

30 September 2016

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

The Army Public Health Update is a collection of articles taken verbatim from public sources to offer awareness of current health issues and the media coverage given to them. The articles do not necessarily represent US Army Medical Department opinions, views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the US Army Medical Command.

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Vaccines.mil

Website Transition

The DHA Immunization Healthcare Branch website, www.vaccines.mil, has moved to www.health.mil/vaccines.

The new website features the same information and resources including Information Papers, Package Inserts, Vaccine Information Statements, ACIP Guidelines, Brochures, Policies, and Service messages, as well as storage and handling and clinical resources, and vaccine recommendations by age and location.

The DHA-IHB training modules, Immunization University (IMZU) & Project Immune Readiness, are transitioning to Joint Knowledge Online (JKO).

[Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Training](#)

[Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Cold Chain Management for Logistical Personnel](#)

Students should retrieve all certificates for record keeping. Transcripts may not be available after 30 September 2016. Click the following links to access your training records:

[Immunization University](#)

[Project Immune Readiness](#)



- [Philippines: Philippines has built only 1% of homes promised after Typhoon Haiyan](#)

USSOUTHCOM

- [Brazil reports 46,000 new chikungunya cases](#)
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U.S. MILITARY

Chemical weapon wasn't used near U.S. troops in Iraq

27 September - A rocket fired last week at an Iraqi base where American troops are present did not contain a chemical agent despite earlier suspicions, the U.S. military reported Tuesday. Extensive laboratory tests concluded that the munition did not contain mustard agent, Air Force Col. John Dorrian, a U.S. military spokesman, said. No one was killed or injured in the Sept. 20 attack. ... One initial field test proved inconclusive but another test uncovered traces of sulfur mustard, a dangerous and banned substance that can cause painful burns on skin and lungs if breathed in. Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress last week the military assessed the munition contained sulfur mustard agent. His assessment was based on the information available at that time, the Pentagon said. The substance was sent to labs for more extensive tests, a process that can take days. [Military Times](#)

For those with the often solitary task of caring for disabled vets, help is on the way

24 September - Spouses, parents, family and friends who care for disabled troops or veterans soon will have a new resource to lean on for support, inspiration and confidence when they need it. The Military and Veteran Caregiver Network is training experienced caregivers to serve as mentors for those new to the role or who think they could benefit from a relationship with a seasoned caregiver. The idea is develop a group trained to provide insight, knowledge and skills to those who need assistance. Through the network, caregivers seeking a mentor will be electronically matched to one with a similar experience or background. [Military Times](#)

Official: One-third of calls to VA suicide hotline roll over

26 September - More than one-third of calls to a suicide hotline for troubled veterans are not being answered by front-line staffers because of poor work habits and other problems at the Department of Veterans Affairs, according to the hotline's former director. Some hotline workers handle fewer than five calls per day and leave before their shifts end, even as crisis calls have increased sharply in recent years, said Greg Hughes, the former director of the VA's Veterans Crisis Line. ... An average of 35 to 40 percent of crisis calls received in May rolled over to back-up centers where workers have less training to deal with veterans' problems, said Hughes, who left his post in June, weeks after sending the emails. The House

Updated:
Key Messages –
Zika Virus Disease

A collection of the most up-to-date, cleared information on the ongoing Zika virus outbreak.



on Monday unanimously approved a bill requiring the VA to ensure that all telephone calls, text messages and other communications received by the crisis line are answered in a timely manner by an appropriately qualified person. [Military Times](#)

Reforming the Military Health System

26 September - ... What is the purpose of the military health system? For the military services, it is about readiness — creating both a medically ready force and a ready medical force, to use the felicitous phrase one often hears in the Pentagon. But for many servicemembers and their families, as well as Congress, the MHS is primarily about access to quality care. It is, alas, rarely acknowledged that these missions are not necessarily compatible. To maintain a ready medical force, the MHS needs a steady flow of patient visits into the military-run medical treatment facilities (MTFs). For the purposes of readiness, these cases should be of the type a provider might see when deployed. But to ensure high-quality, accessible care, the MHS needs a broad network of high-volume providers, as studies have shown that safety and effectiveness are closely related to throughput. High-volume providers are almost always found not in the MTFs, but in the private sector. By attempting to achieve these multiple goals simultaneously — readiness, accessibility, and a high quality of care — the MHS risks succeeding fully at none. [War on the Rocks](#)

U.S. troops in Iraq brace for more 'mustard' attacks

26 September - U.S. troops in Iraq are facing the threat of more chemical weapons attacks as Islamic State militants prepare to defend against a final invasion of Mosul, a defense official said. The dire warning from the Pentagon comes almost one week after a shell that tested positive for “mustard agent” landed inside the wire at Qayara West, an Iraqi-controlled air base where several hundred U.S. forces are helping Iraqi Army units build a staging area for the upcoming offensive into Mosul. ... U.S. troops in Iraq have access to gas masks and full-body protective gear in the event of a chemical weapons attack. ... No one was killed or injured in the Sept. 20 attack, which was the first time a mustard attack in Iraq struck in close proximity to U.S. forces. ... U.S. military officials say the mustard agent was not in a gas state, which would be a far more lethal form. ... The ISIS-made product is in a crude form, typically a powdered form mix with oil and strapped to conventional munitions, that U.S. military officials say it is not “militarily significant,” [Navy Capt. Jeff] Davis said. [Military Times](#)

War studies suggest a concussion leaves the brain vulnerable to PTSD

26 September - ... Studies of troops who deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have found that service members who have suffered a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury are far more likely to develop PTSD. ... [A] team of researchers began studying more than 1,600 Marine and Navy service members from Camp Pendleton. ... The service members had been assessed before deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan, and then again three months after returning. ... The study found that troops who experienced a traumatic brain injury were

SHARP Program Improvement Forum

The **Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program** Improvement Forum is a means for SHARP Program Managers (PMs) and lead Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) to learn and share ideas on the latest processes, techniques, and best practices from subject matter experts. The forum is also a means for SHARP PMs and SARCs to network with colleagues and discuss internal program execution and training techniques.

