

8 February 2019

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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U.S. MILITARY

Among troops, vaping is now more popular than cigarettes

3 February- Vaping now appears to be more common in the military than smoking regular cigarettes. The rate of smoking among military service members has plummeted in recent years and now appears to be lower than the general civilian population at large, according to an analysis of the most recent survey of troops' regarding their health-related behaviors. Across the service branches, 7.4 percent of service members smoked cigarettes daily in 2015, compared with 12.9 percent of adults in the general population, according to the results of the most recent Defense Department Health-Related Behaviors Survey of Active-Duty Service Members. And the number of troops who are occasional smokers (smoked in the last month) dropped by nearly half since 2011 — down from 24 percent to 13.9 percent. Yet the picture looks very different for electronic cigarettes: 11.1 percent of service members said they were daily e-cigarette users, and 12.4 percent had vaped within the last month. The rise of e-cigarette use among troops occurred quickly. The 2015 data shows a five-fold increase in service members who said they have tried vaping compared with 2011. The researchers noted that although the health effects of e-cigarettes are not yet known, they contain chemicals that may cause harm to users and those exposed to secondhand vapors. And some military officials believe they can pose a safety hazard based on reports that the batteries can explode. [Military Times](#)

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Army aims for combat-ready troops with new fitness test



6 February- ...The Army is developing a new, more grueling and complex fitness exam that adds dead lifts, power throws and other exercises designed to make soldiers more fit and ready for combat. "I am prepared to be utterly embarrassed," Sampson said on a recent morning, two days before he was to take the test.

Commanders have complained in recent years that the soldiers they get out of basic training aren't fit enough. Nearly half of the commanders surveyed last year said new troops coming into their units could not meet the physical demands of combat. Officials also say about 12 percent of soldiers at any one time cannot deploy because of injuries. In addition, there has long been a sense among many senior officials that the existing fitness test does not adequately measure the physical attributes needed for the battlefield, said Gen. Stephen Townsend, head of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. The new test, "may be harder, but it is necessary," Townsend said. [Army Times](#)

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Be prepared to stay safe and healthy in winter

Winter storms and cold temperatures can be dangerous. Stay safe and healthy by planning ahead. Prepare your home and cars. Prepare for power outages and outdoor activity. Check on older adults.

Although winter comes as no surprise, many of us are not ready for its arrival. If you are prepared for the hazards of winter, you will be more likely to stay safe and healthy when temperatures start to fall.



Gaining new perspective through vision correcting surgery

29 January- Military applicants were once considered unqualified to join the military if they had a history of refractive surgery, a vision-correcting procedure that usually involves the use of lasers to reshape the cornea. But under the Warfighter Refractive Eye Surgery Program, active duty service members now have this option available to correct their vision. Thanks to advancing technology, refractive surgery is performed to enhance the capabilities of warfighters... According to the National Institutes of Health, refractive surgery helps improve common vision problems, including nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism. Townley said the surgery, which typically take as little as 10-20 minutes, changes the focusing power of the eye by making changes to the cornea. When the procedure was first introduced, corneal incisions were made by hand. Now, more precise methods of refractive surgery include tissue removal with laser technology or use of implantable lenses, Townley said. [Health.mil](#)

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Housing, relocation, access to health care are top concerns for military families in survey

6 February- New survey results underline several issues that were brought to the forefront last year for troops and families: some dissatisfaction with housing, stressful relocations, and problems with access to health care. More than 10,000 family members, service members and veterans responded to the 2018 annual Blue Star Families' Military Family Lifestyle Survey. One of the top three recommendations troops and families made for improving quality of life was to offer better housing and increase the Basic Allowance for Housing. Two-thirds of the families who responded to the survey said they lived in on-base housing during their military service, and one-third of those said they were dissatisfied with their on-base housing experience. Families expressed frustration with privatized housing management and aging properties, and environmental health hazards. For those living off base, the issues were inadequate housing allowances and housing shortages. The timelines for when the families experienced the issues are not specified in the survey, but a number of issues have been reported in privatized housing this past year. [Military Times](#)

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'I plead with you to look at this very closely,' retiree tells panel studying health effects of anti-malarial drugs

31 January- As experts begin their study of the long-term health effects of anti-malarial drugs on service members and others, retirees and other veterans are urging them to consider case studies and medical records. And a long-time critic of the government's response to concerns about the anti-malarial mefloquine told the committee of experts that he has questions about the validity of the study, because of the lack of data, and "a flawed

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.

and biased base" of scientific literature now available. More importantly, he said, the Department of Veterans Affairs should be screening veterans who took mefloquine and providing treatment. The study will have particular emphasis on mefloquine and the new drug, tafenoquine, and will look closely at possible long-term neurologic and psychiatric effects, as well as the potential development of post-traumatic stress disorder. [Military Times](#)

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Military Health System, industry allies work together to improve health care technology

29 January- Civilian and military health informatics leaders came together recently at the University of Missouri's Tiger Institute for Health Innovation to share their insights, experiences, and best practices on electronic record implementation as the Military Health System undergoes a significant transformation. The Tiger Institute, located on MU's campus in Columbia, is a unique partnership between the university's health care system and Cerner, a global leader in health care technology. By leveraging the technology and the unique partnership with Cerner, the institute has been successful in implementing their electronic record and improving the approach to care through interoperability, interexchange of information, and management of data at the point of care. The visit, facilitated by Cerner and the Leidos partnership, grew out of a meeting between Dr. Tom Selva, the Tiger Institute's chief medical informatics officer and Air Force Maj. Gen. Lee Payne, who is dual-hatted as the Defense Health Agency assistant director for Combat Support and MHS EHR functional champion, while both were attending the Cerner Healthcare Conference last year in Kansas City. [Health.mil](#)

