

20 March 2020

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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If you are viewing the Army Public Health Weekly Update using Internet Explorer on a government computer with Windows 10, the external hyperlinks will be disabled per the [Security Technical Implementation Guide](#) (V-64927).

As a workaround, opening the Update using **Chrome** will enable the links.

We're sorry for the inconvenience.

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Subscription or Comments

If you wish to be added to the APH Weekly Update mailing list, removed from the mailing list, or if you have comments or questions about the update, please [contact us](#). We welcome your comments. Please feel free to share this update with others who may be interested.



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**APHC COVID-19
Communication
Toolkit**

This page contains communication messages and materials that Leaders, Public Affairs Officers, and communication staffs can use and tailor for various groups during the spread of COVID-19. Share these messages and products throughout your installation and on your social media platforms to raise awareness of and knowledge about COVID-19.



U.S. MILITARY

Army command continues work on COVID-19 vaccine, treatment

17 March- The Frederick hospital is looking to setup a drive-through testing site. On Fort Detrick, currently, there are no plans to start testing people at the visitor center. The Army Command working on a COVID-19 vaccine and treatment briefed the community Monday in a virtual town hall on Facebook. Officials from the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command, or USAMRDC, the Barquist Army Health Clinic on Fort Detrick, Frederick Health Hospital near the base and other groups answered questions and gave updates about concerns surrounding COVID-19. Leaders of USAMRDC reported a task force with multiple laboratories within the command is meeting daily. They are looking at preventing, detecting and treating COVID-19. According to USAMRDC, they're doing everything ranging from validating testing kits, doing some early vaccine work and looking at therapeutics for COVID-19. The work is done in partnership with other government agencies, as part of the larger response to COVID-19. Frederick Health Hospital is looking to set up a drive-through testing site. They are hoping to have that running sometimes in by the middle or end of this week and plan to follow the Centers for Disease Control guidelines for who should be tested. On Fort Detrick, currently, there are no plans to start testing people at the visitor's center. Right now, officials reported no confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the Fort Detrick community. Leaders attempted a calming tone for this virtual town hall. They asked those listening to be patient, remind them things will change on a daily basis, so the advice is likely to change. They promised to update the community as this happens. [WUSA9](#)

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Army Medical Command launches COVID-19 Information Hotline

16 March- ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. -- The U.S. Army Medical Command is establishing a COVID-19 hotline to provide trusted information and a link to resources. The hotline is part of the Army Medical Readiness Assistance Program and is intended to connect callers to trusted COVID-19 information sources and answer questions. The hotline will be manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can be reached by calling 1-800-984-8523. Callers can also reach the line by calling:

- Overseas: DSN (312) 421-3700
- Stateside: DSN 421-3700
- Stateside Commercial: 210-295-3700

"We have a team of trained professionals standing by to assist all callers," said John Resta, director of the U.S. Army Public Health Center and acting deputy chief of staff of Public Health for the U.S. Army Medical Command. "They will listen to the caller's concerns and assist them

with access to medical care if needed. There is a lot of misinformation out there, and we will continue to be a trusted source of information as we support the whole of government response and try to limit the spread of Coronavirus Disease." APHC provides continuously updated online COVID-19 health information and resources for service members, families, civilians, contractors and healthcare providers. This information helps military communities understand what actions they should take when commanders establish health protection conditions, or HPCON levels, in response to increased COVID-19 community spread. [DVIDS](#)

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Coronavirus may halt proposed changes to military retiree health care

16 March- The worldwide coronavirus pandemic has led one U.S. senator to push back against Pentagon plans that call for military retirees and family members to receive medical care at civilian health care facilities. During a meeting of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York) noted the Department of Defense has been working to downsize health personnel. "The closure of military medical treatment facilities, the shifting of retiree, military family members; care to Tricare," she said. "In many of these areas, treatment facilities may not be capable of handling the increased patient load." She noted the cuts are happening while the coronavirus continues to spread and "and will obviously put a lot of pressure on our system." Last month, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Tom McCaffrey said that 200,000 family members and retirees would likely be moved from military treatment facilities to Tricare providers. The move is part of the transition of military treatment facilities from service branch control to Defense Health Agency management. In testimony before the subcommittee, McCaffrey noted work on the proposal was done before the coronavirus outbreak. "But, what we've said it is conditions-based," he said. "Part of that will be if, in the future, our assumptions that went into the proposal have changed then we will need to change what we proposed." Gillibrand also asked McCaffrey to provide weekly updates to the committee so legislators can ensure the military has adequate testing labs, and manpower to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. [Connecting Vets](#)

