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Army Public Health Weekly Update

U.S. Army Public Health Command



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and

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The new Performance Triad Family Guide helps you enhance your health with sleep, activity, and nutrition

The Total Army Family Challenge Guide is a "how-to" plan to improve your health with sleep, activity, and nutrition.



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**Outbreak of Recent
HIV and HCV
Infections among
Persons Who Inject
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The Indiana State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are investigating a large outbreak of recent HIV infections among persons who inject drugs. Many of the HIV-infected individuals in this outbreak are co-infected with hepatitis C virus.



U.S. MILITARY

Characterizing the relationship between tick bites and Lyme disease in active component U.S. Armed Forces in the Eastern United States

March 2015 - Lyme disease (LD) is the most commonly diagnosed vector-borne illness in the U.S. Analysis of ticks that are removed from patients (rather than collected from the environment) may inform LD surveillance. In this ecological study, LD rates among active component U.S. Armed Forces in the eastern U.S. were compared with tick data from the U.S. Army Public Health Command Human Tick Test Kit Program (HTTKP) covering the same geographic region. In the population of service members in the study sample, mean annual LD incidence was 52.2 per 100,000 person-years ... between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2012. A 10% increase in the rate of ticks submitted to the HTTKP corresponded to an increase in LD incidence of 5.7%. ... Where *Borrelia burgdorferi* infection of *Ixodes scapularis* ticks was high (20% or greater tick infection prevalence), tick removal rates explained 53.7% of the annual variation in LD incidence. ... These data support using location-specific rates of ticks removed while feeding on active component service members to complement LD surveillance. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

Report says American Psychological Association collaborated on torture justification



30 April - The American Psychological Association secretly collaborated with the administration of President George W. Bush to bolster a legal and ethical justification for the torture of prisoners swept up in the post-Sept. 11 war on terror, according to a new report by a group of dissident health professionals and human rights activists. The report is the first to examine the association's role in the interrogation program. It contends, using newly disclosed emails, that the group's actions to keep psychologists involved in the interrogation program coincided closely with efforts by senior Bush administration officials to salvage the program after the public disclosure in 2004 of graphic photos of prisoner abuse by American military personnel at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. ... The American Psychological Association "clearly supports the role of psychologists in a way our behavioral science consultants operate," said Dr. William Winkenwerder, then the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, describing to reporters why the Pentagon relied more on psychologists than psychiatrists at the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. [New York Times](#)

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

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

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GLOBAL

Five billion people 'have no access to safe surgery'

27 April - Two-thirds of the world's population have no access to safe and affordable surgery, according to a new study in The Lancet - more than double the number in previous estimates. It means millions of people are dying from treatable conditions such as appendicitis and obstructed labour. Most live in low and middle-income countries. The study suggests that 93% of people in sub-Saharan Africa cannot obtain basic surgical care. Previous estimates have only looked at whether surgery was available. But this research has also considered whether people can travel to facilities within two hours, whether the procedure will be safe, and whether patients can actually afford the treatment. [BBC News](#)

Hearts different for ART kids?

27 April - Cardiac systolic and diastolic function were altered at age 5 among Chinese children born of assisted reproductive technology (ART), a study found. The external shape of the heart was similar between ART and spontaneously-conceived kids, but transthoracic conventional echocardiography and 2-dimensional speckle tracking showed functional differences between the two groups. ... However, the association isn't necessarily one for patients to worry about, cautioned Robert Greene, MD, of Conceptions Reproductive Associates in Denver. "The largest review to date suggests that IVF patients are at higher risk of pre-maturity and blood pressure problems experienced during pregnancy," Greene noted. "These are very real concerns when it comes down to epigenetic risk and subsequent vascular problems in children." However, "the trend (in the U.S.) to encourage frozen transfers and single embryo transfers has been shown to overcome this risk," he added. "This has fueled a popular trend in the U.S.A. to encourage single embryo transfers and in frozen cycles." [MedPage Today](#)

Most countries woefully unprepared to fight resistant superbugs: WHO

29 April - Only 34 countries have national plans to fight the global threat of antibiotic resistance, meaning few are prepared to tackle "superbug" infections which put even basic healthcare at risk, the WHO said on Wednesday. In a survey of government plans to tackle the issue, the World Health Organization said only a quarter of the 133 countries that responded were addressing the problem. "This is the single greatest challenge in infectious diseases today," said Keiji Fukuda, the WHO's assistant director-general for health security. "All types of microbes, including many viruses and parasites, are becoming resistant." [Reuters](#)