The Headquarters, Department of the Army SHARP Program Office is hosting the second annual SHARP Program Improvement Forum Sept. 28 and 29 in Alexandria, Virginia. The theme for this year's conference is "Sexual Assault. Sexual Harassment. Not in Our Army."



twice as likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder. ... [Another research] team looked at cells in the amygdala, a part of the brain that takes sensory information and decides whether to be afraid. They found changes that would amplify the animal's response to a frightening experience. ... [A third] team of researchers used MEG to scan the brains of 84 people who had experienced a brain injury. ... Those scans found abnormal signals coming from the brains of people who'd had a concussion. And the location of those abnormal signals suggested that there was too much activity going on in the amygdala and not enough in an area that normally tempers emotional reactions. [NPR](#)

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GLOBAL

Americas region first to achieve measles elimination

27 September - Following a rigorous 6-year review, an expert committee today declared the Americas region the first in the world to eliminate measles, one of the world's most contagious diseases that takes its hardest toll on children. The international expert committee tasked with assessing and documenting measles elimination in the region made its announcement today during a meeting of the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO's) directing council in Washington, DC, attended by health ministers from throughout the Americas. ... The achievement today comes on the heels of the Americas region being declared free of rubella and congenital rubella syndrome in 2015. [CIDRAP](#)

Canadian study finds pertussis vaccine protection drops after 3 years

26 September - Pertussis immunization with the acellular vaccine offers high protection during the first 3 years, but immunity tapers off significantly over the next 4 years, Canadian researchers reported today. ... The study is consistent with what US researchers have found and raises questions about how to make the most of protection. The acellular vaccine was developed to sidestep a relatively high level of minor side effects from the whole-cell vaccine, which is still used elsewhere in the world. ... Researchers based their findings on public health lab and vaccination data for 5,867 people born in Ontario between 1992 and 2013. ... Immunity was high during the first 3 years after vaccination, but the team found little protection after 7 years. Though the overall risk was small, the odds of contracting pertussis increased by 27% each year. Also, those who got the acellular vaccine for their first three infant doses of the vaccine were twice as likely to get sick compared to those who received the older vaccine when they were infants. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Classified Version of the Weekly Update

An Army Public Health Weekly Update is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level from the USAPHC SIPRNet site:

<http://phc.army.smil.mil>

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

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

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Chemical weapons: Chlorine gas antidote to advance in development



29 September - The first potential antidote to treat the life-threatening effects of chlorine inhalation, a potential terrorism threat, will advance in development under a contract between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response and Radikal Therapeutics, Inc. of Beverly, Massachusetts. Currently, there is no specific antidote for lung injuries caused by chlorine exposure, and treatment has been limited supportive care. Chlorine gas is a widely available industrial

chemical with catastrophic consequences in industrial accidents. Derailment of a train carrying chlorine in Graniteville, South Carolina, in 2005 led to nine deaths and hundreds of injuries. In addition, chlorine gas has been used as a weapon, for the first time in World War I and repeatedly in the recent Syrian civil war.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

Drug to treat alcohol use disorder shows promise among drinkers with high stress

29 September - A new medication that targets part of the brain's stress system may help reduce alcohol use in people with alcohol use disorder (AUD). ... [Researchers] conducted a randomized clinical trial of a new compound, called ABT-436, designed to block the effects of vasopressin, a neuropeptide produced in the hypothalamus of the brain. ... During a 28-day baseline period, female participants consumed at least 28 drinks per week, while male participants consumed at least 35 drinks per week. Participants were then randomized to receive either placebo tablets or ones containing the ABT-436 compound. ... Researchers found that participants receiving ABT-436 experienced more days of alcohol abstinence than those receiving the placebo. In particular, participants who reported high levels of stress appeared to respond better to ABT-436, in that both the frequency of their drinking and the number of heavy drinking days they experienced decreased. [NIH](#)

First-ever baby born using 'three parent' genetic engineering technique

27 September - ... [A] breakthrough birth occurred under the radar some five months ago. With the help of John Zhang from the New Hope Fertility Center in New York City, a Jordanian couple conceived and gave birth to a child with more than two genetic parents. So-called three parent babies actually have more like 2.001 parents, according to experts. ... These techniques involve the transfer of mitochondrial DNA or mtDNA. ... Mitochondrial DNA, which contains just 37 genes compared to the staggering 20,000 or so carried by DNA in a cell's nucleus, comes entirely from the egg cell. ... Replacing the mother's faulty mitochondria with donor mitochondria in the newly conceived embryonic cells can produce a healthy baby while preserving the vast majority of its mother's DNA. ... The baby seems to

be healthy. ... He also still carries a small percentage of mitochondria with his mother's genetic mutation. His doctors hope and expect that he will develop normally, but there's no way of knowing how the presence of those malfunctioning genes might affect his health.

[The Washington Post](#)

Fungus makes mosquitoes much more likely to become infected with malaria

28 September - Researchers ... have identified a fungus that compromises the immune system of mosquitoes, making them more susceptible to infection with the parasite that causes malaria. Because environmental microorganisms can vary greatly from region to region, the researchers say the findings may help explain variations in the prevalence of malaria in different geographic areas. ... "While this fungus is unlikely to be helpful as part of a malaria control strategy, our finding significantly advances our knowledge of the different factors that influence the transmission of malaria."

[Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health News](#)

More than 9 in 10 people breathe bad air, W.H.O. study says

27 September - The World Health Organization said on Tuesday that 92 percent of people breathe what it classifies as unhealthy air, in another sign that atmospheric pollution is a significant threat to global public health. A new report, the W.H.O.'s most comprehensive analysis so far of outdoor air quality worldwide, also said that about three million deaths a year — mostly from cardiovascular, pulmonary and other noncommunicable diseases — were linked to outdoor air pollution. Nearly two-thirds of those deaths are in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific region, compared with 333,000 in Europe and the Americas, the report said. ... The agency defined unhealthy air as having concentrations of fine particulate matter, known as PM 2.5, above 10 micrograms per cubic meter. [The New York Times](#)

One in 10 children has 'Aids defence'

29 September - A 10th of children have a "monkey-like" immune system that stops them developing Aids, a study suggests. The study ... found the children's immune systems were "keeping calm", which prevented them being wiped out. An untreated HIV infection will kill 60% of children within two and a half years, but the equivalent infection in monkeys is not fatal. The findings could lead to new immune-based therapies for HIV infection. The virus eventually wipes out the immune system, leaving the body vulnerable to other infections, what is known as acquired human immunodeficiency syndrome (Aids). The researchers analysed the blood of 170 children from South Africa who had HIV, had never had antiretroviral therapy and yet had not developed Aids. Tests showed they had tens of thousands of human immunodeficiency viruses in every millilitre of their blood. This would normally send their immune system into overdrive, trying to fight the infection, or simply make them seriously ill, but neither had happened. [BBC News](#)

Some cities are taking another look at LED lighting after AMA warning

25 September -The American Medical Association issued a warning in June that high-intensity LED streetlights — such as those in Seattle, Los Angeles, New York, Houston and elsewhere — emit unseen blue light that can disturb sleep rhythms and possibly increase the risk of serious health conditions, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. The AMA also cautioned that those light-emitting-diode lights can impair nighttime driving vision. ... Nearly 13 percent of area and roadway lighting is now LED, according to a report prepared last year for the Department of Energy, and many communities that haven't yet made the switch plan to do so. LEDs are up to 50 percent more energy-efficient than the yellow-orange high-pressure sodium lights they typically replace. [The Washington Post](#)

ZIKA VIRUS

CDC issues Zika travel notice for 11 Southeast Asian countries

29 September - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a travel notice Thursday urging pregnant women to consider postponing nonessential travel to 11 countries in Southeast Asia because of the risk of Zika virus infections. The countries are Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Philippines, Thailand, East Timor and Vietnam. The travel information is less urgent than the travel alerts the CDC has issued advising pregnant women to avoid going to nearly 60 countries and regions because of the active spread of the mosquito-borne virus. [The Washington Post](#)

CDC whistleblower claims agency has been using wrong Zika test

28 September – ... [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] has been engaged in an intense internal debate about the best way to test whether someone has been infected with the mosquito-borne virus. ... Robert Lanciotti is chief of the CDC lab responsible for developing tests to diagnose viral diseases such as Zika that are transmitted by mosquitoes, ticks and fleas. Lanciotti was demoted in May after he raised concerns inside and outside the agency about the CDC's decision in the spring to recommend a new test for Zika. That test is substantially less effective than another established test, he said, and misses nearly 40 percent of Zika infections. He also said the agency withheld information about testing differences from state and local public health laboratories. The scientist was reinstated to chief of his lab in July after he filed a whistleblower retaliation claim. ... CDC investigators acknowledged in their report that testing for Zika is difficult and needs to be improved. The agency said it made improvements that will boost the new test's sensitivity. The internal investigation also found that the CDC acted reasonably when it withheld the conflicting test

data from state public health labs. Releasing it could have created "considerable confusion during an ongoing emergency response," the investigators said. [The Washington Post](#)

Congress ends spat, agrees to fund \$1.1 billion to combat Zika

28 September - After nearly seven months of bickering and finger-pointing, Congress on Wednesday agreed to allocate \$1.1 billion to help fight the spread and effects of the Zika virus. The deal is part of a broader agreement to continue to fund the government after the fiscal year ends on Friday and the current budget expires. It brings to an end a partisan fight that has had the unusual effect of delaying funding to deal with what all sides agree is a public health emergency. [NPR](#)

Scientists ID key fetal cells vulnerable to Zika

29 September - The devastating mosquito-borne Zika virus can infect cells that play a role in skull development, a new study finds. ... In laboratory experiments, the Stanford University researchers discovered that cranial neural crest cells are vulnerable to Zika. These cells form the majority of bone and cartilage of the head and communicate with the developing brain. ... Neural crest cell formation occurs during the first trimester, "which intriguingly has been correlated with poor birth outcomes in Zika-infected mothers," she said in a Stanford news release. [HealthDay](#)

Zika case counts in the US

As of September 28, 2016 (5 am EST)

US States

- Locally acquired mosquito-borne cases reported: 59
- Travel-associated cases reported: 3,565
- Laboratory acquired cases reported: 1
- Total: 3,625
 - Sexually transmitted: 30
 - Guillain-Barré syndrome: 12

US Territories

- Locally acquired cases reported: 21,988
- Travel-associated cases reported: 81
- Total: 22,069*
 - Guillain-Barré syndrome: 39

*Sexually transmitted cases are not reported for US territories because with local transmission of Zika virus it is not possible to determine whether infection occurred due to mosquito-borne or sexual transmission. [CDC](#)

Zika-related birth defects likely higher than anticipated: panel

29 September - The risk posed by the Zika virus to developing fetuses is likely far greater than current estimates suggest, a top U.S. health official said on Thursday. ... [B]irth defects observed include seizures, deafness, blindness and a range of neurological and developmental abnormalities. Earlier this year, a U.S. analysis estimated the risk of microcephaly following a mother's infection with the virus during the first trimester of pregnancy at between 1 percent and 13 percent. That figure does not include the overall risk of risk of birth defects, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said during a panel discussion on Zika. "If you're talking about any congenital defect I think it's going to be much higher than 13 percent," he said. ... Dr. Marcia Castro [said] ... these children are also exhibiting a severe type of reflux that prevents them from eating ... adding that it is unclear how long these children will live. "Another study with mice shows Zika also affects the brain of an adult," she said, potentially impacting long-term memory and depression. [Reuters](#)

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INFLUENZA

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

Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality Surveillance for 2015-2016 Influenza Season Week 37 ending September 17, 2016:

- NCHS Mortality Surveillance Data: Based on NCHS mortality surveillance data available on September 22, 2016, 5.2% of the deaths occurring during the week ending September 3, 2016 (week 35) were due to P&I. This percentage is below the epidemic threshold of 6.1% for week 35.
- 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System: During week 37, 5.6% of all deaths reported through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 5.7% for week 37. [CDC](#)

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Weeks 31-35/2016 (1 August-4 September 2016)

- Influenza activity in the WHO European Region has remained at low levels, with all countries reporting low-intensity influenza activity.
- Few influenza viruses were detected among both sentinel and non-sentinel

specimens.