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How will the new military travel ban affect you? Ask your chain of command

16 March- Military officials are giving local commanders broad authority to determine when troops will be allowed off base, how far they can travel and whether additional restrictions will be placed on their family members as part of the Defense Department's response to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak. Late Friday night, Pentagon officials announced a total ban on official travel for all domestic locations for troops, civilian employees and military families. Troops will be authorized only "local leave" for the duration of the restrictions, for now set to expire in mid-May. Defense officials also posted a five-page explainer on the new rules, which went into effect March 16. The document details restrictions on both domestic and international travel, also

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covering Permanent Change of Station moves and military separation moves. [Military Times](#)

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GLOBAL

Coronavirus: US volunteers test first vaccine

17 March- The first human trial of a vaccine to protect against pandemic coronavirus has started in the US. Four patients received the jab at the Kaiser Permanente research facility in Seattle, Washington, reports the Associated Press news agency. The vaccine cannot cause Covid-19 but contains a harmless genetic code copied from the virus that causes the disease. Experts say it will still take many months to know if this vaccine, or others also in research, will work. The first person to get the jab on Monday was a 43-year-old mother-of-two from Seattle. "This is an amazing opportunity for me to do something," Jennifer Haller told AP. Scientists around the world are fast-tracking research. And this first human trial, funded by the National Institutes of Health, sidesteps a check that would normally be conducted - making sure the vaccine can trigger an immune response in animals. But the biotechnology company behind the work, Moderna Therapeutics, says the vaccine has been made using a tried and tested process. [BBC News](#)

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COVID-19 warnings! Fake WHO and CDC accounts send emails with phishing scams

16 March- Coronavirus or COVID-19 victims and casualties continue to increase over time around the globe. The panic that covers this health issue is now also being spread out instantly, just like the virus, and people demand information every single second. However, cybersecurity firms are now warning all citizens worldwide that not all information about the virus is worth reading or even safe to open-- most especially if they came from websites or emails posing as the World Health Organization (WHO) or even the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [Tech Times](#)

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Dementia and statins; Crankiness and Alzheimer's; COVID-19 and neurology

17 March- Two statins reduced Alzheimer's and related dementia risk when taken with either an angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor or an angiotensin II receptor blocker, a retrospective study of Medicare patients showed. (PLOS One) Blood pressure was an independent predictor of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia, in a population study. (Hypertension) An inhaled form of alprazolam (Xanax) halted seizures in epilepsy patients within 2 minutes and prevented seizures from recurring in 2 hours in a phase IIb trial, Engage Therapeutics announced. Cranky people appeared better at fending off Alzheimer's disease.

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.

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(Neurobiology of Aging) Duchenne muscular dystrophy patients treated with newly approved golodirsen (Vyondys 53) showed increased exon 53 skipping and dystrophin production. (Neurology) Parkinson's patients showed a higher prevalence of ophthalmologic symptoms than healthy controls. (Neurology) COVID-19's effect on autism research may have long-term implications for the field. (Spectrum) The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) journal Neurology is looking for papers about the neurological aspects of COVID-19 infection. The AAN also cancelled its annual meeting, which was scheduled to be held in Toronto in April. A 100-year-old Alzheimer's patient in China was the oldest man to recover from the novel coronavirus. (CNN) MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) diet researcher Martha Clare Morris, ScD, of Rush University Medical Center, an early investigator of dietary risks for Alzheimer's disease, died of cancer at age 64. (Chicago Tribune) [MedPage Today](#)

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Fish oil supplements linked to lower risk of heart disease and death, study finds

4 March- Taking fish oil as a dietary supplement has a history dating back centuries, but whether it really has a positive effect on our health has been a subject of heated debate. The latest volley is a new study linking regular use of fish oil supplements to a lower risk of premature death and cardiovascular disease (CVD) such as heart attacks and strokes. "With regard to fish oil and CVD the data for the most part have been positive, albeit with some wobbling among studies. The latest study adds to the database suggesting effectiveness," said Alice Lichtenstein, the Gershoff professor of nutrition science and policy, and director and senior scientist at the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at Tufts University. She was not involved in the research. But Lichtenstein stressed that taking fish oil tablets was no "magic bullet" and the study wasn't able to shed any light on what dose was needed to achieve a clinically meaningful effect. This latest research, which published Wednesday in the BMJ medical journal, included nearly half a million people from the UK between 40 and 69 years old and enrolled in the UK Biobank study. [CNN](#)