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Suicides among active-duty soldiers are up about 20 percent

4 February- The Army reported an uptick in active-duty suicides in 2018, according to service statistics, though deaths by suicide were slightly down in the total force. Out of 300 total reports, 138 came from the active-duty side — 22 more than in 2017, Defense Department statistics show. "Like the rest of America, the Army continues to grapple with the loss of too many of our people to suicide," Army spokeswoman Col. Kathleen Turner told Army Times in a statement Friday. "The loss of any soldier or Army family member to suicide is a tragedy." The most recent DoD quarterly suicide report goes back to 2012, showing a six-year high of 325 total suicides in the Army. That number dropped to 300 in 2013 and then to a low of 245 in 2014, before ramping back up to 279 in both 2015 and 2016, then jumping again to 303 in 2017. During that time, active-duty numbers also fluctuated. The Army reported 165 active-duty suicides in 2012, which dropped to 121 in 2013, then 126 in 2014 and 120 in 2015. The past three years, the numbers have swelled and dipped from 120 in 2016 to 116 in 2017, then back up to 138. [Army Times](#)

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GLOBAL

Digital trends heating up the healthcare industry

Technological developments are heating up a number of industries, none more so than the healthcare market. These digital advancements are assisting physicians, advanced practice clinicians, and dentists care for their patients easier, quicker, and better than ever before. While some of these advances are just making their way into the healthcare sector, they are certain to provide patients with better care and treatment now and into the future.

5 Die as plane breaks apart, crashes into neighborhood in Southern California

4 February- At least five people were killed Sunday when a plane apparently broke apart in the air and plummeted into a neighborhood in Yorba Linda, Calif. The pilot died, along with four people in a house hit by wreckage. Officials aren't sure what caused the crash. Two of the victims owned the two-story stucco house that was hit and was engulfed in a raging fire, said Lt. Cory Martino of the Orange County Sheriff's Department. Several witnesses described a dramatic scene in which the aircraft, a 1981 twin-engine Cessna 414, burst into flames and began breaking apart even before it hit the house. Security surveillance footage seemed to confirm that version of events, showing the out-of-control plane trailing black smoke as it fell to the ground. [NPR](#)

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Collapse of Health System sends Venezuelans fleeing to Brazil for basic meds

5 February- Venezuela's once impressive medical system has crumbled dramatically. But it's hard to know exactly how bad things are — because the Ministry of Health stopped releasing national health data. "There has been a strict secrecy policy in public institutions in Venezuela ... since 2012," says Jenny García, a demographer from Venezuela now living in Paris. The government hasn't wanted to release health statistics that are simply going to make it look bad, García says. Statistics that have come out show that all the basic parameters of health in Venezuela have been moving ominously in the wrong direction for the past decade. Rates of malnutrition and HIV are rising; there are new outbreaks of preventable diseases like diphtheria. Infant mortality, which García has been tracking, is on the rise. [NPR](#)

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“Exquisitely contagious,” Thoroughly preventable Measles

30 January- Washington state has declared a public health emergency, as it fights measles outbreaks in 2 counties where vaccine coverage slipped. Now the AP is reporting several cases in the Atlanta area, too. Most of the 35 patients in the Washington State outbreak are children, reports the PBS News Hour. Alan Melnick, Clark County's public health director, explains: Most people born before 1957 are believed to have natural immunity—and children often congregate in close groups. Calling measles “exquisitely contagious,” Melnick notes that “If 10 people without immunity walked into a room with someone with measles, nine would become infected.” An unvaccinated person could catch the virus hours later

from airborne droplets, writes Julia Belluz in Vox—noting that measles is the only virus that can do that. She sets out 8 things everyone should know about the disease—including evidence of the measles vaccine's safety and helpful tables to share with vaccine skeptics.

[Global Health Now](#)

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Fake Xanax: Anxiety drug deaths an 'escalating crisis'

4 February- The coroner for Northern Ireland has called the rising number of deaths linked to fake versions of the anti-anxiety drug, Xanax, "an escalating crisis". Joe McCrisken says he is signing off an alprazolam-related death nearly once a week. He says "most of the deaths" are caused by counterfeit versions of Xanax, the brand name for the drug alprazolam. "The deaths are a very tiny tip of what is a very huge iceberg," he says. Xanax is used to treat anxiety and panic attacks. It is not available on the NHS. It is a powerful tranquiliser. But it can be obtained on private prescription in the UK, is widely prescribed in the US, and counterfeit versions circulate on the black market. Last year, the BBC found that children as young as 11 were being treated by ambulance services after taking fake versions of it.