Rubella has been eliminated from the Americas, health officials say

29 April - Rubella, a disease with terrible consequences for unborn children, has finally been

eliminated from the Americas, a scientific panel set up by global health authorities announced Wednesday. The disease, also known as German measles, once infected millions of people in the Western Hemisphere. In a 1964-65 outbreak in the United States, 11,000 fetuses were miscarried, died in the womb or were aborted, and 20,000 babies were born with defects. "Although it has taken some 15 years, the fight against rubella has paid off," said Dr. Carissa F. Etienne, director of the Pan American Health Organization, which made the announcement in conjunction with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Unicef and the United Nations Foundation. ... The Americas region is the first World Health Organization region to eliminate rubella. The European region — which includes Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia — hopes to follow next. [New York Times](#)

Study: Global warming has dramatically upped the odds of extreme heat events

27 April - In a new study in Nature Climate Change, Erich Fischer and Reto Knutti, of the science-focused Swiss university ETH Zurich, perform an analysis not for any individual event but rather for all daily heat and precipitation extremes of a "moderate" magnitude occurring over land in our current climate. And they find, strikingly, that 18 percent of today's moderate precipitation extremes, and 75 percent of moderate heat extremes, were made more likely to occur by global warming. [Washington Post](#)

Vaccine patches for measles could be here by 2017



28 April - ... [Researchers] have been working for years on creating a pain-free patch to vaccinate against measles. The patch would administer the same solution to a patient using microneedles--no refrigeration or medical personnel required. Today researchers from Georgia Tech and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that a measles vaccine patch could begin clinical trials as early as 2017. ... "With no needles, syringes, sterile water or sharps disposals needed, the microneedle patch offers great hope of a new tool to reach the world's children faster, even in the most remote areas," said James Goodson, an epidemiologist from the CDC's Global Immunization Division. "This advancement would be a major boost in our efforts to eliminate this disease, with more vaccines administered and more lives saved at less cost." [Popular Science](#)

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INFLUENZA

CDC says tough 2014-15 flu season is finally ending

28 April - Two straight weeks of low influenza activity signal that the long 2014-15 flu season, marked by its heavy impact on seniors and poor vaccine performance, is drawing to

an end, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in a short review of the season yesterday. Flu activity stayed elevated for 20 weeks, making the season considerably longer than the average of 13 weeks over the past 13 seasons. H3N2 viruses were the dominant strain, and H3N2-dominated seasons are usually more severe. As the CDC has noted previously, this season brought record hospitalization rates in those 65 and older, who accounted for 60% of flu hospitalizations. From Sep 28, 2014, through Apr 18, an estimated 313.8 of every 100,000 seniors were hospitalized for flu. The next-highest rate was 182.3 per 100,000 in 2012-13. Hospitalization rates in younger age-groups were similar to or lower than in previous seasons. ... The CDC also noted that most circulating H3N2 viruses differed from the H3N2 strain in the vaccine, which probably explains why the estimated vaccine effectiveness (VE) against H3N2 was only 18%. VE against influenza B was estimated at 45%, and overall VE was 19%. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (first item)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 15 (April 12-18, 2015), influenza activity continued to decrease in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** Of 10,457 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 15, 795 (7.6%) were positive for influenza.
- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.
- **Outpatient Illness Surveillance:** The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 1.4%, which is below the national baseline of 2.0%. All 10 regions reported ILI below region-specific baseline levels. [FluView](#)

Flu News Europe

Week 16/2015 (13-19 April 2015):

- Influenza activity continued to decrease in most reporting countries: the proportion of influenza-virus-positive specimens from sentinel sources decreased from 28% for week 15/2015 to 25% for week 16. Since week 51/2014, the positivity rate has been over the threshold of 10%, indicating seasonal influenza activity.
- Low intensity of influenza activity was reported by 31 of 37 reporting countries.
- Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) and type B viruses continued to circulate in the WHO European Region, but type B viruses accounted for 75% of sentinel detections for week 16/2015. [Flu News Europe](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For Week 16 (through 25 April 2015):

- **Influenza:** No new cases of NHRC laboratory-confirmed influenza among US military

basic trainees. Decreasing influenza activity at US military recruit sites.