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Is coronavirus a threat to children? How to keep them safe

13 March- There are more than 1,600 cases of COVID-19 in the U.S., but so far the virus has largely spared children, which is puzzling as they are typically among the most vulnerable when it comes to seasonal illnesses like the flu or other coronaviruses. One pediatrician said it could be their frequent exposure to these seasonal illnesses that is actually protecting them from COVID-19. "No one is certain why this is happening, but the likely reason is that every winter season there are several non-COVID-19 coronaviruses circulating that children are highly prone to catching," Dr. Peter Jung, a pediatrician, told Fox News. "Their frequent exposure to these other coronaviruses likely offers them some level of immunity that adults may not have. There are probably other contributing factors but this is likely the biggest one." [Fox News](#)

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Norovirus outbreak reported on Royal Caribbean's Grandeur of the Seas

18 March- Federal health officials report investigating a norovirus outbreak onboard Royal Caribbean International vessel, Grandeur of the Seas. The outbreak on the March 7–March 19, 2020 voyage has sickened 83 passengers and six crew members, who developed symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea. Specimens have been collected, tested onboard, and found to be positive for norovirus. The specimens will be sent to CDC for genome sequencing. Royal Caribbean International and crew aboard the ship have taken the following actions:

- Increasing cleaning and disinfection procedures according to their outbreak prevention and response plan.
- Collecting stool specimens from passenger and crew gastrointestinal illness cases for testing.
- Making announcements to notify onboard passengers and crew of the outbreak, encourage case reporting, and encourage good hand hygiene.

CDC's Vessel Sanitation Program is sending an investigation team to investigate the causative agent and assist with preventing further spread of illness. Norovirus is a highly contagious virus. Typical symptoms of norovirus infection are acute onset of vomiting, watery, non-bloody diarrhea with abdominal cramps, and nausea. Systemic manifestations include, fever, myalgia and malaise, anorexia, and headache. Although most symptoms end within 48 hours, the elderly, young children and immunocompromised persons may develop prolonged or more severe symptoms. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Self-quarantine? Isolation? Social Distancing? What they mean and when to do them

16 March- ...Self-quarantine is a step up from self-monitoring because the person at risk of infection — even though the person still doesn't have symptoms — had a higher chance of exposure. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, for example, is self-quarantining because his wife tested positive for the virus after returning from a trip to Great Britain. Quarantining means staying home and away from other people as much as possible for that 14-day period. People in this circumstance who don't live alone should do their best to retreat to their room or find a separate area in their home, and they shouldn't go out shopping, eating or socializing... A diagnosis of COVID-19 triggers isolation. "Isolation is when you are sick, either at home or in the hospital," says Benjamin. "Infectious disease precautions are then much more rigid than in self-quarantine." Medical staff, for example, wear gear that is more protective. In addition, the person in isolation would be asked to wear a mask when leaving their room or traveling from home to a medical facility — to try to prevent spreading droplets that might contain the virus... This is a broad category. It means not shaking hands, avoiding crowds, standing several feet from other people and, most important, staying home if you feel sick. Businesses are doing it when they ask employees to work from home or stagger work hours. Governments are doing it when they close schools. We're seeing it in the sports world, with no-spectator games or the postponement of

sporting events. Museums, theaters and concert halls where large groups of people gather are closing their doors. It means trying to find the least-crowded train car or possibly driving instead of taking mass transit. "It's about taking stock, how closely you interact with people in day-to-day life," says Christopher Mores, a professor in the department of global health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University. "Increase distances. Cut out handshakes. The idea is to try to empower people to break the lines of transmission." [NPR](#)

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Smoking or vaping may increase the risk of a severe coronavirus infection

17 March- Smoking or vaping could make you more vulnerable to a severe infection with the novel coronavirus, some experts say. Although there have not been many studies investigating this link specifically, a wealth of evidence suggests that smoking suppresses immune function in the lungs and triggers inflammation. There have been far fewer investigations of vaping, but preliminary research suggests it may do similar damage. And both long-term smokers and e-cigarette users are at a heightened risk of developing chronic lung conditions, which have been associated with more severe cases of COVID-19, as the disease caused by the new virus is called. Scientists say it therefore seems reasonable to assume that smoking—and possibly vaping—could increase the risk of developing a serious infection from the coronavirus. "All these things make me believe that we are going to have more severe cases—especially [in] people who are [long-term] smokers or vapers," says Melodi Pirzada, a clinical professor of pediatric pulmonology at New York University's Langone Medical Center. She has not treated COVID-19 patients herself, "but it is definitely common sense to think that once you have a history of smoking or vaping, the whole airways, the defense mechanism of your lungs—everything changes," she says. [Scientific American](#)

