

Public Health Messages

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

September 25, 2017



Public Health Messages are a way for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) to provide information and recommended guidance to medical providers and hospitals on current issues relating to medical care and public health. They are sent out through the Missouri Health Notification System (MOHNS), and go to the same individuals and facilities that receive DHSS Health Alerts and Health Advisories. **Public Health Messages** do not replace Health Alerts and Health Advisories, but rather provide an additional way for DHSS to communicate, in the form of brief messages, with providers and hospitals.

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2017-18 ACIP Recommendations for Seasonal Influenza Vaccines

The 2017-18 recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the use of seasonal influenza vaccines were published in a recent *MMWR Recommendations and Reports*, and are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/rr/pdfs/rr6602.pdf>. A summary of these recommendations is found at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/2017-18summary.htm>.

Tick-borne Diseases

Each year, Missouri experiences a substantial disease burden due to a variety of tick-borne illnesses including tularemia, ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF), and other spotted fevers. Based on data from the last five years, it is not unusual for cases of tick-borne disease to occur into November and December.

During the first week of illness, when most patients seek medical care, antibodies are unlikely to be elevated. If tick-borne disease is suspected based on clinical presentation, treatment should not be delayed for test results. The standard for diagnosis of rickettsial infections such as ehrlichiosis or RMSF is to perform an immunoglobulin G (IgG) indirect immunofluorescence antibody assay (IFA) on paired acute and convalescent phase specimens taken 2 to 4 weeks apart. Although it may be late in the season, testing of convalescent specimens can be valuable for confirming diagnoses, particularly in patients that present in the early stages of illness.

In recent years, Missouri and other surrounding states have seen the emergence of two new tick-borne viruses, Heartland virus and Bourbon virus. At this time, no commercial laboratories are developing tests for these viruses. Testing is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Providers interested in testing patients for these viruses are required to get approval prior to specimen submission (see below). The required criteria for testing include an illness onset date within four weeks of test request, fever, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, and lack of any other medical conditions that could explain symptoms. Prior to testing for either Heartland or Bourbon virus, both ehrlichiosis and RMSF should be ruled out.

For more information about tick-borne diseases in Missouri, or to request Heartland and Bourbon virus testing, please contact the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' (DHSS) Office of Veterinary Public Health at 573-526-4780.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

Lead Poisoning Prevention Week will take place October 22-28. It is recommended that clinicians assess the need for blood lead testing for all pregnant women and for all children up to age 72 months, as well as for those who may have occupational or other exposure sources to lead. Missouri children are most often exposed to lead from degrading lead paint, from remodeling an older home with lead paint, or from lead-contaminated soil due to old paint or lead mining wastes. There is also significant potential lead exposure from a variety of occupations and hobbies, as well as from some consumer products, foods, and spices, particularly those produced in other countries. Lead ingestion causes many irreversible neurological, behavioral, and physical problems, especially to developing fetuses and children under the age of 72 months, but can be toxic at any age.

DHSS' Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, together with several local public health agencies, offer environmental lead risk assessments throughout Missouri when children under the age of 72 months have an elevated blood lead level. Having a child's home environment assessed for lead enables a parent or guardian to be aware of the source of lead and extent of lead exposure. The lead risk assessors not only identify the source and extent of exposure, but also make recommendations regarding how to safely reduce or eliminate the exposure sources. The specific blood lead level that triggers an environmental risk assessment varies by jurisdiction. Questions can be directed to DHSS' Bureau of Environmental Epidemiology at 573-751-6102. More information on lead poisoning is available at <http://health.mo.gov/living/environment/lead/?/lead>.

Additionally, if you would like to know more about the occurrence of elevated blood lead levels in your area, or about a variety of other health-related information in Missouri, the Missouri Public Health Information Management System (MOPHIMS) provides access to public health-related data to assist in defining the health status and needs of Missourians. The MOPHIMS website may be found at <https://webapp01.dhss.mo.gov/MOPHIMS/MOPHIMSHome>.

September is Sepsis Awareness Month

September is Sepsis Awareness Month. CDC has launched an educational initiative called *Get Ahead of Sepsis* to help protect Americans from the devastating effects of this condition. Each year in the U.S., more than 1.5 million people develop sepsis, and at least 250,000 die as a result. Healthcare professionals are encouraged to educate patients, prevent infections, suspect and identify sepsis early, and rapidly start sepsis treatment. In addition, patients and their families are urged to prevent infections, be alert to the symptoms of sepsis, and seek immediate medical care if sepsis is suspected or for an infection that is not improving or is getting worse.

"Healthcare professionals, patients, and their family members can work as a team to prevent infections and be alert to the signs of sepsis." said Lauren Epstein, M.D., medical officer in CDC's Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion. "*Get Ahead of Sepsis* encourages healthcare professionals and patients to talk about steps, such as taking good care of chronic conditions, which help prevent infections that could lead to sepsis."

For more information about *Get Ahead of Sepsis*, and to access materials, visit www.cdc.gov/sepsis.

September is National Preparedness Month

September is also National Preparedness Month. This year's theme is *Disasters Don't Plan Ahead. You Can*. All health care professionals (along with everyone else) are strongly encouraged to be prepared for unexpected emergencies before they occur by having a family plan and an emergency kit, and by knowing how to get information and instructions in an emergency.

More information is available on making an emergency plan at <https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>, and on building an emergency kit at <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>. In addition, Missouri's Ready in 3 Program has developed a *Family Safety Guide* which provides practical guidance for preparing for emergencies. It is available at <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/pdf/familyguideenglish.pdf>. Multiple printed copies of this booklet (as well as other emergency preparedness resources) for patient waiting rooms can be ordered at <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php>, or by calling 573/ 526-9120. These materials are free, and are available in English, Spanish, Bosnian, and Braille.

Selected Recent DHSS and CDC Health Alerts, Advisories, Updates, and Guidances

- Rifampin/Penicillin-Resistant Strain of RB51 *Brucella* Contracted from Consumption of Raw Milk (9-13-17, CDC Health Advisory)
- Hurricane Harvey—Clinical Guidance for Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning (9-6-17, CDC Health Advisory)
- Nontuberculous *Mycobacteria* Cases Following Plastic Surgery in the Dominican Republic (8-22-17, DHSS Health Advisory)
- Increase in Reported cases of *Cyclospora cayetanensis* Infection, United States, Summer 2017 (8-7-17, CDC Health Advisory)
- Patients Receiving Eculizumab (Soliris®) at High Risk for Invasive Meningococcal Disease Despite Vaccination (7-7-17, CDC Health Advisory)
- Tick-borne Illnesses in Missouri (6-30-17, DHSS Health Guidance)
- Misidentification of *Veillonella* as *Francisella tularensis* by Automated Microbial Identification System (6-5-17, DHSS Health Advisory)
- Potential for Falsely Low Blood Lead Test Results from LeadCare® Analyzers (5-17-17, CDC Health Advisory)
- How To Handle Situations Involving Suspicious Powdery Substances (Updated) (5-16-17, DHSS Health Advisory)
- CDC Recommendations for Diagnosing and Managing Shigella Strains with Possible Reduced Susceptibility to Ciprofloxacin (4-18-17, CDC Health Advisory)

These, along with previous Health Alerts, Advisories, Updates, and Guidances, can be accessed by going to <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvories/index.php>.