- Data from the 16 countries or regions reporting to the European monitoring of excess mortality for public health action (EuroMOMO) project indicate that all-cause mortality was within the normal range in reporting countries during this period.

[European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

Influenza vaccination coverage among health care personnel – United States, 2015–16 influenza season

30 September - ... The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends annual influenza vaccination for all health care personnel to reduce influenza-related morbidity and mortality in health care settings. For the 2014–15 influenza season, the estimated overall influenza vaccination coverage among health care personnel was 77.3%. Influenza vaccination coverage among health care personnel during the 2015–16 influenza season, assessed using an opt-in Internet panel survey, was 79.0%, similar to coverage during the 2014–15 season. Coverage was highest among physicians, nurse practitioners/physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, and health care personnel working in hospital settings. Coverage was lowest among assistants and aides and personnel working in long-term care settings. Employer vaccination requirements and offering vaccination at the workplace at no cost were associated with higher vaccination coverage.

[Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

NHRC: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For 2016 Week 38 (through 24 September 2016):

- Influenza: No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military basic trainees.
- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [Naval Health Research Center](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 infections linked to beef products produced by Adams Farm

24 September - CDC, multiple states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) are investigating a multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-

producing *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (STEC O157:H7) infections.

- Seven people infected with the outbreak strain of STEC O157:H7 have been reported from four states.
- Five ill people have been hospitalized. No one has developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, a type of kidney failure, and no deaths have been reported.

Epidemiologic, traceback, and laboratory evidence indicate that beef products produced by Adams Farm Slaughterhouse in Athol, Massachusetts are a likely source of this outbreak. On September 24, 2016, Adams Farm Slaughterhouse recalled beef, veal, and bison products due to possible *E. coli* O157:H7 contamination. [CDC](#)

Novel coronavirus found in wild bats in China

28 September - A new study in PLoS Pathogens describes a novel coronavirus in bats, and researchers say the discovery helps shed light on why coronaviruses, including those that cause SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome), are mutating to cause severe disease in human populations. The researchers discovered the new coronavirus, now called Roussettus bat coronavirus, in a bat sample from Yunnan province in China. Bats can be reservoirs for human pathogens, and the authors of the study collected samples from 118 bats; 47 samples were positive for coronavirus. Next-generation sequencing showed that two samples were novel viruses, and further analysis showed it was a heterologous recombination event that created the new viruses by placing the p10 gene in the virus's RNA. The authors suggest it is the p10 gene that can cause severe pneumonia when infecting humans, a key feature in coronaviruses.

[CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

The illegal trade in wild-animal meat could cause the next global pandemic

29 September - ... Bushmeat is a catchall phrase for the meat of wild animals found in the tropics, principally West and Central Africa. It is illegal in the UK and many other countries, which were forced to adopt strict rules following disease outbreaks that were linked to the import of wild meat. ... If a specific set of circumstances align, an infectious disease that jumps from an animal to a human can spread rapidly and kill indiscriminately in our hyperconnected world. ... Unlike smallpox and polio, which have been eradicated and nearly eradicated respectively, zoonotic diseases cannot be entirely wiped out—unless we can also destroy all the species that serve as reservoirs for these pathogens. Black death, Spanish flu and HIV—causes of the three biggest known pandemics—are all zoonotic diseases, and so, almost certainly, will be the next big one. [Quartz](#)

Tyson Foods Inc. recalls chicken nugget products

27 September - Tyson Foods Inc., a Sedalia, Mo. establishment, is recalling approximately 132,520 pounds of fully cooked chicken nugget products that may be contaminated with hard plastic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

announced today. The fully cooked Panko Chicken Nuggets items were produced on July 18, 2016. The following products are subject to recall:

- 5-lb. bag containing "Tyson FULLY COOKED PANKO CHICKEN NUGGETS" with a "Best If Used By" date of July 18, 2017 and case code 2006SDL03 and 2006SDL33.
- 20-lb. bulk packages containing "SPARE TIME Fully Cooked, Panko Chicken Nuggets, Nugget Shaped Chicken Breast Pattie Fritters With Rib Meat" with a production date of July 18, 2016 and case code 2006SDL03.