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Testing swabs run in short supply as makers try to speed up production

18 March- The two top makers of the highly specialized swabs used to test patients for the novel coronavirus are straining to keep up with the demand, even as both the Italian and U.S. governments are working with them to increase production, including at a key manufacturing site in the midst of Italy's outbreak. The nasopharyngeal swabs required for the coronavirus tests are quite different from your standard Q-tips — and the exploding need for them has created a bottleneck in the soaring demand for diagnoses. The swabs have to be long and skinny enough to get to the nasopharynx, the upper part of the throat, behind the nose. They must be made of synthetic fiber and cannot have a wooden shaft. Nor can they contain calcium alginate, a substance typically used for swab tips in wound care, as that can kill the virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These swabs are currently singled out by CDC and Food and Drug Administration guidelines as suitable for most coronavirus testing. Once used, they're typically mailed in transportable vials full of a solution known as "viral transport media,"

which keeps the virus testable. While last week's critical shortage was a reagent chemical used in the diagnostic tests, now the specialized swabs are in dire demand, according to Soumi Saha, a pharmacist who is the senior director of advocacy for Premier Inc., a group purchasing organization that procures supplies for 4,000 U.S. hospitals and health systems. As testing finally ramps up in the U.S., hospitals especially are having a hard time getting enough of these swabs, Saha says. [NPR](#)

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Why 'flattening the curve' may be the world's best bet to slow the coronavirus

11 March- For many countries staring down fast-rising coronavirus case counts, the race is on to "flatten the curve." The United States and other countries, experts say, are likely to be hit by tsunamis of Covid-19 cases in the coming weeks without aggressive public health responses. But by taking certain steps — canceling large public gatherings, for instance, and encouraging some people to restrict their contact with others — governments have a shot at stamping out new chains of transmission, while also trying to mitigate the damage of the spread that isn't under control. The epidemic curve, a statistical chart used to visualize when and at what speed new cases are reported, could be flattened, rather than being allowed to rise exponentially. "If you look at the curves of outbreaks, they go big peaks, and then come down. What we need to do is flatten that down," Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told reporters Tuesday. "That would have less people infected. That would ultimately have less deaths. You do that by trying to interfere with the natural flow of the outbreak." [STAT News](#)

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INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Week 10 (01 March 2020— 07 March 2020):

NORTHCOM- ILI activity remained high. Influenza A accounted for over half of the positive specimens. Among subtyped influenza A specimens, A(H1N1) has predominated.

EUCOM- ILI activity remained high. Among positive specimens, the majority continued to be influenza A.

INDOPACOM- ILI activity remained high. The majority of positive specimens continued to be influenza A. Among subtyped influenza A specimens, the majority were A(H1N1).

SOUTHCOM- ILI activity remained minimal. The majority of specimens continued to be influenza A (not subtyped).

CENTCOM- ILI activity decreased to low. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

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

Key Updates for Week 10, ending March 7, 2020: Flu activity as reported by clinical laboratories remains high but decreased for the fourth week in a row; however, influenza-like illness activity increased slightly. Severity indicators remain moderate to low overall, but hospitalization rates differ by age group, with high rates among children and young adults. [CDC](#)

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ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 10/2020 (2 – 8 March 2020)

-For the Region overall, influenza activity remained elevated but continued to decline for the fourth consecutive week. High influenza intensity was reported by 2 Member States and areas, and 12 reported medium influenza intensity. Widespread influenza activity was reported by the majority of Member States and areas across the Region.

-Of the individuals sampled who presented with influenza-like illness (ILI) or acute respiratory infection (ARI) to sentinel primary healthcare sites, 38% tested positive for influenza viruses, a slight decrease compared to the previous week (43%).

-Both influenza virus types A and B were co-circulating in sentinel source specimens with a higher proportion (59%) of type A viruses being detected. Of the type A detections, A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses were the most common (56%). Of the influenza B viruses, the vast majority were B/Victoria lineage.

-The distribution of viruses detected varied between Member States and areas and within sub-regions. Of 26 reports from across the Region: 14 reported dominance of type A viruses; 7 co-dominance of types A and B viruses; and 5 dominance of type B viruses.

