

27 April 2012

Army Public Health Weekly Update

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U.S. Army Public Health Command



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National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has scheduled another National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day for Saturday, April 28, 2012, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Americans who participated in the DEA's third National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on October 29, 2011, turned in more than 188.5 tons of unwanted or expired medications for safe and proper disposal at the 5,327 take-back sites.

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U.S. MILITARY

Officials explain new sexual assault policies

23 April – Senior Defense Department officials today said they hope more service members who are victims of sexual assault report the crimes as a result of a policy change Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta announced last week. Panetta issued guidance April 20 withholding “initial disposition authority” from any officer who is below the O-6 -- colonel or Navy captain -- level and who does not hold special court-martial convening authority. In other words, unit commanders at the company or squadron level no longer have authority to decide whether to take further action in reported cases of attempted rape, forcible

Disaster Planning in Nursing Homes and Home Health Agencies

Although nursing homes and home health agencies care for over 2 million patients, they typically have not been included in disaster planning efforts.

During this COCA call, subject matter experts will share findings from their study and discuss strategies to incorporate nursing homes and home health agencies into community-wide disaster planning.

Date: May 8, 2012

Time: 2:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

Call Number:
1-888-790-6180

Passcode: 1281914

[Register](#)



sodomy or sexual assault. In announcing the new policy, the secretary said the change will ensure that sexual assault cases receive high-level attention. A senior defense official told reporters today during a background briefing that the new policy will allow more experienced and less partial officers to make the initial decision on whether a sexual assault case goes to trial. That will add consistency to how such cases are handled, the official added. [Defense.gov](#)

Update: Exertional rhabdomyolysis, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2011

In 2011, there were 435 incident episodes of rhabdomyolysis likely due to physical exertion and/or heat stress (“exertional rhabdomyolysis”) among U.S. service members. The annual rates of exertional rhabdomyolysis nearly doubled from 2007 to 2011. The highest incidence rates occurred in males, black, non-Hispanics, service members younger than 20 years of age and in the Marine Corps and Army. Most cases were diagnosed at installations that support basic combat/recruit training centers or major Army and Marine Corps combat units. Medical care providers should consider exertional rhabdomyolysis in the differential diagnosis when service members – particularly recruits – present with muscular pain, swelling, limited range of motion, or the excretion of dark urine possibly due to myoglobinuria after strenuous physical activity, particularly in hot, humid weather. [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

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GLOBAL

Bartonella infection associated with rheumatoid illnesses in humans

23 April - [Researchers] tested blood samples from 296 patients for evidence of Bartonella infection. The patients had previously been diagnosed with conditions ranging from Lyme disease to arthritis to chronic fatigue. Since rheumatic symptoms have sometimes been reported following cat scratch disease, the researchers wanted to see if these patients tested positive for *B. henselae*. Of the 296 patients, 62 percent had Bartonella antibodies, which supported prior exposure to these bacteria. [Infection Control Today](#)

Global health officials foresee threats to malaria progress

25 April - To mark World Malaria Day, global health groups today warned that funding cuts could erode progress in fighting the disease, a point that was underscored by a new study that highlighted wavering support and a dramatic increase in disease activity in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other agencies announced new strategies to fight the disease. [CIDRAP](#)

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

Look under Hot Topics & Current Issues.

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Measles deaths said to drop

25 April - The number of measles deaths worldwide has apparently dropped by about three-quarters over a decade, according to a new study by the World Health Organization and others. Most of the deaths were in India and Africa, where not enough children are being immunized. Health officials estimate that about 9.6 million children were saved from dying of measles from 2000 to 2010 after big vaccination campaigns were rolled out more than a decade ago. Researchers guessed that the number of deaths fell during that time period to about 139,300 from 535,300, or about 74 percent. But scientists had solid data for only 65 countries. For the 128 others surveyed, they used modeling to come up with their estimates. Despite the major dent, the progress fails to meet a W.H.O. target to cut measles deaths by 90 percent by 2010. "This is still a huge success," said Peter Strebel, a measles expert at W.H.O. and one of the authors of the study. "You don't reduce measles deaths by three-quarters without significantly accelerating efforts." He noted that the global 85 percent vaccination coverage rate was the highest recorded. The study was paid for by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and was published Tuesday in the journal *The Lancet*. [New York Times](#)