- FRI surveillance at all eight U.S. military basic training centers indicated FRI rates were at or below expected values. [NHRC Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

CDC study suggests dog flu virus poses little threat to humans

29 April - A genetic analysis of the novel H3N2 influenza virus that has sickened some dogs in the United States suggests that it does not pose a special threat to humans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced yesterday. The agency said its study revealed "no evidence suggesting an increased potential for this virus to infect humans or cause severe disease in humans. Therefore, the risk to humans posed by this virus continues to be low and is equivalent to that associated with previously circulating H3N8 canine influenza viruses." The virus was first reported about a month ago in the Chicago area, and by early April it had sickened more than 1,000 dogs and killed 5. The virus, which can also infect cats, is similar to a strain that has existed in China and South Korea since 2006.

[CIDRAP Flu Scan](#) (second item)

Consumer Federation report cites USDA food safety shortcomings

28 April - In an analysis on the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) primary meat and poultry food safety regulatory program, the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) today noted what it sees as key failures—such as a lack of consequences for repeat offenders—and recommended steps for improvement. ... The report also identifies how a 1998 court case (Supreme Beef v USDA) limited the ability of the USDA to enforce its regulations, effectively barring the government from shutting down plants that fail to meet safety standards for *Salmonella*. Consumer groups have argued that Congress should provide USDA with authority to enforce food safety standards, according to a CFA news release.

[CIDRAP Food Safety Scan](#) (second item)

Home-canned potatoes tagged as likely botulism outbreak source

28 April - Potato salad made from home-canned potatoes is probably what triggered a recent botulism outbreak in people who attended a church lunch in Lancaster on Apr 19, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Fairfield Department of Health announced

yesterday. Also, two more illnesses have been detected, raising the outbreak total to 31. So far, 21 cases have been confirmed, including a previously reported fatal illness, and 10 are suspected. Patients received antitoxin provided by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Health officials said in a statement that 12 people are still hospitalized. [CIDRAP Food Safety Scan](#) (first item)

Report: Health inspectors found crickets, mildew at Blue Bell plant

29 April - State health inspectors found crickets in a storage room, dirty mop buckets and mildew at Blue Bell's ice cream production plant in Brenham, according to records obtained by NBC5. The Texas Department of State Health Services found more than a dozen issues during inspections conducted from Jan., 1, 2011, to April 15, 2015, according to documents NBC5 obtained under the Texas open records law. A health department spokeswoman has repeatedly described the iconic Texas company's inspection track over the years as "good" with "very few issues, and none that required a warning letter or penalty." [Dallas Morning News](#)

Zoonotic and human transmission suspected in Colorado plague outbreak



30 April - Investigators from Colorado and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today reported a pneumonic plague outbreak that they say is the largest one to date and that involves dog-to-human transmission, which is very rare, as well as possible human-to-human transmission, which hasn't been reported in the United

States since 1924. The outbreak occurred in July 2014, killing a 2-year-old American pit bull terrier and sickening four people—the dog's owner, two veterinary workers who handled the sick dog, and a woman who was exposed to both the dog and the index patient. ... The report highlights the unusual presentation in the dog as well as misdiagnosis of the initial human case (the ill dog's owner) when an automated test gave inaccurate results, posing a risk to health workers who cared for him. [CIDRAP](#)

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WELLNESS

Air pollution tied to brain aging

28 April - Air pollution is known to increase the risk for stroke and other cerebrovascular disorders. But now researchers have found it is also linked to premature aging of the brain.

... After controlling for health, lifestyle and socioeconomic factors, they found that compared with people exposed to the lowest levels of PM 2.5, those with the highest exposure had a 46 percent increased risk for covert brain infarcts, the brain damage commonly called "silent strokes." They also found that each additional two micrograms per cubic meter increase in PM2.5 was linked to a decrease in cerebral brain volume equivalent to about one year of natural aging. [New York Times](#)

Can a daily TV hour put pounds on kids?

27 April - Children who watch at least an hour of television a day are more likely to be overweight or obese than those who watch less than an hour a day -- but children are watching more than 3 hours a day on average, according to a new study presented at a meeting. Data from 12,650 kindergarten students in the U.S. show these kids watched a mean of 3.30 hours of television per day, said the researchers, one of whom was Mark DeBoer, MD, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. [MedPage Today](#)

Same city, but very different life spans

28 April - Life expectancy is a measure unlike any other, a sort of X-ray machine that can see through the geography of a city to the bones of a neighborhood's distress. This week, researchers from Virginia Commonwealth University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released life expectancy calculations for four cities, part of a broader series whose aim is to influence social policy.

