



EPI WATCH

Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter



205 Dr. MLK Jr. St. N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 824-6900

Outbreak of Melioidosis Linked to Aromatherapy Room Spray

by Alissa Brown, MPH

Director
Ulyee Choe, DO

Editor
Andrea Leapley, MPH, CIC
Andrea.Leapley@FLHealth.gov

Division of Disease Control and Health Protection

Disease Reporting

To report diseases and clusters of illness:

Phone: (727) 824-6932
Fax: (727) 484-3865
(excluding HIV/AIDS)

To report HIV/AIDS by mail:

Surveillance Room 3-138
205 Dr. MLK Jr St. N

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Between March and July 2021, four cases of melioidosis were identified in Kansas, Minnesota, Texas, and Georgia. There was no report of the cases having a history of travel outside on the United States but genomic analysis indicated that all four cases were related and that the bacterial strain was commonly found in South Asia.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tested blood samples, consumer products, soil, and water from in and around the homes of all four cases. In October, *Burkholderia pseudomallei* was isolated from a bottle of Better Homes and Gardens Essential Oil Infused Aromatherapy Room Spray with Gemstones Lavender & Chamomile scent found in the home of the Georgia case. The genomic analysis indicated that the bacteria isolated matched those from the cases. This strain was also isolated from an unopened bottle of the same product recalled from a Walmart store in a different state. Testing of the other scents is ongoing.

The Lavender & Chamomile Aromatherapy Room Spray, along with the Lemon & Mandarin, Lavender, Peppermint, Lime & Eucalyptus, and Sandalwood & Vanilla scents, were sold at Walmart between February and October 21 in limited stores and online nationwide. Persons who have any of the Better Homes and Gardens Room Sprays with gemstones should take the following precautions:

- **Stop using the product immediately.** Do not open the bottle. Do not throw away the bottle in the regular trash.
- Double bag the bottle in clean, clear zip-top bags and place them in a cardboard box. Return the boxed product to a Walmart store.
- Wash sheets or linens that the product may have been sprayed on using normal laundry detergent and dry in a hot dryer.
- Wipe down surfaces that might have spray on them with undiluted PineSol or a similar disinfectant.
- If you used the product in the last 21 days and develop a fever or symptoms of melioidosis, seek medical care and inform your doctor of your exposure to the spray. If you do not have symptoms but were exposed to the product in the last 7 days, your doctor may recommend you take antibiotics to prevent infection.

Walmart is offering product refunds and \$20 gift cards for customers who return the spray to the store. It is important not to discard the spray in the trash or down the drain as the bacteria may become established in the environment and could cause future infections.

For more information on the multistate outbreak, please visit [Source Identified and Case Definition Established: Multistate Investigation of Non-travel Associated *Burkholderia pseudomallei* Infections \(Melioidosis\) in Four Patients: Georgia, Kansa, Minnesota, and Texas - 2021](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

by Morgan Wilson, MPH, CPH

It has been almost a year since we began vaccinating against COVID-19. The three approved COVID-19 vaccines have undergone and continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. Over 193 million people in the United States are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. In Florida, almost 13 million people are fully vaccinated. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is the first to receive full U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for those twelve years and older. On October 29, 2021, the FDA authorized the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 to include children ages five to eleven years old. The vaccine is a two-dose series, administered three weeks apart. The vaccine is a lower dose than the dosage used for those twelve years and older. During the clinical trial, the immune response of children ages five to eleven years old compared to those of individuals sixteen to twenty-five years old. The vaccine was 90.7% effective in preventing COVID-19, providing much hope to worried parents, as their children are in school and other group settings. This age group accounts for 1.9 million cases of COVID-19 infections and was heavily impacted during the most recent wave of COVID-19 cases.

Additional third doses and boosters are available for those in need. A third dose is recommended for moderately to severely immunocompromised people who have received the two-dose series of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. The third dose may be given four weeks after the second dose. Booster doses are available for those over 65 years old, anyone over 18 years old that live in a long-term care setting, have underlying medical conditions or work/live in a high-risk setting. Those who qualify may receive a booster of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna at least six months after their second dose. Those who are over 18 years old that received the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine may receive a booster 2 months after their initial dose. Vaccination opportunities are now widespread in the community and easily accessible. However, only roughly 60% of Pinellas County residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Although that percentage compares well with other counties both in and out of Florida, it is still not enough to confer sufficient population immunity to prevent the ongoing spread of COVID-19 and its emerging variants. As we enter the holiday season, it is important to consider the many COVID-19 vaccination options that are available in our community.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/keythingstoknow.html?s_cid=10496:cdc%20covid%20vaccine.sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN:FY21. Accessed on November 10, 2021.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States. https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-total-admin-rate-total. Accessed on November 10, 2021.