New 'snail fever' treatment suggested for kids under 5

25 April - The World Health Organization has published new recommendations for treatment of very young children with schistosomiasis after studies throughout Africa showed a drug given to older patients also works well in infants. Schistosomiasis, also known as snail fever, claims 200,000 lives per year and mostly occurs in sub-Saharan Africa, but the disease is also found in Asia, the Middle East, and South America... In areas where schistosomiasis is endemic, school-age children routinely get an annual dose of a drug to protect them against infection. But until now, the assumption was that younger children weren't exposed to the parasite and didn't need the medicine. [Voice of America](#)

New studies on HIV treatment as prevention



25 April - Recent studies have shown that antiretroviral drugs can be used not only to treat HIV, but also to prevent infection in the first place. It's called pre-exposure prophylaxis or PrEP for short. Now, the western U.S. state of California is launching new studies to determine PrEP's effectiveness beyond clinical trials and out in the real world. Treatment as prevention has been shown to be highly successful in clinical trials. But will it work for people in high risk groups as they go about their daily lives? Will they adhere to the drug regimen even if it's taking only one pill a day? These are some of the questions the California HIV/AIDS Research Program hopes to answer with three new studies. Mitchell Warren, head of the AIDS advocacy group AVAC, said these are "demonstration studies." [Voice of America](#)

Week focuses on boosting vaccination

24 April - More than 180 countries are taking part in World Immunisation Week this week, it was announced yesterday. The World Health Organisation says different regions are

focusing on different aspects of vaccination. In Europe campaigners are seeking to reach vulnerable groups while in Africa the week is centred on the eradication of polio. WHO says this is the first year the week has become truly global. In three regions, the Americas, Europe and the Western Pacific, more than 90 per cent of children undergo some kind of immunisations. It says there are ten countries that represent 70 per cent of the 19 million infants who did not have a full course of the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine. These include Pakistan, South Africa, India, Indonesia and Iraq. [Englemed](#)

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INFLUENZA

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center: DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary

For the week ending 25 April 2012,

- The first influenza cases of the season among shipboard population were identified last week.
- The overall influenza activity remains low to moderate in overseas DoD laboratory surveillance networks and the activity level continues to decrease within the MHS from previous weeks. [AFHSC DoD Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)

CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report

During week 15 (April 8-14, 2012), influenza activity was elevated in some areas of the United States, but declined nationally and in most regions. [FluView](#)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview

During week 15 (9-15 April 2012),

- Decreasing trends were reported by 14 countries, thirteen of which have been doing so for at least two consecutive weeks.
- Of 302 sentinel specimens tested, 29.1% were positive for influenza virus. This proportion has decreased for seven consecutive weeks from a peak of nearly 60% in week eight.
- Of 88 positive sentinel specimens, 30 (34.1%) were type B. This proportion has been steadily rising.
- Since week 40/2011, 1 710 SARI cases, including 101 fatalities, have been reported by seven countries. Of these cases, most were influenza-related. [Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview](#)

Flu vaccination reminder via text messaging improves rate of vaccination

24 April - A text messaging intervention with education-related messages sent to parents increased influenza vaccination coverage compared with usual care in a traditionally hard-to-reach, low-income, urban, minority population of children and adolescents, although coverage overall remained low, according to a study in the April 25 issue of JAMA...

"Traditional vaccine reminders have had a limited effect on low-income populations; however, text messaging is a novel, scalable approach to promote influenza vaccination."

[Infection Control Today](#)

Google.org: Flu Trends

26 April - Estimates of flu activity based on flu-related Internet search queries indicate that the level of flu activity in ranges from minimal to low worldwide. [Google.org Flu Trends](#)

Naval Health Research Center: Febrile Respiratory Illness Surveillance Update

For the week ending 21 April 2012:

Influenza: Five cases of A/pH1N1 from CGTC Cape May were laboratory confirmed. These cases occurred in mid-March and had been vaccinated 1-6 days prior.