New York City: In Tribeca, Murray Hill and the Upper East Side, the average resident lives until 85 — on par with places in the world with the highest life expectancy like Japan and Hong Kong. In Brownsville, Brooklyn, about 10 miles away, life expectancy was 74, closer to that in Brazil.

Chicago: Health authorities in Chicago spotted an unusual pattern: Life expectancy defied income in a number of neighborhoods, possibly because of the influx of immigrants who tend to live longer than native-born Americans. "We look at life expectancy to help us identify where the problems are," said Dr. Julie Morita, the city's health commissioner.

Atlanta: In Atlanta, the lowest life expectancy was 71, about the same as in Egypt. One of the neighborhoods with that low lifespan was Vine City, the 30314 zip code, where Martin Luther King Jr. lived as an adult with his family. Karen Minyard, director of the Georgia Health Policy Center at Georgia State University, said the patterns of the lowest life expectancies coincided almost exactly with areas of high poverty and low education.

Richmond, Va.: One of the reasons that Richmond's gaps appear so extreme is that the calculations here are based on even more precise geographical data. ... That reveals concentrated pockets of wealth and poverty, which would be diluted over a larger area. The standout spot is Gilpin Court, a large public housing project, where life expectancy is just 63, on par with Haiti. [New York Times](#)

Starting buprenorphine in ED keeps patients in treatment

28 April - Starting buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone) in the emergency department leads to better treatment maintenance a month later, researchers found. In a single-center study, more patients randomized to the addiction treatment drug remained on treatment a month later compared with those randomized to a referral-only group and a brief intervention group (78% versus 37% and 45%, respectively, $P < 0.001$), according to Gail D'Onofrio, MD, of Yale, and colleagues. [MedPage Today](#)

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USAFRICOM

Liberia: Measles outbreak - four deaths - 363 suspected cases

28 April - Officials of the Ministry of Health are reporting an outbreak of measles in the country. ... Giving an update to media executives over the weekend about the measles outbreak in the country, Pharmacist Adolphus T. Clarke, Deputy Program Manager, Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) at the Ministry of Health, said as it stands at least 363 cases from 10 of Liberia's 15 counties, have been reported. Mr. Clarke also stated that 245 children, who are between the ages of nine to 59 months are the group most affected. They made 67 percent of the total number. [AllAfrica](#)

Niger: Meningococcal disease

29 April - Between 1 January and 25 April 2015, the Ministry of Public Health of Niger notified WHO of 1543 suspected cases of meningococcal disease, including 147 deaths. Suspected cases have been reported in seven of Niger's eight regions. Meningococcal meningitis outbreaks have been confirmed in several areas of Dosso and Niamey regions. ... Laboratory tests have confirmed the predominance of *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C in the affected areas, with *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup W also being identified in several samples. A national epidemic committee has been activated to manage the outbreak. An international investigation team composed of WHO and CDC has been deployed to support the Ministry of Public Health's (MoH) investigation of the outbreak and reinforce the surveillance capacity in the country. [WHO](#)

South Africa should invest in public toilets to combat sexual assault: experts

29 April - Investing in public toilets could reduce the number of sexual assaults in South African townships by almost a third and lower the economic cost of the crime on society,

public health experts said on Wednesday. Many women in South Africa must walk long distances from their homes to public toilets, leaving them vulnerable to sexual assault. ... In 2011/2012, South Africa had the highest number of reported rapes per head of population of any Interpol member country, with more than 64,500 reported. [Reuters](#)

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

Sierra Leone: Back to class after the Ebola outbreak

30 April - Children in the West African nation of Sierra Leone finally resumed classes almost nine months after the Ebola outbreak forced schools to shut down. On arrival they were greeted by buckets of chlorinated water and teachers armed with digital thermometers. Though new cases have dropped sharply over the past few months, nobody was taking any chances. But amid continued fear of crowded spaces and an economy battered by the restrictions put in place to fight Ebola, just a fraction of students actually turned up. In one classroom in the Tengbeh Town neighbourhood of Freetown, just 11 out of 105 Class 1 pupils arrived. Their bemused-looking teacher said some of the parents were still too afraid of letting their children associate with others for fear of catching Ebola. [Al Jazeera](#)