[BBC](#)

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Growing pains for swelling cities

1 February- The global city-dwelling population is set to climb by 2.5 billion by 2050, with nearly 90% of the growth in lower-income nations in Africa and Asia. Now the challenge is making those cities healthy and habitable. Population growth is outpacing urban infrastructure, leading to massive, overcrowded slums where epidemics thrive. There is no quick fix for these growing pains. However, promising moves include establishing and enforcing land rights, promoting investment in formal housing, and establishing a tax base and stronger local government. [Global Health Now](#)

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How U.S. mission creep in Syria and Iraq could trigger war with Iran

4 February- ...President Donald Trump announced in December 2018 that he's withdrawing all U.S. troops from Syria, but administration sources told Foreign Policy last month that he's considering keeping a small force at a remote base in southeastern Syria, far from the last remnants of the Islamic State, to counter Iran. And yesterday, Trump said he wants to maintain some troops in Iraq for the same purpose. "I want to be able to watch Iran," he told CBS's Face the Nation. "We're going to keep watching and we're going to keep seeing," he said. In both countries, the strategy would constitute a core operational change, raising broad questions about the mission. Then-President Barack Obama completed a drawdown of all U.S. forces in Iraq in 2011, bringing an end to the 2003 Iraq War. But the Islamic State's sweep of broad territories in Iraq and Syria in 2014 prompted the United States to intervene

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militarily in both countries, alongside a coalition of other militaries, to fight the militant group. "What is the strategy? What would be the rules of engagement? How would we avoid being sucked into a regional war not of our making?" said Kelly Magsamen, the vice president for national security and international policy at the Center for American Progress. "If I'm a service member in Syria, I would want to know what the heck I was doing there and how my mission fit into a strategy." [Foreign Policy](#)

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Millions of cancer patients suffer needlessly from pain

2 February- In advance of World Cancer Day (February 4), the World Health Organization is issuing new cancer pain control guidelines aimed at ending the needless suffering experienced by millions of people afflicted with this illness... Director of WHO's Department for the Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Etienne Krug, says controlling pain should be an essential part of cancer treatment. Yet, he says pain is very often neglected as part of that treatment, a situation he considers unacceptable. "Nobody, cancer patients or not cancer patients should live or die in pain in the 21st century. We have the knowledge of how to treat pain," said Krug. "We have the medicines of how to address it. It is a question of making sure everybody has that knowledge and everybody has access to the necessary treatment." Krug says the situation is most acute in the poorer countries because pain management systems tend not to be in place. But he notes even in the rich countries people are still living and dying in pain. [VOA News](#)

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Patient at Pennsylvania hospital being tested for Ebola

6 February- A patient is being tested for Ebola at a hospital in Philadelphia, although officials don't believe the patient has the potentially deadly illness. Penn Medicine says preliminary testing at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania indicates the person has another condition. They did not release the patient's name. [Fox News](#)

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Raccoons in Louisiana infected with rabies-like disease that could affect dogs, wildlife officials warn

6 February- An increasing number of raccoons in parts of Louisiana are said to have a serious and contagious rabies-like disease known as canine distemper, which can affect dogs, officials with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) said in an online warning this week. The LDWF said the affected raccoons are "primarily from Lafayette to the Florida Parishes in southeast Louisiana" and noted other wild animals — such as foxes, coyotes and skunks — can also be infected with the disease, which spreads "among susceptible animals through direct contact with body fluids or droppings from an infected animal." Canine distemper, although not the same as rabies, presents similar symptoms such as "discharge from the nose and eyes, a rough coat of hair, seizures, coughing,

emaciated appearance and unusual behavior such as disorientation or wandering aimlessly,” according to the wildlife department. While the disease does not affect humans, unvaccinated dogs can be infected — and there is no cure, according to the American Veterinary Medical Foundation. For this reason, the LDWF is encouraging dog owners to ensure their pet is vaccinated. [Fox News](#)

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Rising temperatures could melt Most Himalayan glaciers by 2100, report finds

4 February- Rising temperatures in the Himalayas, home to most of the world’s tallest mountains, will melt at least one-third of the region’s glaciers by the end of the century even if the world’s most ambitious climate change targets are met, according to a report released Monday. If global warming and greenhouse gas emissions continue at their current rates, the Himalayas could heat up by 8 degrees Fahrenheit (4.4 degrees Celsius) by 2100, according to the report, the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment. Those starker numbers would translate to a loss of two-thirds of glaciers in the region, plus radical disruptions to food and water supplies, and mass population displacement. Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region, which spans over 2,000 miles of Asia, provide water resources to around a quarter of the world’s population. [New York Times](#)

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Russian Navy has new weapon that makes target hallucinate, and vomit

4 February- The Russian Navy reportedly has a new weapon that can disrupt the eyesight of targets as well as make them hallucinate and vomit. Russian state news agency RIA Novosti reported that a Russian military contractor has installed the weapon on two Russian warships. The weapon fires a beam similar to a strobe light that affects the target's eyesight, making it more difficult for them to aim at night. During testing, volunteers reportedly used rifles and guns to shoot targets that were protected by the weapon. The volunteers reported having trouble aiming because they couldn't see. Additionally, about half of the volunteers said they felt dizzy, nauseous and disoriented. About 20 percent of the volunteers reported experiencing hallucinations. [The Hill](#)

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Stroke prevention awareness

4 February- Stroke is the leading cause of serious, long-term adult disability in the United States. The effects of a stroke range from mild to severe and can include paralysis, problems with thinking, difficulty with speaking, and emotional problems. According to the National Institutes of Health, each year nearly 800,000 Americans experience a new or recurrent stroke. Approximately 610,000 of these are first attacks, and 185,000 are recurrent attacks.