Adenovirus: Type 14 adenovirus is present at MCRD Parris Island.

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

U.S. beef sales curbed in South Korea after 'mad cow disease' case

25 April - At least one major South Korean retailer has suspended the sale of U.S. beef after authorities confirmed a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, sometimes referred to as "mad cow disease," in a dairy cow in central California. Public health officials in the United States said the risk to the public was extremely low, and that residents do not need to take any specific precautions. But in South Korea, one of the largest importers of U.S. beef, the discovery was enough to prompt retailer LotteMart to remove American beef from store shelves. "Currently, the sale of U.S. beef is temporarily suspended to ease our customers from anxiety," LotteMart said. For its part, South Korean government said it will step up checks on U.S. beef imports -- but not halt it for now. [CNN News](#)

U.S., California: Mad cow disease found; no human threat seen



25 April - U.S. authorities reported the country's first case of mad cow disease in six years on Tuesday, swiftly assuring consumers and global importers that there was no danger of meat from the California dairy cow entering the food chain. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack gave assurances that the finding posed "no risk to the food supply or to human health", a line that seems to have been accepted by major foreign buyers. Fears of a potential backlash among consumers and big importers of U.S. beef fueled a sell-off in Chicago live cattle [futures](#) on Tuesday, with memories still sharp of the first case in 2003 that caused a \$3 billion drop in exports. It took until 2011 before those exports fully recovered. [Reuters](#)

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WELLNESS

Allergic disease reaching 'epidemic proportions'

20 April - The increase in allergic diseases and asthma is in danger of reaching epidemic proportions, experts have claimed. The World Allergy Organisation warned this week that up to 400 million people could suffer from asthma by 2025 if current trends continue. At the moment, an estimated 300 million people across the globe suffer from the condition. Allergic rhinitis, which is a risk factor for asthma and is often known as hay-fever, affects 400 million people annually, while food allergies affect about 200 to 250 million. An estimated 250,000 avoidable deaths from asthma occur each year. However, WAO, which presented new data this week, said children and young adults were bearing the brunt of the illnesses. Professor Marek Kowalski, chair of the World Allergy Week Steering Committee, called for an integrated approach to diagnosis and treatment of allergies because the increase in multiple allergies in individual patients was "making the global burden even more complex". [Englemed](#)

Healthy foods that protect against heart disease and stroke

20 April - Increasing fibre intake and eating low-fat dairy foods could help to protect against heart disease and stroke, two new reports from Sweden have shown. The first study, published in the Public Library of Science journal *One*, analysed the eating habits of more than 20,000 people in Malmö and focused on 13 different nutrients such as fibre, fats, proteins and carbohydrates. Peter Wallström, a researcher at Lund University and the primary author, found that women who ate a high fibre diet reduced their risk of heart disease by 25 per cent, while in men it helped to reduce the risk of stroke. Although the

reason for the difference between the sexes is unclear, it is possible that women eat fibre from healthier food sources, such as fruit and vegetables, than men, who tended to get most of their fibre from bread. "The difference in the results for men and women shows that we need to pay more attention to gender when we conduct research on diet," said Wallström. [Englemed](#)

Progesterone might relieve menopause symptoms

25 April - A hormone called progesterone helps reduce how frequently and how severely women experience hot flashes and night sweats after menopause somewhat, according to a new study. Progesterone capsules might offer an alternative therapy to women who don't want to be on an estrogen-based treatment, said the lead author of the study, Christine Hitchcock. "There are certainly some people for whom estrogen is not an appropriate therapy and other people who wish to avoid it for other reasons. [Reuters](#)

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USAFRICOM

Africa: Beating measles - one more push?