-Pooled estimates of all-cause mortality from 24 countries or regions reporting to the EuroMOMO showed normal expected levels of mortality. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

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WHO: Influenza Update

16 March 2020 - Update number 363, based on data up to 01 March 2020:

-In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity appeared to decrease overall.

-In North America, influenza-like illness (ILI) and influenza activity started to decline, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and B viruses co-circulating.

-In Europe, influenza activity remained elevated overall, though appeared to have peaked in some countries.

-In Central Asia, influenza activity decreased with detections of all seasonal influenza subtypes.

- In Northern Africa, influenza activity continued to increase in Algeria and Tunisia, with detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and B viruses.
- In Western Asia, influenza activity decreased in most countries, except in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Qatar.
- In East Asia, ILI and influenza activity decreased overall.
- In the Caribbean and Central American countries, influenza activity was reported in some countries. In Mexico, influenza activity decreased, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses most frequently detected.
- In tropical South American countries, influenza activity remained low.
- In tropical Africa, influenza detections were low across reporting countries.
- In Southern Asia, increased influenza activity was reported in Bhutan.
- In South East Asia, influenza activity continued to be reported in some countries.
- In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels.
- Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections. [WHO top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

California company recalls sushi from 40 states for risk of vibrio infections

16 March- AFC Distribution Corp. is recalling a certain kind of sushi from retailers because an ingredient in it could be contaminated with a microscopic organism that can cause illnesses in humans. The company, based in Rancho Dominguez, CA, announced the recall of all of its sushi ebi with sell-by dates through March 13. The company initiated the recall on March 13 and the Food and Drug Administration posted it today, March 16. Company officials did not report how the potential contamination with *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* was discovered. The implicated sushi recall includes all of the ebi products with sell-by dates from Feb. 19 through March 13. Consumers and retailers can determine whether they have the recalled sushi ebi by looking for lot number 2019.10.02 on the product labels. The recall notice did not include any product photos. "The recalled ingredient, Cooked Butterfly Tail-On Whiteleg Shrimp (Sushi Ebi), was distributed to designated retail AFC sushi counters, where it is further processed into prepared sushi items, within grocery stores, cafeterias, and corporate dining centers in the following states: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, MN, MO, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NM, NY, OH, OR, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WV, WY," according to the company's recall notice. "While AFC has ceased using the recalled ingredient, we urge anyone who has any AFC product containing Cooked Butterfly Tail-On Whiteleg Shrimp to discard or return product to their point of purchase for a full refund." Anyone who has eaten any of the recalled sushi and developed symptoms of infection from *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* should immediately seek

medical attention. Symptoms can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and chills, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “. . . About 1 in 5 people with this infection die, sometimes within a day or two of becoming ill,” according to the CDC. As of the posting of the recall notice no confirmed illnesses had been reported in relation to the recalled sushi. [Food Safety News](#)

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Cornstarch recalled in Canada for foreign material metal pieces

18 March- Two brands of cornstarch recalled in Canada because the products may contain foreign materials in the form of pieces of metal, which pose a choking and mouth injury hazard. No illnesses or injuries have been reported to date in connection with this issue. The first recall is for Mosto Foods Corn Starch by V&T Distributors. This product was distributed to warehouses in Ontario. The recalled product is Mosto Foods CornStarch that is sold in 5 kilogram packages. There is no UPC number on the product label. The lot number is 1B000239979. The second recall is for Grain Processing Corporation brand Pure-Dent B700 corn starch for pieces of metal. The company that distributes this product is Blendtek Fine Ingredients Inc. This product was also shipped to warehouses in Ontario. The recalled product is Grain Processing Corporation (GPC) Pure-Dent B700 Corn Starch sold in 22.68 kilogram packages. There is no UPC number on the product. The manufacture date of this product is 12/27/2019 and the lot number printed on the label is 1B000239979. Anyone who has any of this cornstarch should not use it. Just throw it away or return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. [Food Poisoning Bulletin](#)

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WELLNESS

A psychologist’s science-based tips for emotional resilience during the coronavirus crisis