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the US, killing nearly 133,000 people a year and accounting for one of every 19 deaths. Nearly three-quarters of all strokes occur in people over the age of 65 and the risk of having stroke more than doubles each decade after the age of 55. Americans have shown that stroke is preventable and treatable. In recent years, a better understanding of the causes of stroke has helped Americans make lifestyle changes that have cut the stroke death rate nearly in half. [Health.mil](#)

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Trump highlights health agenda and vows to lower 'unfair' drug prices

6 February- Health was a persistent theme, if not the centerpiece, of President Trump's State of the Union address at the Capitol on Tuesday night. The president laid out a series of health-related goals, including some that even Democrats indicated could be areas of bipartisan negotiation or compromise. Trump vowed to take on prescription drug prices, pursue an end to the HIV epidemic in the U.S. by 2030 and boost funding for childhood cancers. He also took a victory lap for goals that his administration had accomplished. "We eliminated the very unpopular Obamacare individual mandate penalty," he said, referring to the requirement in the Affordable Care Act that most people must have health insurance or pay a fine. It was eliminated as part of the 2017 GOP tax bill, despite backlash from critics that it could undercut Obamacare, after many failed attempts by Republicans to repeal the law. And Trump noted congressional passage of a "right-to-try" bill that was supposed to make it easier for terminally ill patients to gain access to experimental medications, but so far few patients have been able to make the law work for them. [NPR](#)

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USA: Emerging cancer trends among young adults

3 February- Monitoring cancer occurrence in young adults, often under 50 years, is informative because it often reflects relatively recent changes in exposure to carcinogenic factors. Moreover, these cancer trends often serve as a sentinel for the future disease burden in older adults, among whom most cancer cases occur. Exposures to carcinogens during early life can affect an individual's cancer risk by acting during crucial developmental periods and increasing cumulative mutagenic damage. Due to the obesity epidemic over the past 40 years, younger generations worldwide are experiencing an earlier and longer lasting exposure to excess adiposity over their lifetime than previous generations. Numerous cancers are associated with excess bodyweight, and evidence from experimental studies from murine models suggests that obesity and an obesogenic diet accelerate the multistage transition from normal tissue to invasive malignancy and metastatic disease. Increases in the incidence of early onset colorectal cancer have been reported in several high-income countries over the past decade, including the USA, and could in part reflect the obesity epidemic. [The Lancet](#)

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Verily is making smart shoes that can measure weight and detect falls

2 February- Alphabet's Verily is working on smart shoes that can sense movement and track weight, according to a new report. Sources claim that the life sciences company is now looking for possible partners in developing the shoes' prototype. Three people familiar with the project have revealed to CNBC that in the past few months, Google's sister company held private meetings where it showcased the prototype of the smart shoes. If things push through, Verily's smart shoe will be an addition to a growing number of health-focused gadgets in the market. Reports say that the shoes feature sensors that can track sudden weight gain, which could be a sign of congestive heart failure. It's also equipped with a tracker that sends an alert if a user falls down, which is quite useful especially for the elderly and people with mobility issues. [Tech Times](#)

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WHO and vaccine group back 'critical' cervical cancer shots

4 February- A vaccine given to girls to protect them against a virus that causes cervical cancer is a "critical" health tool and access to it should be scaled up as swiftly as possible, especially in poorer countries, cancer experts said on Monday. Figures from the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) showed an estimated 570,000 new cases of cervical cancer were diagnosed worldwide in 2018, making it the fourth most common cancer in women globally. Each year, more than 310,000 women die from cervical cancer, and the vast majority of deaths are in poorer countries where immunization rates against the human papillomavirus (HPV) that causes it are low. In wealthy countries, some anti-vaccine campaigners are also persuading parents to refuse the shot for their children, leaving them at risk, IARC said... IARC said reducing the cost of vaccines in poorer countries would play a vital role in increasing access to them. It said it was working with the generic drug maker Serum Institute of India to develop an HPV shot that "could provide a high-quality alternative at a lower cost". [Reuters](#)

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INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

For Week 4:

-NORTHCOM: Influenza activity continued to fluctuate between low to moderate for the majority of the states, however Connecticut continued to have high activity.

-EUCOM: Influenza activity remained minimal to low across EUCOM. Activity in Turkey decreased from high to low.

-PACOM: Influenza activity remained low in the Republic of Korea and Japan and minimal in Hawaii and Guam.

-CENTCOM: Influenza activity ranged from minimal to high in CENTCOM locations with available data.

-AFRICOM: In Djibouti, influenza activity remained minimal. The percentage of outpatient visits due to ILI dropped to 4.0% for week 04.

-SOUTHCOM: Influenza activity remained minimal in Honduras and Cuba during week 04.

[DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

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APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 26 January 2019 (week 4): The number of positive respiratory specimens increased by 13% from surveillance week 3 to surveillance week 4; there were 479 positive specimens in week 3 and 543 in week 4. Influenza A continues to be the most frequently resulted respiratory pathogen, accounting for 414 (76%) of all positive specimens. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity has been steadily increasing and RSV accounted for 101 (19%) of the positive specimens in week 4. One influenza associated hospitalization with an onset date in week 4 was reported in the Disease Re-reporting System internet; the case was an unvaccinated Active Duty Service Member. This brings the total number of influenza-associated hospitalizations for the season to 32 (6 AD & 26 non-AD).

[APHC](#)

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

2018-2019 Influenza Season Week 4 ending January 26, 2019

-Viral Surveillance: The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza viruses in clinical laboratories increased. Influenza A viruses have predominated in the United States since the beginning of October. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses have

predominated in most areas of the country, however influenza A(H3) viruses have predominated in the southeastern United States (HHS Region 4).

- Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was at the system-specific epidemic threshold in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Mortality Surveillance System.

-Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: Two influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to CDC during week 4. [CDC](#)

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ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 4/2019 (21-27 January 2019)

-Influenza activity continued to increase in the European Region. Samples collected from individuals presenting with ILI or ARI to sentinel primary health care sites yielded an influenza positivity rate of 51.3%

-Influenza type A virus detections dominated with A (H1N1) pdm09 viruses and A(H3N2) viruses co-circulating. Very few influenza B viruses were detected.

-Pooled data from 23 Member States and areas reporting to the EuroMOMO project indicated excess mortality in adults and elderly populations overall. However, this result was driven by data from only a few countries. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

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NHRC: Operational Infectious Diseases - Weekly Surveillance Report

31 January - For Epi Week 3, 2019, febrile respiratory illness surveillance data among military recruit, DoD beneficiary, and U.S.-Mexico border (CDC-BIDS) populations indicated 82 positive samples out of 107 received.

-Military Recruits – 14 received

-DoD Beneficiaries – 46 received

-CDC Border Infectious Disease Surveillance – 47 received [Naval Health Research Center](#)

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Fatal brain disease in deer, elk, moose spreading; Danger for humans?

4 February- Just as hunters have been stalking deer and elk, so, too, has a deadly brain disease been stalking their four-legged quarry. Known as a chronic wasting disease (CWD), it infects deer, elk, and moose. It was first confirmed in Colorado in the 1970s. Back then, wildlife officials thought it would take more than 100 years to find its way east. They were confident that the Mississippi River would serve as a natural border. But since being confirmed in Wisconsin in 2002, it has made its way to 25 states, most recently into Mississippi and Tennessee, and two Canadian provinces. News headlines warn that it's now within miles of the Alabama state line, approaching Indiana, and looking like it might get into Idaho. "It continues to spread," said Kip Adams, the conservation director for the Quality Deer Management Association. The affected states are Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Mississippi, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The two Canadian provinces are Alberta and Saskatchewan. [Food Safety News](#)

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FDA posts warning letters: Violations cited at juice, seafood companies

5 February- The Food and Drug Administration recently made public two warning letters issued in November 2018 involving significant violations of federal law. Violators have 15 working days to respond in writing. The FDA has not issued closeout letters for either of the companies reported below.

- Gonzalez and Nietos LLC — formerly Loty International Wholesalers Corp. Miami, FL
- H & H Products Co. Orlando, FL
- Juice HACCP violations at H & H
- Acidified foods violations at H & H

[Food Safety News](#)

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Frito-Lay recalls pita chips after consumer reports allergic reaction

7 February- At least one person has had an allergic reaction after eating Stacy's brand pita chips that contained undeclared milk. Federal law requires specific label language on foods that include ingredients that have been designated as known allergens. Frito-Lay, a division of multi-national giant PepsiCo, initiated a recall "after it was discovered that 228 bags of Stacy's Simply Naked Pita Chips were inadvertently filled with another flavor of pita chips, potentially exposing consumers to undeclared milk" according to a company statement... Frito-Lay reports the recalled chips are packaged in "7 1/3 oz." bags and are labeled as Stacy's Simply Naked Pita Chips. The implicated pita chips have a UPC number of 028400564632, which is printed on the bottom right side of the back of the bag. [Food Safety News](#)

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Sales suspended from New York raw dairy over Listeria monocytogenes contamination

4 February- New tests required before a New York raw milk dairy will be allowed to resume sales are scheduled for today. Sales at the Shunpike Dairy in Millbrook, NY, were suspended Jan. 30 by New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard A. Ball. The state agriculture commissioner suspended sales because of possible Listeria monocytogenes contamination of the raw milk produced by Shunpike Dairy. Ball warned consumers in Dutchess County and the surrounding area not to consume the unpasteurized raw milk from the Millbrook dairy. Shunpike made the transition to selling unpasteurized, raw milk in 2010, now making only on-the-farm sales directly to consumers. No confirmed illnesses have been reported in association with the current incident, but it can take up to 70 days after exposure for symptoms of Listeria infection to develop. The state ordered sales at the dairy suspended when a routine test turned up traces of bacteria and additional testing confirmed the milk was contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes. [Food Safety News](#)

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U.S. importer recalls fish from Vietnam after skipping border inspection

5 February- Q's American Best Trading Inc., an importer of record based in Lakewood, CA, recalled 1,000 pounds of imported Siluriformes fish products Monday that were not presented for import re-inspection into the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The frozen Siluriformes, specifically Sheat fish, items were imported from Vietnam to the U.S. on Dec. 25, 2018. The only label information to identify the recalled fish is as follows:

-14-oz. clear bag packages containing “Q’S AMERICAN BEST AB CA TREN KET Sheat fish.

These recalled items were shipped to retail locations in California. The problem was discovered on Jan. 29, during FSIS surveillance activities of imported products at the distributor facility. [Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

Can you get too much exercise? What the heart tells us

6 February- ...Many middle-aged marathon runners and other endurance athletes are familiar with concerns from their loved ones — and occasionally their physicians — that they might be exercising too much and straining or harming their hearts. For all of them, a large-scale study published recently in JAMA Cardiology should be mollifying. It finds that middle-aged men who work out often and vigorously do tend to develop worrisome plaques in their cardiac arteries. But those men also are less likely than more sedentary people to die prematurely from a heart attack or other cause. The findings raise the interesting possibility, in other words, that strenuous exercise may protect the heart against the very problems to which it also contributes. No one doubts, of course, that our hearts benefit from exercise. Study after study shows that people who meet the standard exercise guidelines, which call for about 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise, have a reduced risk of developing heart disease. [New York Times](#)

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Does intermittent fasting work?