24 April - Vaccines against measles have been around for decades and are highly effective, yet the campaign against the disease in recent years has had a bumpy ride. The first target of the 21st century - to halve the number of deaths from measles between 1999 and 2005 - was successfully met. So the World Health Organization (WHO) set an even more ambitious goal - to reduce deaths by 90 percent from 2000 levels by 2010. Now some elaborate number crunching by experts from WHO, the US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Pennsylvania State University has produced disappointing news. Their study, published today in the London-based medical journal, *The Lancet*, concludes that although gains were rapid between 2000 and 2007, progress slowed towards the end of the decade, and the final reduction in mortality by 2010 was only 74 percent - good, but not nearly as good as had been hoped. [AllAfrica](#)

Africa: Malaria - a mass killer under fire

25 April - Malaria is in the bull's eye of a global campaign. The target is zero malaria deaths by 2015. The challenge is how to get there -- and stay there. Nearly 2,000 children die every day from malaria, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). For much of the past decade, malaria has killed as many as a million people annually. More than 90 percent of those deaths are in Africa. Non-fatal cases take a further toll, compromising immunity to other diseases and lowering productivity, as well as family incomes and national GDPs. Yet malaria is both preventable and treatable. In sub-Saharan Africa, 11 countries have managed to cut their malaria cases by half since 2000, according to the WHO. [All Africa](#)

Angola: Tuberculosis on the rise, Vice President

25 April - The Angolan vice president, Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos, said Wednesday in Luanda that tuberculosis is recording a rising trend in the country, where 300 of every 100,000 people suffer from the disease, 42 cent of which infected with Hiv/Aids. Fernando da Piedade was speaking at the opening of the extraordinary session of health ministers and Hiv/Aids programmes officials from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) on tuberculosis in the mining industry. According to the official, in order to deal with the situation, the Angolan Government will increase the number of laboratories in the country to detect infections and control the disease, under HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis fight programmes, the official [AllAfrica](#)

Nigeria: Lassa fever, CDC travel notice

25 April - The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health has reported an increased number of cases of Lassa fever. Nineteen of the country's 36 states have reported cases since the beginning of 2012. As of April 13, 2012, there were reports of 818 suspected cases, including 84 deaths. At this time, 131 cases have been confirmed by laboratory testing. Seven deaths have also been reported among health care workers. Cases have occurred in the states of Edo, Bauchi, Plateau and Taraba. The number of reported cases of Lassa fever in Nigeria is greater this year than in previous years. However, cases in previous years could have been underestimated due to the lack of laboratory and disease investigation systems. [CDC](#)

Nigeria: Two new polio cases round in Sokoto

25 April - Sokoto State has recorded two new cases of the wild polio virus Type 1 and the cases were recorded at Helele and Waziri B areas of Sokoto North local government area where two girls were confirmed to have the virus, a government official has said. Speaking on the situation, Special Adviser to Skoto governor on Primary Healthcare Development Agency, Comrade Ibrahim Jibril, said the development was retrogressive to the efforts of the agency, state government and development partners in their quest to eradicate the disease. He said at present Sokoto North has the highest number of wild polio virus throughout the country. [All Africa](#)

South Sudan: Deadly Kala Azar disease

19 April - In newly independent South Sudan, deadly Kala Azar disease is still raging in some of the most remote areas lacking basic health services. Standing next to the single tent she now calls home in the scorching sunshine, Alaskan-born Dr. Jill Seaman explained how after coming to South Sudan in 1989 and visiting villages where only five out of 1,000 people had survived a Kala Azar outbreak, she could not tear herself away from this swampland... That Kala Azar outbreak killed around half the population in the area, and around half the 11,000 cases reported last year were treated at the clinic in Old Fangak... If left untreated, Dr. Seaman said around 95 percent of Kala Azar patients simply waste away

or die after catching other infectious diseases. Three percent of patients died in Old Fangak last year, but the clinic has already treated 1,800 people with Kala Azar this year. [Voice of America](#)