Psittacosis in Birds and Humans

by Andrea Leapley, MPH, CIC

Chlymdia psittaci are bacteria that cause an infection in humans and in birds called psittacosis. It's also sometimes referred to as "parrot fever," but that's incorrect as it can infect as many species of birds. Cockatiels, budgies, and parrots are the most commonly affected companion birds but any pet bird may be infected. While only about 10 cases per year are reported in humans in the United States, its believed to be underdiagnosed and underreported.

Infected birds can shed the bacteria in droppings, saliva, mucus, feather dust, and eye or nasal discharge. Healthy birds then become infected by inhaling contaminated dust particles from dried droppings or feathers. Birds can also ingest the bacteria from contaminated food, water, perches, or toys. Symptoms of infection can include nose or eye discharge, swollen, watery, crusty eyes, yellow or green droppings, depression, reduced vocalization or appetite, weight loss, weakness, ruffled feathers, trouble breathing, fever, diarrhea, excessive urination, and rarely trembling, seizures, or head twisting. However, not all infected birds may have symptoms but can still shed the bacteria during times of stress. The infection can be treated with antibiotics.



The bacteria can be transmitted from birds to humans when humans inhale contaminated dust that contains dried droppings, through respiratory secretions, or less commonly, through bites or beak-to-mouth contact. The incubation period is usually 5-14 days, though symptoms may develop after more than 14 days. Illness in humans can range from asymptomatic infection to severe. When present, symptoms can include abrupt onset of fever and chills, headache, myalgia, nonproductive cough, and pneumonia. The infection can be treated with antibiotics.

To prevent infection, birds should be kept in clean, uncrowded, and non-stressful conditions. All new birds should be examined by a veterinarian and quarantined for at least 30 days. Birds with psittacosis should be isolated and treated and anything the bird was in contact with should be cleaned and disinfected. When handling sick birds, everyone should wear a mask, gown, an eye cover, and gloves and should wash hands after every interaction.

In Florida, psittacosis in humans should be reported to the local county health department by the next business day following diagnosis. For more on psittacosis in humans, please visit [CDC Psittacosis](#)

Cases of psittacosis in birds should be reported to the [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services](#). For more on psittacosis in birds, please visit [Veterinary Partner](#)

Select Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	Pinellas		YTD Total		Pinellas Annual Totals		
	October 2021	October 2020	Pinellas 2021	Florida 2021	2020	2019	2018
A. Vaccine Preventable							
Measles	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
Mumps	0	0	2	35	1	7	10
Pertussis	0	0	1	41	8	27	32
Varicella	1	1	23	296	18	33	67
B. CNS Diseases & Bacteremias							
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	0	1	18	0	3	1
Meningitis (Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic)	1	0	4	67	6	7	9
Meningococcal Disease	0	0	1	23	3	1	1
C. Enteric Infections							
Campylobacteriosis	13	26	183	3221	252	310	264
Cryptosporidiosis	2	6	25	268	44	64	34
Cyclosporiasis	0	0	9	251	9	28	4
<i>E. coli Shiga Toxin (+)</i>	2	1	16	527	10	24	15
Giardiasis	4	4	22	548	28	52	41
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	0	0	0	3	0	1	0
Listeriosis	0	0	2	48	2	2	1
Salmonellosis	30	14	147	5126	176	201	233
Shigellosis	3	1	31	387	19	22	40
D. Viral Hepatitis							
Hepatitis A	1	0	2	159	4	377	113
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman	3	3	9	256	40	24	14
Hepatitis B, Acute	4	4	48	450	103	72	52
Hepatitis C, Acute	4	8	60	1172	18	82	40
E. Vector Borne/ Zoonoses							
Animal Rabies	0	0	0	69	1	2	1
Rabies, possible exposure	11	17	117	2981	128	128	130
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Dengue	0	0	0	18	0	3	0
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	0	0	10	241	11	22	14
Malaria	0	1	2	36	2	5	3
West Nile Virus	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
Zika Virus Disease	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
F. Others							
Chlamydia	313	378	3437	n/a	3982	4588	4422
Gonorrhea	132	167	1581	n/a	1640	1537	1439
Hansen's Disease	0	0	0	11	0	0	0
Legionellosis	2	3	31	755	35	43	37
Mercury Poisoning	0	0	2	14	1	1	1
Syphilis, Total	44	61	501	n/a	469	479	438
Syphilis, Primary and Secondary	26	33	226	n/a	224	213	190
Syphilis, Early Latent	11	17	183	n/a	161	191	158
Syphilis, Congenital	1	0	4	n/a	5	6	2
Syphilis, Late Syphilis	6	11	88	n/a	89	69	88
Tuberculosis	2	0	18	n/a	24	23	33
<i>Vibrio Infections</i>	2	0	12	220	12	18	6

*YTD up to October 31, 2021. n/a = not available at this time

Reportable diseases include confirmed and probable cases only. All case counts are current and provisional. Data is collected from the Merlin Reportable Disease database, surveillance systems maintained at the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County, and Florida CHARTS <http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/default.aspx>. STD data in STARS is continually updated. Please note, data from the previous month takes up to an additional month or more to be correctly updated.