Slow Ebola progress in affected nations shows need for response tweaks

30 April - The number of lab-confirmed Ebola cases in Guinea and Sierra Leone held steady last week, with much of the activity centered in a hot spot in a border area between the two countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) said today in its weekly update on disease activity and response actions. Between them, the two countries reported 33 confirmed case last week, the same as the week before. The WHO said 25 of the Ebola infections were reported from two areas—Forecariah district in Guinea and neighboring Kambia district in Sierra Leone. Liberia for the fifth week in a row reported no new cases. The WHO said improved community engagement targeting the areas is needed to ensure that responders are able to track all remaining chains of transmission, which is the key to ending the outbreak. [CIDRAP](#)

WHO releases next phase of Ebola response plan



28 April - The World Health Organization (WHO) today unveiled its game plan for helping West African countries battle Ebola through the end of 2015. ... The WHO's new Ebola strategy follows its initial Ebola plan, which was released in August 2014 and was designed to cover only response steps that would take place through February. The new plan seeks to drive down cases as low as possible before the rainy season ramps up this month and next. It also focuses on limiting cases to the coastal areas, aggressively identifying all new cases,

enhancing contact tracing, and boosting surveillance. [CIDRAP](#)

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USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Landslide in Badakhshan province kills 52 people

28 April - At least 52 people were killed when a landslide wiped out an entire village in northern Afghanistan early Tuesday, the local governor told NBC News. ... District Governor Ghufuran Zaki said the landslide hit just after midnight local time and sent a cascade of mud ripped through the buildings in Badakhshan Province's mountainside village of Jurm Ulya. He said 22 children, 25 women, and five men had been killed. "We do not have any equipment to rescue any possible survivors buried under a huge mountain of mud," Zaki said, adding that all 97 homes in the village were destroyed. Zaki told NBC News that many villagers had already left the town amid fears of a landslide after some noticed cracks had developed in the upper part of the valley following heavy rainfall. [NBC News](#)

Saudi Arabia: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

29 April - Between 14 and 20 April 2015, the National IHR Focal Point for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia notified WHO of 4 additional cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection, including 1 death. ... Globally, WHO has been notified of 1110 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including at least 422 related deaths. [WHO](#)

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USEUCOM

EU lawmakers urge calorie content labels to cover alcohol

29 April - European beer, wine and spirits makers should inform consumers about the amount of calories in their drinks via clear labeling, EU lawmakers said on Wednesday. Most foods and drinks are subject to legislation mandating labels with nutritional and ingredient information, but alcoholic drinks are exempt. The European Parliament voted in favor of a resolution calling on the European Commission, which typically initiates EU law, to prepare

new legislation by next year at the latest that would extend such labeling to alcohol. [Reuters](#)

Germans switch sausage for soya over green, health concerns

29 April - Germans, known for their love of sausages, are eating less meat and more vegetarian food as concerns grow about health, animal welfare and the environmental cost of livestock farming. Meat consumption is stable or declining in most developed countries but the shift is particularly striking in Germany, Europe's biggest pork producer. ... [Overall] meat consumption dropped last year to 60.1 kgs per person from 62.8 in 2011. While that was well above the global average, it is still about half that eaten by the average American.

[Reuters](#)

United Kingdom: HIV home test kit goes on sale in UK

27 April - The first legally approved HIV self-test kit that allows people to get a result in 15 minutes at home has gone on sale in England, Scotland and Wales. Unlike other kits, these tests do not need to be sent off to a lab to get the results. It works by detecting antibodies on a small drop of blood, which are often only detectable three months after the infection is caught. Experts warn that any positive tests must be reconfirmed at clinics. Charities hope it will reduce some of the 26,000 people estimated to have undiagnosed HIV in the UK. [BBC](#)

[News](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: 10-year study notes *C diff* incidence highest in Northeast

29 April - The incidence of hospitalization for *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI) was highest in the Northeast and in the spring season, whereas *C diff* mortality rates were highest in the Midwest and in the wintertime, according to a large 10-year study of the disease across US regions published today in the *American Journal of Infection Control*. University of Texas researchers analyzed 2.3 million cases of CDI from 2001 through 2010 and found the highest incidence in the Northeast, with 8.0 CDI hospital discharges out of 1,000 total discharges, followed by the Midwest (6.4), South (5.0), and West (4.8). [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

U.S.: CDC reports rare vaccinia infection in vaccinated lab worker



30 April - A laboratory worker in Boston was infected with vaccinia virus because of a needlestick injury, despite having been vaccinated against the virus 10 months earlier, according to an article today in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. The article says the infection is the first reported in a US lab worker who had been vaccinated recently in accord with recommendations of the

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Vaccinia is the virus used in smallpox vaccines. [CIDRAP](#)