16 March- As the news about the coronavirus pandemic becomes grimmer, and governments and businesses issue closing or work-from-home directives, many of us are experiencing a variety of negative emotions. We feel anxiety in response to the uncertainty of the situation; sadness related to losing our daily sources of meaning and joy; and anger at whatever forces are to blame for bringing this upon us. As a psychologist, I believe following evidence-based recommendations for bolstering mental resilience can help us weather this crisis. It’s normal to be unsettled and concerned about the upending of life as we know it. “Humans find comfort and safety in the predictability of the routines of daily living,” said John Forsyth, a professor of psychology at the University at Albany in New York and co-author of “Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Anxiety Disorders.”... It is important to acknowledge that a lot of anxious thoughts and emotions will show up during this time, and to accept them rather than trying to push them away or escape them. The same goes for sadness stemming from the loss of our regular ways of living, worry about lack of supplies or apprehension about kids getting cabin

fever. That's because research has shown that avoidance of such emotions will only make them stronger and longer-lasting. Notice negative emotions, thoughts and physical sensations as they come up, look into them with curiosity, describe them without judgment and then let them go. This is an essence of mindfulness, which has been consistently linked to good psychological health. [The Washington Post](#)

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Your gym might be closed, but coronavirus doesn't have to keep you from your workout

18 March- The novel coronavirus is increasingly upending our rhythms and routines — including our workout schedules. In response to the pandemic, some gyms and studios are announcing temporary closures, while others are limiting occupancy and ramping up cleaning practices. As the coronavirus spreads, "the stereotypical 'gym hack,' " the cough that some people experience after a bout of hard exercise, "becomes extra scary," says Adam St. Pierre, a Boulder, Colo., running coach. But that doesn't mean we need to abandon our workouts — nor should we. Regular exercise supports optimal functioning of the immune system and is an excellent stress management tool. "Working out is the best thing you can possibly do right now," says Holly Roser, a San Mateo, Calif., fitness studio owner and personal trainer. [The Washington Post](#)

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USAFRICOM

Nigeria: Final field visit to determine polio-free status

15 March- On Friday, the Africa Regional Certification Commission (ARCC) concluded its final field visit to Nigeria to determine the country's polio-free status. The Africa Regional Certification Commission (ARCC) for wild poliomyelitis eradication carried out similar field visits in all the 47 countries of the World Health Organization (WHO) African Region to verify the absence of wild poliovirus while ensuring that disease surveillance is undergoing according to certification-standard. It has already accepted the documentation of 43 African countries with only Cameroon, Central African Republic, Nigeria, and South Sudan remaining. For its final field verification visit in Nigeria, the ARCC visited selected health facilities at Central, State, Local Government Authority and Ward levels in the states of Kwara, Kogi in the North Central Zone; Borno and Bauchi in the North East Zone; and Kano and Sokoto in the North West Zone. "This verification visit is an opportunity for Nigeria to demonstrate to the rest of the world that it is on the verge of ending the chapter of wild poliovirus from its history. The virus has paralysed thousands and killed scores of Nigerians for decades. Today, every Nigerian is very excited about the prospects of this historic achievement," said Dr. Faisal Shuaib, Executive Director of Nigeria's National Public Health Care and Development Agency. The commission will finalize documentation review of the four countries in June before making its final decision on the certification of wild poliovirus eradication in the African Region. No wild poliovirus has been detected anywhere in Africa since 2016. This stands in stark contrast to 1996 when wild

poliovirus paralysed more than 75,000 children across every country on the continent. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Nigeria: Lassa fever outbreak now at 855 cases

14 March- Nigeria health officials reported an additional 81 confirmed Lassa fever cases the week of Mar. 2-8, bringing the country total to 855 since the beginning of the year. This total is nearly double the 472 confirmed cases reported during the same period last year. Nigeria Centre for Disease Control reported nine additional deaths, bringing the fatality total to 144 (16.8% CFR). In total for 2020, 27 States have recorded at least one confirmed case across 119 Local Government Areas. Of all confirmed cases, 74% are from Edo (34%), Ondo (33%) and Ebonyi (7%) states. Two additional healthcare workers (HCW) tested positive. To date, 29 HCWs have been reported with Lassa fever in 2020. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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South Africa: COVID-19 outbreak rises to 62 cases, President Cyril Ramaphosa declares National State of Disaster

16 March- On Sunday, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster. He says it's a measure proportionate to the severity of the threat to our people, society and economy. This will enable us to have an integrated & coordinated disaster management mechanism and set up response systems. "This virus will be extremely disruptive, and our priority is to safeguard the health and well-being of all South Africans. "We also have to address the inevitable economic fallout. We must expect a decline in exports, a drop in tourist arrivals and a severe impact on production, business viability and job creation and retention." Today, the South Africa National Institute for Communicable (NICD) confirmed an additional 11 new COVID-19 cases that have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, the causative pathogen for COVID-19. This brings the country to a total of 62 confirmed COVID-19 cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USCENTCOM

