circulates in wild animals and is most commonly found in bats, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, and foxes. Rabid wildlife can transmit rabies to unvaccinated cats, dogs, and farm animals, which then pose a threat to people. "Rabies is 100% preventable," said Assistant State Veterinarian Dr. Sarah Bailey with the NDDA Animal Health Division. "Keep your pets and valuable livestock up to date on rabies vaccinations. If your pets tangle with skunks, racoons or other wildlife, you should call your veterinarian." The virus is most often transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Rabies can also be transmitted if saliva or nervous system tissue from a rabid animal enters open cuts and wounds or the eyes, nose, or mouth. The virus attacks the nervous system and causes swelling of the brain. There is no treatment and rabies is nearly always fatal. "You should seek medical care as soon as possible if you are bitten by an animal," said Laura Cronquist, epidemiologist with the NDDoH. "If the animal is a healthy dog, cat, or domestic ferret, it should be confined and held for observation for 10 days to rule out the risk of rabies virus transmission. If you were bitten by a wild animal, the animal should be euthanized and tested for rabies." [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Peru: Peru's commendable strides towards tuberculosis elimination

26 April- Young Pedro Suarez was a physician practising at a local health centre in northern Lima, Peru, in the 1980s, when the centre's director asked him to see patients with lung diseases. Suarez usually saw 50 patients a day, most of them with tuberculosis. "This was my first encounter with the tuberculosis problem, but it was also an opportunity to observe and understand the day-to-day difficulty in managing tuberculosis", said Suarez, who is now a public health expert at Management Sciences for Health (Washington, DC, USA). "As a physician I was accountable to provide medical care to hundreds of tuberculosis patients and their families", he told *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. [The Lancet](#)

[top of page...](#)

[U.S. Military](#) | [Global](#) | [Influenza](#) | [Veterinary/Food Safety](#) | [Wellness](#) | [Contact Us](#)
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