U.S.: Cryptosporidiosis surveillance — United States, 2011–2012

1 May - Cryptosporidiosis is a nationally notifiable gastrointestinal illness caused by the extremely chlorine-tolerant protozoa of the genus *Cryptosporidium*. Fifty state and two metropolitan public health agencies voluntarily report cases of cryptosporidiosis through CDC's National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System. For 2011, a total of 9,313 cryptosporidiosis cases (confirmed and nonconfirmed) were reported; for 2012, a total of 8,008 cases were reported; 5.8% and 5.3%, respectively, were associated with a detected outbreak. Cryptosporidiosis incidence rates remain elevated nationally, and rates of nonconfirmed cases have increased. Rates remain highest in young children, although rates among elderly adults are increasing. Future research is needed to address shifting trends in cryptosporidiosis cases, with a specific focus on the increase in nonconfirmed cases and increasing incidence rates among elderly adults. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: FDA warns about another illegal stimulant in supplements

28 April - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is warning companies to stop selling dietary supplements that include a stimulant known as DMBA, the latest in a series of moves to clamp down on potentially dangerous weight-loss and body-building products. In an April 24 letter to one manufacturer, 1ViZN LLC, the agency noted that its product Velocity listed AMP as a dietary ingredient. ... The FDA said it considered Velocity adulterated because there is not enough information to provide reasonable assurance that DMBA is safe. Earlier this month the agency warned five companies to stop selling dietary supplements containing a stimulant known as beta-methylphenylethylamine, or BMPEA, which is often hidden in supplements containing *Acacia rigidula*. [Reuters](#)

U.S.: Health plans often fail to provide free coverage for women's health

30 April - Many women were thrilled when the Affordable Care Act became law in 2010, because it required insurance companies to cover a broad array of women's health services

without any out-of-pocket costs. Five years later, however, the requirement isn't being enforced, according to two new studies. Health insurance plans around the country are failing to provide many of those legally mandated services including birth control and cancer screenings. The studies by the National Women's Law Center looked at health plan coverage documents and consumer complaints in 15 states. One of the studies focused on contraception, while the other looked at a range of women's health issues, including maternity care, breast-feeding support and other services. [NPR](#)

U.S. Recommends limiting fluoride levels in drinking water

28 April - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is recommending that fluoride levels in community water be reduced to 0.7 mg/L of water. Previously, the agency recommended fluoride concentrations between 0.7–1.2 mg/L. Since the previous recommendations were implemented in the early 1960s, Americans have greater access to fluoride through toothpaste and mouth rinses, according to HHS. The reduction was recommended to limit the risk for dental fluorosis in children while still providing protection from cavities. Similarly, the FDA is asking manufacturers to limit the amount of fluoride put into bottled water. [NEJM Journal Watch](#)

U.S.: Study reveals increasing incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome in U.S.

28 April - An increasing number of babies across the country are born addicted to opioids and require intensive care, according to a study analyzing MEDNAX Clinical Data Warehouse statistics from 299 neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) around the United States. ... The illness, called "neonatal abstinence syndrome" (NAS), is a drug withdrawal syndrome that most commonly occurs after in utero exposure to opioids. It can lead to seizures, difficulty feeding, respiratory complications and low-birth-weight in affected infants. The study ... found that NAS is responsible for a substantial and growing portion of resources dedicated to critically ill neonates in NICUs nationwide. [News-Medical.Net](#)

U.S.: Tyson Foods aims to stop using human antibiotics in chickens

28 April - Tyson Foods Inc., one of the world's largest meat and poultry producers, announced today a goal of eliminating the use of human antibiotics in broiler chickens by the end of September 2017, with the aim of limiting the spread of antibiotic resistance. ... The firm has already stopped using antibiotics in its 35 broiler hatcheries, requires a veterinary prescription for antibiotics used on broiler farms, and has reduced the use of human antibiotics to treat broiler chickens by more than 80% since 2011, the statement said. Tyson said it is also forming working groups with independent farmers and others in its beef, pork, and turkey supply chains to discuss how to reduce the use of human antibiotics on cattle, hog, and turkey farms. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

U.S. 'will not fund research for modifying embryo DNA'