2 February- One of the biggest diet and nutrition trends these days is intermittent fasting. Every week, I hear from listeners wanting to know my thoughts on it. I've mentioned intermittent fasting on the podcast before, in an episode on the health benefits of fasting. But that was way back in 2011. At that point, the research was still quite preliminary and most of it had been done in rodents. Nonetheless, researchers were excited about the potential for intermittent fasting to prevent or reverse diabetes, weight gain, DNA damage, and other artifacts of aging. Based on these promising but preliminary results, lots of people started experimenting with various forms of modified or intermittent fasting—generating a lot of positive anecdotal reports. Over the last few years, more studies have been done—some of them on actual humans. [Scientific American](#)

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Early aerobic exercise speeds concussion recovery

4 February- Young athletes recovered more quickly from sport-related concussion with an early, progressive, aerobic exercise regimen in a 103-patient randomized trial. Adolescents who performed individualized, sub-symptom threshold aerobic exercise soon after concussion recovered in a median of 13 days, compared with 17 days for adolescents in a stretching program ($P=0.009$), reported John Leddy, MD, of the University of Buffalo, and co-authors in JAMA Pediatrics. "This research provides the strongest evidence yet that a prescribed, individualized aerobic exercise program that keeps the heart rate below the point where symptoms worsen is the best way to treat concussion in adolescents," Leddy said in a statement. Because exercise can exacerbate concussion symptoms, the standard of care for sport-related concussion has been prescribed rest until symptoms resolve. This protocol emerged from 2001 guidelines which recommend rest until athletes were "completely asymptomatic," noted Sara Chrisman, MD, MPH, of the Seattle Children's Research Institute, in an accompanying editorial. [Med Page Today](#)

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We've lost touch with our bodies

5 February- ...Our use of drugs to mask symptoms has contributed to a lack of awareness about our own bodies. So has the emergence of technologies such as computers, smartphones, remotes and game controllers, which only involve our bodies—usually just our fingers—as control inputs. His lack of connection to our bodies can be looked at through a concept called interception, which describes our awareness of internal bodily signals, including the detection of sensations such as hunger, thirst, and heartbeat. Interception is a process by which our brains/minds make sense of these signals, which serve as a running commentary or mental map of the body's internal world across conscious and unconscious levels of perception. Our culture, technology and medicine have progressively made us into poor interceptors. Disrupted interception is now understood to play an important role in mental health conditions including anxiety and mood disorders, eating disorders and addiction, and it is thought to be a feature of most psychiatric disorders. Scientific American has previously explored the role of interception in eating disorders ("A Broken Sense of Self Underlies Eating Disorders"), emotional awareness ("Emotional Ignorance Harms Health"), the location and function of such awareness in the brain ("Where Mind and Body Meet"). And results from relatively recent neuroanatomical and neuroimaging studies have shown how dysfunctional interception can cause or exacerbate anxiety and depression. [Scientific American](#)

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Democratic Republic of the Congo: Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo time to sound a global alert?



4 February- The epidemic of Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the second largest in history after the 2014 west African epidemic. A storm of detrimental factors complicates this event: armed conflict, political instability, and mass displacement. WHO,

the DRC Government, and non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners have shown remarkable leadership but are badly stretched. The outbreak remains far from controlled, risking a long-term epidemic with regional, perhaps global, impacts...Cases of Ebola virus disease have more than tripled, with an expanded geographical footprint into 18 health zones. Governments, including the USA, have withdrawn personnel, fearing for their safety.

[The Lancet](#)

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Five killed in South African coal mine gas explosion

7 February- Five people have been killed by a gas explosion in an unused coal mine in South Africa's eastern province of Mpumalanga and several others remain trapped, police said on Thursday. State broadcaster SABC said about 20 people were still stuck underground at the mine in Middleburg. Rescue efforts were hampered by dangerously high levels of toxic gas underground, SABC said. The mine is owned by Tegeta Resources and Exploration, which is undergoing creditor protection after its owners, the Gupta brothers, found it difficult to continue doing business in South Africa following corruption allegations against them. Several people had entered the mine on Wednesday afternoon to steal copper wires that supply electricity for lighting and ventilation when a gas pipe exploded, police spokesman Leonard Hlati said. [Reuters](#)

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Saudi Arabia reports increase in MERS cases

3 February- The Saudi Arabia Ministry of Health reported an additional four Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection today bringing the total to 20 cases in 2019. The most recent cases are from Riyadh (1) and Wadi Aldwasir (3) and one patient had contact with camels. All the cases are hospitalized for their illness. Since September 2012, WHO has been notified of 2,279 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-

CoV, including 806 deaths. While the bulk of the cases have been reported in Saudi Arabia, 26 other countries have reported cases. According to the World Health Organization, humans are infected with MERS-CoV from direct or indirect contact with dromedary camels. MERS-CoV has demonstrated the ability to transmit between humans. So far, the observed non-sustained human-to-human transmission has occurred mainly in health care settings.