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USCENTCOM

Dubai: DHA likely to fine clinics for not reporting infectious diseases

23 April - Private healthcare establishments could be fined for failing to notify health authorities on infectious diseases, according to a senior health official from the Dubai Health Authority (DHA). Last week, a Khaleej Times investigative report had revealed that some private clinics and labs were concealing results of infectious diseases from the authorities. By law, diseases such as HIV/Aids, Hepatitis B, TB and Syphilis should be reported to the authorities and expatriates found to be infected with any of these diseases except Syphilis, will be deported. "We are considering imposing a fine for not notifying us," said Dr Fatma Al Attar, Head of Preventive Medicine Services, Primary Health Care at the DHA. "However, most private facilities are cooperative and notify us on the required 46 infectious diseases," she said. The notifications remain just numbers to the authorities unless an infectious disease is reported. In 2011, a total of 114 expatriates were deported after being notified by the private sector. Of these, 85 were HIV positive cases, 9 Aids cases, 10 of pulmonary TB, seven of leprosy and 3 cases of Hepatitis B. Total infectious diseases notified in 2011 were 10,213 of which 8,252 were reported by the private sector and 1,962 by DHA centres. [Zawya](#)

Tajikistan: Heroin stabilises a poor country

21 April - Tajikistan is the poorest republic of the former Soviet Union, yet its capital, Dushanbe, is awash with cash, construction and flash cars. It is easy to guess where the money comes from. Tajikistan has little industry but, with a porous 1,300-km (800-mile) border with northern Afghanistan, it is at the heart of a multi-billion-dollar network smuggling heroin. Bizarrely though, unlike other transit countries such as Mexico, Tajikistan sees little drug-related violence. The heroin, instead, seems to help stabilise the place... Researchers believe the industry is equivalent to 30-50% of Tajikistan's GDP. But officials from NATO, which is trying to extract itself from the region, say they have no intention of upsetting the status quo. [Economist](#)

Uzbekistan denies forced sterilizations, mutilating women

23 April - Everything is fine, no need to look here, we don't secretly cut out our women's wombs. That's the message from Uzbekistan's state-run Uzdaily.uz, which has decried as the

work of the "yellow press" a recent BBC report on how Uzbek doctors are secretly sterilizing tens of thousands of women. Only women who wish to be sterilized are having the procedure, says Uzdaily. The BBC, however, reported that doctors are convincing women to give birth by Caesarean section in order to gain access to their internal reproductive organs: "Rules on Caesareans used to be very strict, but now I believe 80 percent of women give birth through C-sections. This makes it very easy to perform a sterilization and tie the fallopian tubes," a senior surgeon at a Tashkent hospital told the BBC. Uzdaily reiterated the government claim, which doctors ridicule, that only 6.8 percent of Uzbek women have C-sections. [EurasiaNet](#)

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USEUCOM

England: Measuring childhood vaccine coverage – the role of child health information systems

19 April - Child Health Information Systems (CHISs) are computerised clinical record systems which support a range of health promotion and prevention activities for children, including immunisation and screening. There are a number of different providers of CHISs in England. These systems are managed by child health departments in each local area and not all are interoperable. The establishment of systems which record and maintain accurate information on the entire population is critical to assess vaccination coverage at both national and local levels. These systems should have the flexibility to adapt to a continuously evolving immunisation programme, a mechanism to rapidly feedback to local public health teams for outbreak prevention and control, and the ability to mount a timely response to vaccine safety scares. [Eurosurveillance](#)

United Kingdom: Most NHS costs wasteful, says Diabetic Medicine



24 April - The majority of NHS spending on diabetes is avoidable, says a report in the journal Diabetic Medicine. It suggests that 80% of the NHS's £9.8bn annual UK diabetes bill goes on the cost of treating complications. Experts say much of this is preventable with health checks and better education - something the Department of Health says it is tackling. The report also predicts that by 2035, diabetes will cost the NHS £16.8bn, 17% of its entire budget. [BBC News](#)

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Mexico: Popocatepetl volcano rumbles

25 April - The white-capped Popocatepetl volcano that looms over Mexico City emitted a terrifying low-pitched roar Friday and spewed roiling towers of ash and steam as it vented the pressure built up by a massive chamber of magma beneath its slopes. Authorities prepared evacuation routes, ambulances and shelters in the event of a bigger explosion. Even a large eruption of the 17,886-foot (5,450-meter) cone of Popocatepetl is unlikely to do more than dump ash on one of the world's largest metropolitan areas. But the grit could play havoc with Mexico City's busy airport, and tens of thousands of people in the farming villages on its flanks could be forced to flee. [Denver Post](#)