30 April - Modifying the DNA of embryos is a "line that should not be crossed", a leading figure in US research says. Dr Francis Collins, National Institutes of Health director, was responding to reports that the first embryos had been modified in China. He argued there were "serious and unquantifiable safety issues", big ethical questions and no compelling medical reason to do it. He said the NIH would not fund such research in the US. The advent of "Crispr technology" - which is a more precise way of editing DNA than anything that has come before - has spurred huge progress in genetics. But there had been growing concern these tremendous advances were making the modification of human embryos more likely. ... Last week a team at Sun Yat-sen University, in Guangzhou, reported using Crispr to modify defective parts of DNA that lead to a blood disorder called beta thalassaemia. Their world first, reported in the journal Protein and Cell, showed the correction was successful in seven out of 86 attempts. However, there were a number of other "off-target" mutations introduced to the genetic code. [BBC News](#)

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USPACOM

China: Beijing babies born heavier during Olympics

30 April - Women in Beijing in the final stage of pregnancy during the 2008 Olympics - when officials strictly controlled air pollution - gave birth to heavier babies than in years when the city was smoggier, a study has found. The study, led by epidemiologist David Rich of the University of Rochester Medical Center, found that mothers in their eighth month of pregnancy during the Games had children which were born on average 23 grams heavier than those born either a year earlier or a year later. It found no significant association for mothers in their first through seventh months. Beijing halted construction, shut factories and cut the numbers of vehicles allowed on the roads for 47 days for the games, providing the basis for a natural experiment on the effects of pollution. [Al Jazeera](#)

Malaysia, Australia: CDC posts travel notices for dengue, Ross River virus

27 April - Late last week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued two travel notices about mosquito-borne diseases: dengue in Malaysia and Ross River virus disease (RRVD) in Australia. Both alerts are at the "watch" level, the lowest of the three travel notices that the CDC issues. ... The agency said that **Malaysia** has had more than 30,800 cases of dengue fever this year through Mar 21, including 308 deaths. Case numbers are up 41% over the same period in 2014. In **Australia**, meanwhile, 6,054 RRVD cases have been reported in 2015 through Apr 17, the largest number since 1996, the CDC said in the other

travel notice. Most cases have been in Brisbane and the surrounding areas of Queensland. From 55% to 75% of people who get infected with RRVD don't feel sick, the CDC noted. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (fifth item)

Vanuatu records first case of rare mosquito-borne zika virus

28 April - Vanuatu health officials have for the first time confirmed cases of the rare mosquito-borne zika virus. Zika is the "milder brother" of dengue fever, head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Vanuatu Jacob Kool said. The two illnesses share similar symptoms of fever, aching joints and rash. Although there were no recorded deaths from zika, health officials warned it can cause "very explosive outbreaks". Like dengue fever, there is no cure for the zika virus. ... Dr Kool told ABC's Pacific Beat removing sites was "going to be very challenging" following the devastation caused by Cyclone Pam, which killed at least 11 people last month. [ABC News](#)

NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

Earthquake in Nepal

29 April - CDC recommends that US residents avoid all nonessential travel to Nepal. If you must travel, such as for humanitarian aid work, then protect yourself by following CDC's advice below. Additionally, the US Department of State recommends that US citizens traveling to Nepal should limit nonessential travel to Nepal. On Saturday, April 25, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck 48 miles (77 km) northwest of Nepal's capital, Kathmandu. The earthquake also caused avalanches around Mount Everest and many aftershocks. According to Reliefweb, as of April 27, 2015, the government of Nepal reports more than 3,350 deaths, more than 6,800 people injured, and many missing. The numbers of deaths are expected to rise. Eight million people in 39 districts have been affected. Most of the deaths have reported in Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and Lalitpur. People were also killed in China and Bangladesh. Significant infrastructure damage has caused problems with clean water, sanitation, food supply, electricity, transportation, shelter, and medical care. The monsoon season in Nepal is approaching, and heavy rainfall and flooding may further increase the spread of foodborne and waterborne diseases, as well as diseases spread by mosquitoes. [CDC](#)

Teenager pulled from rubble in Katmandu 5 days after quake

29 April - ... Hundreds cheered as the 15-year-old, Pemba Tamang, was pulled out of the wreckage, dazed and dusty, and carried away on a stretcher. He had been trapped under the collapsed debris of a seven-story building in Kathmandu since Saturday, when the magnitude-7.8 earthquake struck. ... [Many] residents remained on edge over aftershocks

that have rattled the city since Saturday's mammoth quake killed more than 5,800 people and destroyed thousands of houses and other buildings. More than 70 aftershocks stronger than magnitude 3.2 have been recorded in the Himalayan region by Indian scientists over the past five days. ... Rattled by the shaking and anxious to check on family members in outlying areas, tens of thousands of people have left the capital on buses this week. The government has been providing free bus service to many destinations.