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USEUCOM

Finland: Measles advisory issued for passengers of Silja's Serenade ferry

5 February- The Finland National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) issued an advisory today (computer translated) over an adult passenger with measles who cruised from Helsinki to Stockholm and back on Silja's Serenade ferry over the weekend. He traveled on Silja Serenade on Friday, February 1 at 5 pm from Helsinki to Stockholm. Returned Saturday, February 2, from Stockholm at 16.45 am local time on the same ship to Helsinki. The ship arrived in Helsinki on Sunday 3 February at 10.30 am. Silja said it is attempting to reach passengers who were on the weekend cruise. Officials are asking passengers who have traveled on the ship to check whether their own protection is in order. This includes previous measles infection or two MMR vaccine series/ If you do not have your own or your child's vaccine protection, or if you do not know you have had measles, contact your health center immediately. [Outbreak News](#)

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London: Schools in England introduce a new subject-mindfulness

4 February- ...In up to 370 English schools, students will start to practice mindfulness as part of a study to improve youth mental health, the British government said on Monday. They will work with mental health experts to learn relaxation techniques, breathing exercises and other methods to "help them regulate their emotions," the government said in a news release announcing the program. The goal of the program is to study which approaches work best for young people in a world of rapid change. The government said the study, which will run until 2021, is one of the largest of its kind in the world. [New York Times](#)

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Poland: Mad Cow Disease identified on Poland farm

5 February- Dr. Pawel Niemczuk, Chief Veterinary Officer with the Poland Ministry of Agriculture notified the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) of a case of atypical bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or "Mad cow disease" among cattle on a Mirsk, Dolnoslaskie farm in southwestern Poland. The atypical strain of the disease was uncovered on January 24 during a routine screening. The affected cow was killed and disposed of, according to an OIE release. [Outbreak News](#)

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Switzerland: Swiss government recommending Meningoencephalitis vaccination for 2019

6 February- Cases of tick-borne encephalitis in Switzerland reached a record high in 2018 with 377 cases, reported the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH). Tick-borne encephalitis virus (TBEV) can cause severe meningoencephalitis. In response to this negative trend, the FOPH is recommending vaccination against meningoencephalitis throughout Switzerland during 2019. This Swiss vaccination program is recommended for both adults and children, who are above the age of six, who are living in or staying in Switzerland. [Precision Vaccinations](#)

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Turkey: At least two killed after building collapses in Turkey's Istanbul

6 February- At least two people were killed and six wounded after an eight-storey residential building collapsed in Istanbul on Wednesday, the governor's office said. It was not immediately clear why the building, in the Kartal district on the Asian side of the city, had collapsed. Istanbul Governor Ali Yerlikaya told reporters at the site that 43 people were registered in 14 apartments at the address, but that the top three floors of the building had been built illegally. Yerlikaya also said there was a textile workshop on the ground floor that was operating without a license. The chairman for Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) said search and rescue operations were underway. President Tayyip Erdogan sent the interior and environment ministers to the site, state-owned Anadolu agency reported. Emergency teams pulled at least three people out alive as crowds surrounded the site. Roads leading to the building were blocked by vehicles and crowds.

[Reuters](#)

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Australia: Unprecedented floods in Australia force hundreds to evacuate

4 February- After weeks of unrelenting heat and bushfires across the continent, torrential rain and flooding in northern Australia have forced hundreds of residents to evacuate their homes in what weather officials describe as an “unprecedented” event. Since Jan. 26, there has been close to two feet of rain on average in the Townsville region, a coastal city in the state of Queensland, and up to twice that at some weather stations, eclipsing records set in 1998 during a flood known as the “Night of Noah.” The downpour pushed the nearby Ross River Dam to almost 250 percent of its capacity, forcing the floodgates open as officials instructed people to move to higher ground. Emergency crews, including about 1,500 members of the Australian military, helped rescue people and their pets with inflatable boats and treat others who were injured. [New York Times](#)

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Japan: Swine fever spreads in Japan, 15,000 pigs to be culled

6 February- Japan’s swine fever outbreak has spread to five prefectures including Osaka, and more than 10,000 pigs will be culled as part of measures to prevent further contagion, the government said on Wednesday. This is a different strain from the deadly African swine fever China has been battling, an agriculture ministry official said. Pigs in central Japan’s Aichi prefecture have been found with swine fever, the first such case outside neighboring Gifu prefecture since the country’s first swine fever outbreak in 26 years was confirmed in Gifu last September. Pigs shipped from the Aichi farm in question to pig farms in Osaka and three other prefectures were also found infected with swine fever, the ministry official said, adding some 15,000 pigs at affected farms were being culled and buried. “In order to prevent the disease from spreading further, the government will do its utmost by having the agriculture ministry and relevant local authorities cooperate for speedy and thorough implementation of quarantine measures,” Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a regular news conference. Swine fever is often deadly for pigs and wild boars, but is not infectious for humans. [Reuters](#)

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Thailand: Thailand chikungunya outbreak- Another 400 cases in past week

5 February- In a follow-up on the chikungunya outbreak in southern Thailand, health officials recorded an additional 424 cases during the past week, bringing the total to 1,499 from 17 provinces since the beginning of the year. The hardest hit provinces include Phuket (79.48 / 100,000 population), Pattani (55.93 / 100,000 population) and Songkla (47.37 / 100,000 population). No deaths have been reported. Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes. It causes fever and severe joint pain, which is often debilitating. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue, and rash. The disease shares some clinical signs with dengue and Zika, and can be misdiagnosed in areas where they are common. As there is no cure, treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms. [Outbreak News](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Legal marijuana may complicate SUD treatment in adolescents