U.S. cholesterol rate falls, study shows



24 April - Only 13.4 percent of U.S. adults have high cholesterol, a federal agency said on Tuesday, possibly reflecting better diet, more exercise and the increased use of prescription drugs to lower the risk of heart attacks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey in 2009 and 2010 revealed a 27 percent decline over 10 years in the percentage of adults with high cholesterol, a major risk factor for heart disease that is the leading cause of death in the United States. A similar survey conducted in 1999 and 2000 showed that 18.3 percent of adults had high total cholesterol. [Reuters](#)

U.S., Florida: Whooping cough outbreak reported in Hillsborough

23 April - Local health officials think adults are unknowingly responsible for the latest outbreak of a severe childhood respiratory disease. A total of 35 cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, have been reported since Jan. 1 in Hillsborough County. The 112 cases reported statewide so far indicate a possible spike not seen in several years, according to the Florida Department of Health. The Hillsborough cases cropped up in the homes of seven local families, said Warren McDougle, epidemiology program director at the Hillsborough County Health Department. In one case, an adult infected six children in the family who did not have vaccinations, he said... This year-round illness is spreading beyond Florida. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also reports recent outbreaks in Montana, North Carolina, Texas and Washington State. Cases could exceed the 27,550 reported in 2010, officials said. [Tampa Tribune](#)

U.S.: Short sleep duration among workers, 2010

27 April - ...To assess the prevalence of short sleep duration among workers, CDC analyzed data from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The analysis compared sleep duration by age group, race/ethnicity, sex, marital status, education, and employment

characteristics. Overall, 30.0% of civilian employed U.S. adults (approximately 40.6 million workers) reported an average sleep duration of ≤ 6 hours per day. The prevalence of short sleep duration (≤ 6 hours per day) varied by industry of employment (range: 24.1%–41.6%), with a significantly higher rate of short sleep duration among workers in manufacturing (34.1%) compared with all workers combined. [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

U.S.: Teens getting drunk off hand sanitizer

24 April - Doctors are warning parents about a dangerous new trend after six teenagers drank hand sanitizer and ended up in Southern California emergency rooms with alcohol poisoning. Dr. Billy Mallon works in the emergency room at Los Angeles County USC Medical Center. He said he's seen too many young people come through the hospital's doors because they tried to get drunk by guzzling hand sanitizer. It doesn't sound appealing, but you have to remember that kids don't have access to alcohol so they're very creative," Mallon told KTLA. The trend may seem harmless or even laughable, but doctors say it's harmful and dangerous. Bottles of hand sanitizers are inexpensive and accessible and teens can find instructions on distillation online. Liquid hand sanitizer is 62% ethyl alcohol and makes a 120-proof liquid. "It's essentially a shot of hard liquor," said Cyrus Rangan, director of the toxicology bureau for the L.A. County Public Health Department and a medical toxicology consultant for Children's Hospital Los Angeles. [KTLA.com](#)

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USPACOM

Asia: NIH scientists link quickly spreading gene to Asian MRSA epidemic

22 April - National Institutes of Health (NIH) scientists and their colleagues in China have described a rapidly emerging *Staphylococcus aureus* gene, called sasX, which plays a pivotal role in establishing methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA) epidemics in most of Asia. Senior author Michael Otto, PhD, of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, says these findings illustrate at the molecular level how MRSA epidemics may emerge and spread. Moreover, their study identifies a potential target for novel therapeutics... Previous data indicated that the sasX gene is extremely rare. Therefore, the researchers were surprised when they analyzed 807 patient samples of invasive *S. aureus* taken over the past decade from three Chinese hospitals. Their data showed that sasX is more prevalent in MRSA strains from China than previously thought, and the gene's frequency is increasing significantly: From 2003 to 2011, the percentage of MRSA samples containing sasX almost doubled, from 21 to 39 percent. [Infection Control Today](#)