There have been no confirmed reports of adverse reactions due to consumption of these products. [USDA](#)

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WELLNESS

After just 10 days of rest, brain benefits of exercise diminish

28 September - ... [Researchers asked] a group of exceedingly fit older men and women to stop exercising for awhile. ... The researchers eventually found 12 competitive masters runners between the ages of 50 and 80 who agreed to join the study. All had been running and racing for at least 15 years and still regularly ran 35 miles a week or more. ... Then the athletes sat around for 10 days. They did not run or otherwise exercise and were asked to engage in as little physical activity as possible. ... After 10 days of being sedentary ... [m]uch less blood streamed to most of the areas in the runners' brains, and the flow declined significantly to both the left and right lobes of the hippocampus. Encouragingly, the volunteers did not perform noticeably worse now on the tests of cognitive function than they had at the start. But the results do suggest that the improvements in brain blood flow because of exercise will diminish if you stop training, Dr. Smith says. [The New York Times](#)

Bike lanes are a sound public health investment



29 September - Every \$1,300 New York City invested in building bike lanes in 2015 provided benefits equivalent to one additional year of life at full health over the lifetime of all city residents, according to a new economic assessment. New York built 45.5 miles of bike lanes in 2015, with an investment of about \$8 million. This increased the probability that residents would ride a bike by 9 percent, the researchers calculated. Based on a population of 8.5 million, they compared the direct and indirect costs and benefits of building those additional miles of bike lanes versus maintaining the status quo before they were built. Adding bike lanes to motor vehicle

roadways reduces the risk of injury and raises the probability of ridership, which increases physical activity and decreases pollution from the vehicles riders would otherwise be using, they found. Per person, bike lanes created an additional cost of \$2.79 and a gain of .0022 quality-adjusted life years, according to the results published in Injury Prevention. [Fox News](#)

Can celebrity chef Robert Irvine refine military chow?

25 September - Daily chow for thousands of troops may be improving soon after celebrity chef Robert Irvine, host of the popular Food Network program "Restaurant: Impossible," announced a new partnership with a company that runs dining facilities at dozens of military installations. Irvine, whose first military restaurant opened at the Pentagon in late September, plans to work closely with Sodexo, a food-service provider that serves more than 125,000 meals daily at military bases and government buildings. [Military Times](#)

Can testosterone boost combat performance? Pentagon studies hormone's role in fitness

23 September - The Defense Department is studying whether a boost of testosterone can keep military muscle and brains operating in top form during long periods of combat. When troops are engaged in prolonged physical activity like war and contingency operations, they are unable to consume the calories needed to sustain high physical and mental function, according to medical researchers. The calorie deficit -- sometimes as much as 50 percent to 60 percent below the needed amount -- can result in muscle loss, fatigue, cognitive decline and, in men, a drop in testosterone, leaving them vulnerable to injury, illness, wounds or death. Scientists at Louisiana State University's Pennington Biomedical Research Facility and the Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine are conducting a study to see if maintaining normal testosterone levels during periods of calorie restriction will improve performance, or at least minimize negative consequences. The results will provide insight into the role of testosterone in maintaining strength, agility and brain function, according to Stefan Pasiakos, a research physiologist at USARIEM. [Military Times](#)

Child fitness gap linked to income inequality

29 September - In a comparison of fitness levels among children in 50 countries, the nations with the biggest internal income disparities tended to have the least fit youth. African and northern European nations, as well as Japan, had the highest scores on cardio-respiratory fitness among kids aged 9 to 17, while Mexico was last among the 50 and the United States fourth from the bottom. When looking for social, economic and health factors that went along with high or low fitness levels, researchers found that the greater a country's internal income inequality, the less fit its children were likely to be. [Reuters](#)

Deadly opioid overwhelms first responders and crime labs in Ohio

25 September - ... Heroin isn't new in Cincinnati, but the recent surge in overdoses is being

blamed on an even more potent drug called carfentanil. It's 100 times stronger than fentanyl, a more common synthetic opioid that is itself much stronger than heroin. Carfentanil is used to sedate elephants. It can be dangerous to even touch it without gloves. City and county agencies in the Cincinnati area — from law enforcement to the county coroner — are straining to respond to the carfentanil wave. Carfentanil is part of a shift to synthetic opioids in Cincinnati and around the country. Last year in Hamilton County, Ohio, there were more deaths attributed to fentanyl than to heroin. Suspected carfentanil cases were first reported in the U.S. in July in Ohio. The rate of overdoses has dropped since that shocking 174 in six days, but not by much. There are currently 20 to 25 overdoses a day, on average, reports Hamilton County's heroin task force. Police are calling it the new normal.

[NPR](#)

Investors urge food companies to shift from meat to plants

26 September - A group of 40 investors managing \$1.25 trillion in assets have launched a campaign to encourage 16 global food companies to change the way they source protein for their products to help to reduce environmental and health risks. The investors ... wrote to the food companies on Sept. 23 urging them to respond to the "material" risks of industrial farming and to diversify into plant-based sources of protein. Among the companies targeted were Kraft Heinz, Nestle, Unilever, Tesco and Walmart, a statement by the Farm Animal Investment Risk & Return Initiative, which organized the investor group, said on Monday. ... The campaign follows an Oxford University study which said \$1.5 trillion in healthcare and climate change-related costs could be saved by 2050 if people reduced their reliance on meat in their diet. [Reuters](#)

Is it healthy? FDA wants to know what you think

27 September - The Food and Drug Administration wants to know what you think "healthy" should mean when it's on a food label. The FDA started the public process Tuesday for redefining how the label can be used, and opens the matter up for public comment Wednesday. "Redefining 'healthy' is part of an overall plan to provide consumers with information and tools to enable them to easily and quickly make food choices consistent with public health recommendations and to encourage the development of healthier foods by the industry," according to the FDA. "As our understanding about nutrition has evolved, we need to make sure the definition for the 'healthy' labeling claim stays up to date," FDA's Douglas Balentine wrote in a blog post. [NBC News](#)

The muddled link between booze and cancer

22 September - ... The World Health Organization has recognized alcoholic beverages as a Group 1 carcinogen since 2012, meaning evidence supports a link between alcohol and increased cancer risk. This past March, Jennie Connor, a preventative and social medicine researcher from New Zealand's University of Otago, published a review of studies looking at the correlation between drinking and cancer, concluding that "there is strong evidence that

alcohol causes cancer at seven sites in the body and probably others.” ... The public health community is split among people who think alcohol has its benefits and those who caution against its risks. ... [Some researchers] have gone on the offense against the studies that support alcohol’s potential health benefits, saying they may have been grossly oversold by industry-funded research. [Wired](#)