5 February- The legalization of marijuana almost certainly will complicate the treatment of substance use disorder in adolescents, particularly when SUD occurs as a comorbidity of bipolar disorder or other psychiatric diseases, according to an expert review at a pediatric psychopharmacology update held by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The full effects of marijuana legalization on SUD have not yet been comprehensively studied in children or adults, but the consequences of easier access, diminished stigma, and potential for a diminished sense of harm are widely considered to be an important obstacle to successful therapy in children, said Timothy E. Wilens, MD, chief of the division of child and adolescent psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. Comorbid substance use in children with mood disorders or ADHD has long been understood as a form of self-medication. However, use of marijuana, alcohol, or other mood-altering drugs also are known to interfere with treatment, Dr. Wilens said. The problem is common among adults as well, but adolescents pose a greater challenge.

[Internal Medicine News](#)

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U.S: New Hampshire- Increase in hepatitis A cases ‘concerning’, early stages of outbreak

5 February- New Hampshire state health officials are reporting a significant increase in the number of hepatitis A cases. Over the past three months, 13 new individuals have been diagnosed with acute hepatitis A infections, including 7 in January, compared to an average of 6 – 7 people annually (range of 1-10 cases annually) over the past five years. The cases occurred in residents residing the southern part of the state. “There are large outbreaks of hepatitis A occurring in multiple other states across the country,” said Dr. Benjamin Chan, NH State Epidemiologist. “While these outbreaks have often started in individuals experiencing homelessness and those with a substance use disorder, once it is in our communities it can spread very easily even to others without specific risk factors. Thankfully, hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable disease. We encourage anybody who wishes to protect themselves from hepatitis A to talk with their healthcare provider about obtaining the very effective hepatitis A vaccine.” DPHS reports the hepatitis A virus (HAV) is contagious and is transmitted when a person ingests the virus from objects, food or drinks contaminated by small, undetected amounts of stool from an infected person. [Outbreak news](#)

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U.S: Texas- Measles case confirmed in Galveston County

5 February- One case of measles has been confirmed in Galveston County, according to health officials. The patient is a boy, ages 1-2 years old. “We have one positive case in Galveston County, and we are aware of a small cluster of cases in the region. Residents should be aware and know what symptoms to look for,” said Dr. Philip Keiser, Galveston County local health authority. “Immediately contact your doctor if you have been exposed to someone who has measles or if you think you may have measles,” Keiser said. “Let them know your symptoms and they can decide the best course of action. Your best protection is the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine. It provides long-lasting protection. Children need two doses for the best protection.”The first dose can be given at 12-15 months of age and the second at 4-6 years. The measles vaccine is highly effective. One dose of the measles vaccine is about 93 percent effective at preventing measles if exposed to the virus while two doses are 97 percent effective. [Outbreak News](#)

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Brazil: At least five dead in Brazil after powerful storm lashes Rio de Janeiro

7 February- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second-largest city, awoke to scenes of chaos on Thursday after thrashing wind and rain whipped through neighborhoods, felling trees, flooding streets and sweeping away buses in a storm that killed at least five people. Some of Rio's most iconic neighborhoods, including tourist hot-spots like Ipanema and Copacabana, were battered by winds of up to 110 kilometers per hour (68 mph) on Wednesday night, with precarious hillside favelas hit by mudslides that closed roads. At least five people died, with one more person potentially killed in a bus that was hit by a mudslide, Rio's mayor, Marcelo Crivella, told local news media. [Reuters](#)

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Jamaica: Jamaica dengue outbreak- Hundreds of cases in St. Catherine

4 February- In a follow-up on a report early last month, Senior Medical Officer (SMO) for St Catherine, Dr. Prosper Chen said that the parish recorded more than 520 notifications for dengue in the month of January alone. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2018, a total of 986 suspected and confirmed cases of dengue including 13 deaths have been reported. By the end of 2018, the largest number of reported cases were notified by Kingston and Saint Andrew parishes. However, as noted above, the largest proportion of cases have been reported by Saint Catherine parish so far in 2019. Laboratory tests have identified DENV3 as the dengue serotype currently circulating. The Jamaica Ministry of Health (MoH) declared the dengue outbreak on 3 January 2019. Health authorities in Jamaica are implementing measures for the following activities; strengthened integrated vector control, enhanced surveillance of cases, social mobilization, clinical management, enhanced laboratory diagnostic capacity, and emergency risk communications. [Outbreak News](#)

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Panama: Pertussis outbreak in Ngäbe Buglé, Panama

2 February- Health officials in Panama are reporting an outbreak of pertussis, or whooping cough in the Ngäbe Buglé region since mid-December, according to an El Siglo report (computer translated). To date, 81 confirmed cases have been reported, including nine fatalities in children under two years of age. According to the head of the Department of Epidemiological Surveillance Ministry of Health, Israel Cedeno, the children died due to complications and were registered in the Loma Yuca sector of the region. Whooping cough, also called pertussis, is a highly contagious respiratory illness that spreads by coughing and sneezing while in close contact with others. Left untreated, it can spread from a single

infected person for several weeks, with people in the early stage of illness being the most contagious. [Outbreak News](#)

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