Australia: Mystery illness recalls 1980 toxic spill

19 April - Five road workers have recovered after exposure to a mystery toxic chemical they unearthed while building a new section of the Pacific Highway near Port Macquarie. The

workers were struck by nausea, vomiting and sore throats after excavations uncovered a patch of greyish clay that became streaked with orange after it was exposed to the air. The site, between Herons Creek and Stills Road near the town of Laurieton, is notorious as the location of one of Australia's most controversial spills of toxic chemicals and radioactive material. In 1980 a truck rolled over while carrying several tonnes of the insecticide DDT, two drums of radioactive material and some other chemicals. Some of the DDT was apparently buried on site. It sparked a chain of events that saw allegations of a "massive cover-up" by a local doctor who claimed 13 people involved in the clean-up fell ill, and a parliamentary investigation. [Sydney Morning Herald](#)

Australia: Why antibiotics can be health risk

20 April – Nearly 100 years after antibiotics were discovered, a study has found most Australians are confused about when they should take them and how they work... A study by the National Prescribing Service found four out of five Australians expect to be given antibiotics for ear, nose, throat or chest infections... The study of more than 1000 people found half of them didn't know stopping taking antibiotics before the course was finished contributed to antibiotic resistance. Only about 40 per cent knew antibiotics do not work on viruses, and even fewer knew that if antibiotics were taken for viruses they could help create drug-resistant bugs. [Sydney Morning Herald](#)

Thailand, Myanmar: Malaria, artemisinin resistance

23 April - Scientists are predicting that artemisinin-resistant malaria found on the border of Thailand and Myanmar could now spread to India and then Africa as resistance to other antimalarial drugs has done before. Artemisinin was recently adopted as the 1st-line treatment for malaria. According to a new study, if the artemisinin-resistant malaria does spread, eliminating the disease could prove impossible and will threaten initiatives to reduce its global burden. The study, funded by researchers from Shoklo Malaria Research Unit and Texas Biomedical Research Institute, followed reports in 2009 of the emergence of artemisinin-resistant malaria parasites in western Cambodia, 800 km away from the Thailand-Myanmar border, where the new cases of resistance have been found. [ProMED-mail](#)

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Chile: Echinococcosis

25 April - "Hydatidosis [also known as echinococcosis or hydatid disease] is an endemic and extremely relevant disease in the [Aysen] region, where the average is more than 15 times the national average," said Health SEREMI [regional governmental ministerial unit], Dr Pablo Mardones, in a statement during the opening of a workshop on Wednesday morning [18 Apr 2012] in Coyhaique. This pathology has grave consequences in the Aysen region, where

the high rates reported result in surgery with high economic and social costs for those who suffer it. "We have a rate of about 35 cases per 100 000 inhabitants, 35 new cases each year, and usually the disease is detected when the cysts, which are usually located in the liver and in the lungs but can be even in the brain, are large and require surgery," said Mardones.

[ProMED-mail](#)

Dominican Republic officials say 6 villagers dead of cholera

23 April - Health officials in the Dominican Republic say six people have died after contracting cholera in a northern village hit by a new outbreak of the disease. Authorities in the Caribbean nation announced last week that they were investigating a new cholera outbreak in the area after rains damaged sewer pipes. Hundreds of people sought medical attention. Health officials announced the deaths Monday and said only 17 villagers remained hospitalized. [Official Wire](#)

Haiti: Cholera, CDC outbreak notice

25 April - An outbreak of cholera has been ongoing in Haiti since October 2010. Cases of cholera in Haiti have decreased recently. Cases have been officially reported in all 10 departments of Haiti. In Port-au-Prince, the country's capital, over 140,000 cases have been reported since the beginning of the outbreak. Cases in the Port-au-Prince have been reported from the following neighborhoods: Carrefour, Cite Soleil, Delmas, Kenscoff, Petion Ville, and Tabarre. [CDC](#)

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The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* is published by the Health Information Operations Program, Deputy Chief of Staff for Communication, United States Army Public Health Command.