Iran reports 1,200 more coronavirus cases

15 March- The spokesperson and the head of Public Relations Center and Information Ministry of Health, Dr. Kianoosh Jahanpour reported an additional 1,209 coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours. This brings Iran's official total to 13, 938 and 724 deaths, although the numbers are questioned as being true. New satellite images from Maxar show Iranian authorities digging large numbers of graves in the Qom area. The graves were so extensive you can see them from space. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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EU closes borders to slow COVID-19; activity escalates in South Asia

17 March- As COVID-19 cases continued to surge in Europe, European Union (EU) leaders today approved a plan to close its external borders for the next 30 days. And as disease activity escalated in other parts of the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) today warned about rapidly evolving outbreaks in its Southeast Asia region, which includes some nations in southern Asia, like India. The EU ban is similar to the ban the United States last week placed on European countries, which followed an earlier ban on travel from China and other virus hot spots. Members of the Schengen countries and the United Kingdom are exempt from the ban, which does not apply to the movement of goods. The European Commission also launched a European expert group to strengthen coordination and response to the pandemic. [CIDRAP](#)

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Europe coronavirus: Italy, Spain, Germany and France updates

15 March- Italy: Italy's outbreak continues to go full steam as the Ministry of Health reported 3,590 additional coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases in the past 24 hours, bringing the country total to 24,747. Health authorities reported 366 deaths. Italy has now reported 1,809 deaths due to COVID-19 (CFR 7.3%) Regions reporting the most cases include Lombardy (13,272 cases/1,218 deaths-9.1% CFR), Emilia Romagna (3,093/284), Veneto (2,172/63), Marche (1,133/46) and Piemonte (1,111/81).

Spain: The Spanish Ministry of Health reported 2,000 additional coronavirus cases and 152 additional deaths, bringing the country total to 7,753 cases and 288 deaths. Madrid has seen 3,544 cases and 213 deaths to date.

Germany: Health officials in Germany saw their cases rise to 5,426 and 11 deaths. On March 12, Federal Minister of Health Jens Spahn informed the prime ministers of the federal states about the current status of the spread of the corona virus. "During this time, it is important that the federal and state governments work well together," said Spahn. An important decision of the meeting between the Chancellor and the heads of government of the federal states was that the hospitals in Germany are concentrating on the expected increasing demand for intensive care and ventilation capacities for the treatment of severe respiratory diseases by COVID-19.

France: Sante Publique France is now reporting 5,423 COVID-19 cases through Sunday, including 127 deaths. The following regions have reported the most cases: Great East, Ile-de-France, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. In addition, 43 cases have been reported in Caribbean islands and other territories. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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France orders lockdown to slow COVID-19 spread

16 March- France today became the third European country to go on lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19, while in Spain, the number of new cases nudged the country ahead of South Korea as the world's fourth hardest-hit country. Other European countries saw no let-up in cases, and more African countries detected their first cases. With about 179,000 global cases now reflected on the Johns Hopkins online dashboard, the proportion of cases outside China is increasing steadily, as are the share of deaths. [CIDRAP](#)

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Italy COVID-19 death toll tops 2,000

16 March- The Italy Ministry of Health reported an additional 3,233 coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19 cases and 349 deaths in the past 24 hours. This brings the lock downed country to 27,980 total cases and 2,158 deaths. Only Hubei, China has reported more COVID-19 fatalities. The region of Lombardy, by far the hardest hit area, now reports 14,649 cases and 1,420 deaths. [Outbreak New Today](#)

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Italy COVID-19 epidemic tops 30K cases

18 March- The Italy Ministry of Health is reporting that the total COVID-19 cases in the country now stands at 31,506. The death toll has also risen to 2,503. Lombardy (16,220), Emilia Romagna (3,931), Veneto (2,704), Piemonte (1,897), Marche (1,371) and Toscana (1,053) regions have seen the most cases to date. Elsewhere in Europe, the highest case counts are seen in Spain (11, 826), Germany (9360), France (7695) and Switzerland (2700). [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USINDOPACOM

COVID-19 in the Philippines: Cases rise to 140

15 March- The Philippines Department of Health is now reporting 140 coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19 cases as of Sunday. Of this total, 11 deaths have been recorded. Of the total, the localities of Quezon City (15.7%), San Juan City (11.4%), Makati City (10%), Pasig City (7.1%) and Manila (6.4%) have seen the most cases. Concerning health facility where cases are reported, The Medical City-Ortigas (18), the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine (16), St. Lukes Medical Center-Quezon City (15) and Makati Medical Center (13) have seen the most cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Canada: COVID-19 cases now 138, Sophie Grégoire Trudeau test positive