On Wednesday, helicopters finally brought food, temporary shelter and other aid to villages northwest of Kathmandu in the mountainous Gorkha District near the epicenter. Entire clusters of homes there were reduced to piles of stone and splintered wood. ... While the death toll in the village of Gumda was low — only five people were killed and 20 were injured among 1,300 residents — most had lost their homes and desperately needed temporary shelter, along with the 40-kilogram (90-pound) sacks of rice that were delivered Wednesday.

Meanwhile, at least 210 foreign trekkers and residents stranded in the Langtang area north of Kathmandu had been rescued, government administrator Gautam Rimal said. ... Police said the official death toll in Nepal had reached 5,825. That figure did not include the 19 people killed at Mount Everest — five foreign climbers and 14 Nepalese Sherpa guides — when the quake caused an avalanche that hit part of the base camp. [New York Times](#)

The latest on Nepal quake: US soldiers stay in Nepal to help

27 April - ... The Pentagon says two teams of U.S. Army Green Beret soldiers happened to be in Nepal when the deadly earthquake struck Saturday and are staying to help with search and relief efforts. A Pentagon spokesman, Col. Steve Warren, says the 26 U.S. soldiers were in Nepal for high-altitude and other training with the Nepalese army. The 11-person crew of a C-130 cargo plane that brought them to Nepal also is remaining in case of a request to evacuate any American citizens. In addition, Warren says that a second U.S. Air Force C-17 cargo plane carrying members of a Los Angeles urban search and rescue team is due to arrive in Nepal on Tuesday. [Washington Post](#)

Trying to locate the living, Nepal rescuers find only frustration



29 April - A team of the United States' most renowned search-and-rescue workers drove into the shattered city of Bhaktapur on Wednesday, having traveled to Nepal from Fairfax County, Va. They brought with them sniffer dogs trained to detect live bodies, acoustic and seismic listening devices designed to pick up noises from entombed victims, and engineers capable of cutting through six-inch walls of reinforced concrete. ... The members of the disaster assistance response team, from the United States Agency for International Development, drew stares, with their buzz cuts and neon hard hats, as they mounted the hill into the 15th-century city. But the next three hours brought a slow

deflation, as they bumped into other international crews and one resident after another told them there was no one to save. The ruined houses were mashed wads of brick and mud and wood, leaving no space that could allow a trapped person to survive. [New York Times](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Chile: Medical marijuana farm blooms in conservative Chile

28 April - Latin America's first medical marijuana farm has taken root in a dusty yard at a secret location in Chile's capital, with the blessing of a prominent right-wing official and high hopes the idea could sprout elsewhere in the socially conservative nation. A debut crop of around 100 kilos (221 lbs) of prime cannabis bud - with a value of \$2 million on the street - was harvested this month from the farm in La Florida, a middle-class Santiago neighborhood, and sent to a laboratory for processing. ... Scientists plan to extract the active ingredients from the cannabis for use in the treatment of 200 cancer patients who signed up via the local healthcare system or through the foundation. [Reuters](#)

Nearly 30,000 new chikungunya cases reported, mainly in Latin America

27 April - After a modest increase in reported case numbers for chikungunya the previous week (700-plus), last week's rise of 29,434 is more in line with recent trends in the continuing outbreak. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) published new numbers Apr 24. The week-by-week count may be misleading, because not all countries and territories report each week. For example, the largest increase this past week was reported by Colombia, with 18,516 new suspected and 65 new confirmed cases; however, that number reflects new cases over a 2-week period. Countries with the next highest increases were Honduras, with 4,729 new suspected cases, and Guatemala, with 4,337 new suspected and confirmed cases; neither country reported to PAHO last week. The cumulative case count as of Apr 24 stands at 1,401,560, which includes 1,367,343 suspected, 30,580 confirmed, and 3,637 imported cases, most of the latter in the United States. [CIDRAP News Scan](#) (second item)

Peru: Lima's life-saving shipping container



26 April - ... Peru has the highest incidence of [multi-drug resistant TB] in the Americas, with over 2000 cases a year. The problem is particularly pronounced in the over-crowded and poorly-ventilated homes in the outskirts of Lima, where conditions are perfect for the

disease to spread. Now the charity Partners in Health has converted an old shipping container into a high-tech TB lab and placed it right in the heart of one of Lima's poorer neighbourhoods. (Video) [BBC News](#)

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