This small connected device helps monitor your oral health

27 September - ... [T]here’s a new device in the market called Mint. The Mint device is a small, sleek device that fits into the palm of your hand. It connects to your smartphone via Android and iOS. Think breathalyzer meets quantified self. You effortlessly breathe into the device for about three seconds and then Mint gives you an oral health card so to speak — from A to F – you can read on your smartphone. Mint tells you ... how effective your brushing actually is and if that leads or doesn’t lead to bad breath. Through the app, the Mint device also gives you advice based on your oral health grade and tracks your progress. ... [E]lectrochemical sensors in the device measure volatile sulfur compounds (VSC) in your mouth which causes halitosis or bad breath. The device also measures the humidity, temperature and pressure simultaneously running an algorithm which interprets the data from the sensors to get an accurate makeup of the VSC’s in your mouth. [Forbes](#)

What’s in your herbal pills? Firm promises DNA testing for proof

28 September - NBTY, one of the nation’s largest makers of popular supplements like ginkgo biloba and ginseng, has agreed to conduct advanced genetic testing to help ensure that its herbal products actually contain the ingredients promised on the label. The agreement, which affects several popular brands including Solgar, Nature’s Bounty and Sundown Naturals, was announced Wednesday by the New York State attorney general’s office. It follows an agency investigation last year that found that four out of five of the products tested from major retailers did not contain any of the herbs promised on their labels. Instead the agency said the bottles often contained pills made of cheap fillers like powdered rice, asparagus and houseplants, and in some cases, substances like nuts and soy that could be dangerous to people with food allergies. The agreement with NBTY is the third such agreement with a supplement maker negotiated by the office of the state attorney general. ... Last year, two major supplement makers, GNC and Nature’s Way, said that they would implement strict new quality control procedures like the use of advanced DNA testing to authenticate the plants used in their herbal product lines. [The New York Times](#)

Who is responsible for that pile of poop?

23 September - ... [Sanjaya Devkota, who works for the U.N. Habitat through the Global Sanitation Fund] is practicing a behavior change strategy called Community Led Total Sanitation. CLTS was pioneered in Bangladesh in 2000 by Kamal Kar, an Indian-born

agriculture and natural resources specialist, as a new way to combat open defecation; Bangladesh has since nearly eliminated the practice. The focus is on eliciting shame and disgust as motivation to improve sanitation. Critics question the ethics of a shaming approach, but proponents say it's a promising strategy for a serious public health problem. ... [P]roponents of CLTS say financial support is not very effective. Bradley says toilets built through such subsidy-based approaches often go unused because the habit of going outside hasn't been undone. ..." The 2014 "SQUAT" survey in five Indian states found that in 40 percent of households with a working latrine, someone still defecates outside. ... Instead of subsidies, CLTS tries to make people want to build toilets themselves. The idea is that if people are truly convinced that using a toilet is better for family and community health, they'll be willing to spend some of what may be very limited income on sanitation. [NPR](#)

Why do obese patients get worse care? Many doctors don't see past the fat

25 September - ... One in three Americans is obese, a rate that has been steadily growing for more than two decades, but the health care system — in its attitudes, equipment and common practices — is ill prepared, and its practitioners are often unwilling, to treat the rising population of fat patients. The difficulties range from scales and scanners, like M.R.I. machines that are not built big enough for very heavy people, to surgeons who categorically refuse to give knee or hip replacements to the obese, to drug doses that have not been calibrated for obese patients. The situation is particularly thorny for the more than 15 million Americans who have extreme obesity — a body mass index of 40 or higher — and face a wide range of health concerns. [The New York Times](#)

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USAFRICOM

Central Africa Republic: Outbreak of deadly monkeypox in Central Africa Republic

28 September - At least 10 people have died in an outbreak of monkeypox in western Central African Republic, a country already hit by cholera, the health ministry announced Wednesday. "We have logged 10 deaths out of 19 patients," in the southern province of Basse-Kotto, said Dr Joachim Tengueré of the public health emergencies operations centre. Further deaths have been reported from other villages in Haute-Kotto, the country's largest province. Preparations are being made for a rapid intervention team to be sent to the area to help those affected cope with the monkeypox outbreak, Tengueré added. ... The highly contagious disease usually strikes in remote rural areas surrounded by rainforests although the chances of catching it are very slim, according to experts. [Medical Xpress](#)

Egypt approves tougher jail terms for FGM

28 September - Egypt has approved a law that will increase jail terms for those who perform female circumcisions, raising the maximum sentence to seven years from two, according to the state's official gazette on Wednesday. Genital cutting of girls, often referred to as female genital mutilation (FGM) or circumcision, is banned in Egypt but the practice remains common as a rite of passage and is often viewed as a way to protect their chastity. More than nine in 10 women and girls aged 15 to 49 in Egypt have undergone FGM, but the number has declined in recent years, according to data collected by the United Nations. Female genital cutting is performed on both Muslim and Christian girls in Egypt and Sudan, but is rare elsewhere in the Arab world. It is also common in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. The new law stipulates jail sentences of between five and seven years for doctors who perform the operation and one to three for parents who order it. [Reuters](#)

Kenya: Child TB deaths set to fall as Kenya launches new drugs

26 September - More children are likely to survive tuberculosis, the leading infectious disease killer, after Kenya introduces child-friendly medicines on Oct. 1 - the first country in the world to do so. Some 155,000 children with TB are set to benefit across 18 countries that have already ordered the new medicines and are preparing to roll them out, starting with Kenya, according to the TB Alliance campaign group that oversaw their development. [Reuters](#)