13 March- Canadian health officials are reporting 138 COVID-19 confirmed cases and three probable cases in the country through Thursday. Of the confirmed cases, Ontario (59) and British Columbia (46) have seen the most. Seven of the 10 provinces have reported cases. 13% of cases have been hospitalized and 80% of cases are travelers and 10% are close contacts of those travelers. One death has been reported in British Columbia. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: New York- COVID-19 cases surpass 700, Cuomo calls on Trump for aggressive national strategy for testing

15 March- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo confirmed 69 additional cases of novel coronavirus, bringing the statewide total to 729 confirmed cases in New York State. The highest number of cases are seen in New York City (329), Westchester County (196) and Nassau County (98). Three deaths have been reported. In an open letter to President Trump, the Governor called on the President, through the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to authorize states to certify a wider array of testing labs and methods in an effort to maximize testing capacity to identify and isolate positive cases faster. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Costa Rica COVID-19 cases reach 50, Soccer championship canceled, Calls not to hoard food

18 March- The Costa Rica Ministry of Health reports as of Tuesday, 50 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed, with an age range of 10 to 87 years. There are 24 women and 26 men, of whom 44 are Costa Rican and 6 are foreigners. Positive cases are registered in 19 cantons of five provinces: San José, Heredia, Guanacaste, Alajuela and Cartago. Puntarenas and Limón continue without cases. By age we have: 40 adults, 6 older adults and 4 minors. At this time 720 people have been discarded. To avoid the shortage in supermarkets, the restriction on the hours of entry of delivery trucks to the GAM was lifted, while the distribution of drinking water with tank trucks continues, said Alexánder Solís, Executive President of the CNE, who insists on calling the calm and rational use of water resources. Along the same lines, the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Renato Alvarado, assured that both the MAG and the sector's institutions are monitoring the behavior of markets and production flows. He emphasized that, at this time, the supply of grains and agricultural products is guaranteed on a regular basis, for which he made a call for solidarity and not to hoard food products. Finally, and in compliance with the

recommendations of the Ministry of Health, the President of the Costa Rican Soccer Federation, Rodolfo Villalobos, reported on the cancellation of the national soccer championship. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Venezuela reports 8 COVID-19 cases, Maduro declares a permanent emergency

15 March- At the Miraflores Palace in Caracas, The Presidential Commission for the Prevention and Care of Coronavirus (COVID-19) reported the presence of eight new cases in the country. This brings the total cases to 10 in the country. After submitting more than 30 people to diagnostic tests, following the protocols established by the World Health Organization (WHO), eight new ones infected with the virus were detected, reported sector vice president Jorge Rodríguez. "We have to report, in a responsible way, that eight of more than those 30 cases evaluated today were positive for Coronavirus," said Rodríguez from the Government Palace. He pointed out that six of these eight people are men and two women, of which three are from Spain, two from the US, one from Colombia (Cúcuta) and two Venezuelans who were secondarily infected. The cases are being attended with the rigor that they deserve, stressed the also Minister of Communication and Information, while detailing that four of these people are located in the Miranda state, one in Aragua, one in Apure, one in Cojedes and the eighth person is a citizen of Spanish origin cabin crew. In addition, prior to reporting any cases, the National Government declared a permanent emergency in the National Public Health System in order to establish mechanisms for the prevention and containment of the coronavirus (COVID-19). "I have decided to declare the Health System a permanent emergency for prevention, protection and to fully prepare them in all their capacities to attend to cases that, at some point, are detected anywhere in the country," announced the president of the Republic, Nicolás Maduro. From the Miraflores Palace, located in Caracas, he explained that 46 hospital centers are empowered to "conduct and exercise stewardship in the coronavirus care processes throughout the national territory." On Saturday, officials said 4,800 beds were arranged in 572 Comprehensive Diagnostic Centers (CDI) throughout the country. In Colombia, the government of President Ivan Duque announced late Friday that non-nationals would be barred from entering the country from March 16 if they have been in Europe or Asia over the past two weeks. It also announced the closure of the border with Venezuela, prompting fears of what such measures may mean for those who rely on medicine, medical supplies and other goods from Colombia. Colombia has reported 22 COVID-19 cases to date. Venezuela slammed the decision as "an act of gross irresponsibility". More than 4.8 million people have fled Venezuela since 2015, and over 1.7 million now reside in Colombia, according to the United Nations's most recent figures. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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