Sudan accused of using chemical weapons in Darfur



29 September - Sudan's justice minister has refuted claims by displaced persons in the Jebel Marra area of Darfur that they suffered chemical exposure at the hands of the government of Sudan. Amnesty International reported earlier Thursday that since January, people in Jebel Marra have reported blisters and rashes, peeling skin, eye problems including total vision loss, bloody vomit, diarrhea and severe respiratory problems. Amnesty said the symptoms are due to chemical weapons used by Sudanese authorities. As many as 250 people, including children, may have died as a result of chemical attacks, and hundreds more have been injured, according to the rights group. ... The report released by Amnesty on Thursday states that Sudanese security forces have deliberately targeted civilians and their property, including the probable use of "blister agents" — a banned class of chemical weapons — in roughly 32 villages in the Jebel Marra area. [VOA](#)

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Afghanistan: EU-Afghanistan relations

29 September - ... Afghanistan's development: facts and figures. Today, Afghanistan is in far better shape in terms of human development than it was in 2001:

- Access to primary healthcare has increased from 9% of the population to more than 57%;
- Life expectancy has increased from 44 to 60 years;
- School enrolment has increased 10 times since 2001, with over 8 million students enrolled in schools, 39% of whom are girls.
- Maternal mortality has dropped by around 80% from 1,600 to 396 per 100,000 births ...

Despite considerable improvements since 2001, Afghanistan's health indicators remain near the bottom of international tables. Life expectancy is low and infant under-five and maternal mortality are very high. There is an extremely high prevalence of chronic malnutrition, poor sanitation, micronutrient deficiency diseases and other diseases, from malaria and tuberculosis to mental health conditions. [European Union External Action](#)

Saudi Arabia: MERS sickens 2 more in Saudi Arabia

23 September - Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Health (MOH) today announced two new MERS-CoV cases, both of them involving men who had primary exposure to the virus, meaning they didn't contract their infections from another person. One of the patients is a 43-year-old expatriate from Riyadh who is not a healthcare worker and is listed in stable condition. The other is a 52-year-old Saudi man from Wadi Al Dawisir in the south central part of the country who is also in stable condition. The pair of cases lifts Saudi Arabia's overall total MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) cases to 1,456, of which 610 have proved fatal. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

Syria: Aleppo's two largest hospitals bombed by Syrian regime

28 September - Government bombardment of the Syrian city of Aleppo hit the area's two largest hospitals on Wednesday. The bombing in the rebel-held eastern part of the city put the heavily damaged facilities out of service, compounding the city's critical lack of medical services. "The warplane flew over us and directly started dropping its missiles on this hospital...at around 4 a.m.," a doctor told Reuters news agency. According to a report by the Washington Post, two patients died in the attack that also injured three staff members. ... The two hospitals hit on Wednesday were two of the seven that the WHO said were still running in the besieged city. [EIN World News Report](#)

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USEUCOM

Russia plans to ban 'baby boxes' for unwanted infants

29 September - Russia is moving towards banning "baby boxes" - the hatches introduced in many countries where desperate mothers can safely abandon an unwanted infant. But there has been sharp criticism of the ban proposed by senator Elena Mizulina and backed by the government. Some warn that a ban will mean more dead babies left in woods or at rubbish dumps. Russia has about 20 of the boxes, where a mother can anonymously leave a baby at a maternity unit. A UN committee has condemned the boxes. ... The Russian state, it said, should "address the root causes that lead to the abandonment of infants, including by providing family planning services and adequate counselling and social support for unplanned pregnancies". [BBC News](#)

The Netherlands: Increase in ECHOvirus 6 infections associated with neurological symptoms in the Netherlands, June to August 2016

29 September - The Dutch virus-typing network VIRO-TypeNed reported an increase in ECHOvirus 6 (E-6) infections with neurological symptoms in the Netherlands between June and August 2016. Of the 31 cases detected from January through August 2016, 15 presented with neurological symptoms. Ten of 15 neurological cases were detected in the same province and the identified viruses were genetically related. This report is to alert medical and public health professionals of the circulation of E-6 associated with neurological symptoms. [Eurosurveillance](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Earthquakes - additional actions needed to identify and mitigate risks to federal buildings and implement an early warning system

22 September - About 40 percent of federally-owned and -leased buildings in the United States are located in areas where very strong to extreme shaking from earthquakes could occur. The Department of Defense (DOD) and General Services Administration (GSA), which are responsible for the majority of these buildings, have not fully identified their exceptionally high risk (EHR) buildings or prioritized and implemented comprehensive seismic safety measures. Federal agencies identified their EHR buildings as part of a

government-wide effort in the 1990's, and GSA has begun taking initial steps to identify its current EHR buildings. In addition, while DOD and GSA have taken some steps to reduce the seismic risk of their buildings through seismic retrofits, disposals, and low-cost mitigation alternatives, GAO observed gaps in the extent to which these agencies have comprehensively implemented these mitigation measures, such as securing furniture. [GAO](#)

U.S.: Expansion proposed for women's health services without a copay

27 September - The list of preventive services that women can receive without paying anything out of pocket under the health law could grow if recommendations from a group of mostly medical providers are adopted by federal officials later this year. The draft recommendations, which are open for public comment until Sept. 30, update the eight recommended preventive services for women. ... The proposed new recommendation would allow women at average risk for breast cancer to begin screening as early as age 40 and receive a mammogram every one or two years. ... In addition to the breast cancer screening itself, the ACOG working group proposes that if imaging tests, biopsies or other interventions are required to evaluate the mammogram findings that those be considered an integral part of the screening, which would mean they would be provided without charge to women. [NPR](#)

U.S.: HHS announces \$99 million in new grants to improve mental health services for young people

22 September - Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell announced today \$99 million to train new mental health providers, help teachers and others recognize mental health issues in youth and connect them to help, and increase access to mental health services for young people. These funds were included in the President and Vice President's Now Is the Time plan to reduce gun violence by keeping guns out of dangerous hands, increasing access to mental health services, and making schools safer. [HHS](#)

U.S.: More children infected at California dental clinic losing permanent teeth

24 September - As the outbreak of infections among children treated at an Anaheim pediatric dental clinic climbed to 20 cases Friday, a doctor at Children's Hospital of Orange County said the affected children have not only undergone extensive surgeries and received powerful antibiotics, but many have also lost permanent teeth. ... Doctors and staff have been taking X-rays of the children's jaws and chest area to detect infected areas, and all children have required surgery to rid their bones of the infection, he said. ... All of the children are receiving antibiotics intravenously and will have to get that treatment for four to six months, he said. ... The children, ages 3 to 9, all underwent baby tooth root canals, or pulpotomies, at the Children's Dental Group clinic between April and July. In all, 500 children underwent the procedure in recent months. So far, five water samples from the

clinic have tested positive for *Mycobacterium chelonae/abscessus* group. [The Mercury News](#)

U.S.: More U.S. babies born addicted to opiates like heroin

26 September - The proportion of U.S. babies born suffering from withdrawal syndrome after exposure to heroin or prescription opiates in utero has more than doubled in less than a decade, a study suggests. ... Nationally, the rate of neonatal abstinence syndrome involving mothers' use of opiates - which includes heroin as well as prescription narcotics like codeine and Vicodin - surged from 2.8 cases for every 1,000 births in 2009 to 7.3 cases for every 1,000 births in 2013, the study found. ... "We know that certain states are harder hit by the opioid/heroin abuse epidemic, with about 10 states contributing half of all neonatal abstinence syndrome cases," [Dr. Joshua] Brown said. "These states are often more rural and impoverished areas of the U.S. such as Mississippi, Alabama, and West Virginia." Brown and colleagues looked at Kentucky in particular. Here, the rate of neonatal abstinence syndrome climbed from 5 cases for every 1,000 births in 2008 to 21.2 cases per 1,000 births in 2014, researchers report in *JAMA Pediatrics*. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Too poor for proper plumbing: a reality in 500,000 U.S. homes

26 September - The hard clay soil in this rural Southern county [Tyler, Alabama] ... is bad for burying things — in particular, septic tanks. So Ms. Rudolph, 64, did what many people around here do. She ran a plastic pipe from her toilet under her yard and into the woods behind her house. Paying to put in a septic tank would cost around \$6,000 — a little more than half of her family's annual income. Here in Lowndes County ... less than half of the population is on a municipal sewer line. While that is not a hardship for more affluent communities — about one in five American homes are not on city sewer lines — the legacy of rural poverty has left its imprint here: Many people have failing septic tanks and are too poor to fix them. Others, like Ms. Rudolph, have nothing at all. That is not so uncommon. Nearly half a million households in the United States lack the basic dignity of hot and cold running water, a bathtub or shower, or a working flush toilet, according to the Census Bureau. The absence has implications for public health in the very population that is the most vulnerable. [The New York Times](#)

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USPACOM

India: Delhi's chikungunya outbreak

27 September - In 2006 India experienced one of its worse chikungunya outbreaks, when more than 1.5m cases were reported. The current outbreak in Delhi has claimed at least 15

lives so far, and the city's hospitals are overloaded because of demand from neighbouring states such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. ... Last week the government announced an additional 1000 beds for fever patients and a helpline number. The beds will be provided in the three nodal hospitals for vector-borne diseases. ... The outbreak in India's capital is the worst in six years, with more than 1,000 people affected by September 10. The last time the number of affected people reached the three-figure mark was in 2011.

[The BMJ](#)

India: The cost of cheap drugs? Toxic Indian lake is 'superbug hotspot'

28 September - ... A short drive from the bustling tech hub of Hyderabad, Medak is the heart of India's antibiotics manufacturing business: a district of about 2.5 million that has become one of the world's largest suppliers of cheap drugs to most markets, including the United States. But community activists, researchers and some drug company employees say the presence of more than 300 drug firms, combined with lax oversight and inadequate water treatment, has left lakes and rivers laced with antibiotics, making this a giant Petri dish for anti-microbial resistance. ... Drugmakers in Medak ... say they comply with local environmental rules and do not discharge effluent into waterways. National and local governments are divided on the scale of the problem. [Reuters](#)

Philippines: Philippines has built only 1% of homes promised after Typhoon Haiyan

29 September - ... The archipelago nation is regularly rocked by storms that are predicted to get stronger and more frequent due to climate change. ... After Haiyan – one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded, and one that destroyed more than a million homes and killed more than 6,000 people – the government promised to “build back better”. The strategy included relocating people away from coastal areas that are almost sure to be hit again. The plan has so far been a failure, at least in terms of numbers. In the aftermath of one of the worst natural disasters ever to hit the Philippines, the government of then president Bignino Aquino III committed to building 205,000 homes to accommodate around one million people living in coastal danger zones. Last week, Vice President Leni Robredo, newly installed as head of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council ... admitted that only around one percent of the target had been achieved. [IRIN](#)

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Brazil reports 46,000 new chikungunya cases

26 September - Brazil reported 46,446 cases in the 5 weeks since it previously reported cases, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said in its most recent update, published late last week. Brazil now has 216,102 cases. All told, countries in the Americas had 47,931 new confirmed, suspected, and imported cases, bringing the 2016 total to 302,940, according to PAHO's Sep 23 report. ... PAHO also reported 55 new deaths—52 in Brazil and 3 in Colombia—bringing the total this year to 108. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (third item)

Venezuela: Diphtheria reappears in Venezuela after long absence - another symptom of a broken health system

29 September - The governor of Bolivar state, Venezuela, Francisco Rangel Gómez confirmed this week that there are 13 cases of diphtheria in the town of San Antonio, Sifontes municipality. ... The Venezuelan Society of Public Health says diphtheria was eradicated in Venezuela in the late 1940s. Officials state they have the vaccines and medicines to prevent and combat the outbreak. Bolivar state is also the region in Venezuela most affected by the current malaria epidemic, the largest in 75 years. In fact, former Minister of Health, Dr. José Felix Oletta has said these issues are only a symptom of a broken health care system in the country. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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