

Infection Preventionist Lunch and Learn

February 2025

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES

Series Objectives

- Encourage learning, growth, and networking
- Provide non-regulatory education and information
- Discuss topics relevant to new infection preventionists (IPs)



Preparing for Outbreaks and Emerging Infectious Diseases

Beth Ellinger MS, MPH, CIC
Outbreaks and Emerging
Disease Infection Preventionist

Agenda

- Background
- Preparing for outbreaks
- Preparing for emerging infectious disease
- Key takeaways
- Questions

Background



What is an Outbreak?

- An outbreak is a sudden rise in the number of cases of a disease that is over the expected occurrence.
- There are different scenarios, including:
 - Many cases caused by the same infectious agent.
 - A single case of a very unusual disease.

Common Source

- All cases are exposed to an infectious agent from the same source.
- Exposure can be **continuous** or **intermittent**.
- Example: People who visited the same restaurant and ate alfalfa sprouts develop gastrointestinal (GI) illness caused by salmonella.

Propagated Source

- Transmission occurs from one person to another.
- **Example:** Residents of a nursing home develop GI illness caused by norovirus after exposure to other residents or staff with the same GI infection.

Infection Control Breaches

- Breaches occur when there is a failure to follow infection control procedures that prevent transmission of infectious agents.
- Examples include:
 - Reuse of syringes.
 - Equipment reprocessing errors.
 - Using a single dose vial as a multidose vial.

Infectious Diseases

Emerging

Diseases that appear in a population for the first time or may have existed previously but are rapidly increasing.

Re-emerging

Diseases that return after being on a major decline.

Special Pathogens

New or re-emerging infectious agents that:

- Are easily transmitted from person-to-person.
- Have limited or no medical treatments such as effective vaccine or prophylaxis.
- Have a high mortality.

Preparing for Outbreaks



Surveillance



- Recognize potentially infectious patients and residents early.
- Initiate containment strategies.
- Prevent transmission of disease and outbreaks.

Planning



- Conduct risk assessments and update infection prevention and control plan.
- Develop an outbreak management team.
- Encourage vaccination.
- Stockpile essential supplies.

Planning



- Establish communication channels.
- Audit infection prevention and control practices.
- Provide staff education and training.
- Stay up to date with public health information.

Preparing for Emerging Infectious Diseases



Prevent Introduction of Special Pathogens in Health Care Facilities

Identify



Isolate



Inform



Identify

- **Be prepared.** Identify health care facilities where patients or residents could be directed for an assessment for a special pathogen.
- **Perform screening.** Assess patients or residents for the possibility of a special pathogen by checking signs and symptoms, travel history, and other risk factors.

Isolate

- Isolate symptomatic or exposed patients or residents in a single room with a private bathroom or covered bedside commode.
- Follow the infection prevention and control measures for patients or residents with suspected special pathogens.
- **Do not release or transfer patient or resident unless instructed by public health.**

Inform

- Notify appropriate staff in your facility or health system.
- Inform the Division of Public Health Bureau of Communicable Diseases:
 - **During business hours (8 a.m. – 4 p.m.):** 608-267-9003
 - **After-hours/emergency on-call 24/7 service:** 800-943-0003 (Option 4)

Guide for Clinicians Evaluating an Ill Person for a Special Pathogen

Guide for Clinicians Evaluating an Ill Person for a Special Pathogen



HEALTH FACILITY

CONSULTATION

TESTING

Ill person presents to healthcare facility

Screening questions for a special pathogen

Within the incubation period of a special pathogen, has the patient...

- Been in contact with a person who had a suspected or confirmed infection with a special pathogen or any object contaminated by their body fluids?
- Been to an area with an active outbreak of a disease caused by a special pathogen, or where special pathogens are endemic?
- Has patient worked in a laboratory that handles special pathogens?

Patient answers YES to one or more screening questions

Patient answers NO to all screening questions

Is patient experiencing fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}/38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$) without use of antipyretics and any of the following symptoms?

- Severe headache
- Muscle and/or joint pain
- Weakness and fatigue
- Cough/difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Loss of appetite
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, including abdominal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting
- Chest pain
- Encephalitis
- Acute hearing loss
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising, including bleeding outside a normal menstrual cycle
- Red eyes, skin rash, and hiccups
- A concerning constellation of other signs and symptoms

The patient answers no to all screening questions. Continue with routine evaluation and care.

If concern remains, consult State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial Public Health Department for additional guidance.

YES

NO

Isolate and Inform¹

- Isolate patient at a healthcare facility in a single room with private bathroom/covered bedside commode.
- Adhere to infection prevention and control (IPC) procedures to prevent transmission, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Use only essential healthcare workers trained in their designated roles and keep a log of all people entering the patient's room.
- Notify facility's IPC program.

The patient is not exhibiting signs and symptoms compatible with a special pathogen. Continue with routine evaluation and care.

If concern remains, consult State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial Public Health Department for additional guidance.

Contact State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial Public Health Department for Testing Recommendations

Did the patient ...

- Receive pre-travel vaccinations?
- Adhere to their malaria prophylaxis regimen if they traveled to a malaria-endemic country?
- Report any illness/death in travel companions or other contacts?

Preceding illness onset, did the patient ...

- Have contact with someone who was sick or died, or with any object(s) contaminated by their body fluids?
- Work in a healthcare facility in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Experience a breach in IPC precautions that may have resulted in contact with the body fluids of a patient with suspected or confirmed disease due to a special pathogen?
- Have contact with the body fluids of a person who recovered from a disease due to a special pathogen – urine, saliva, sweat, vomit, breast milk, amniotic fluid, or semen?

Preceding illness onset, did the patient ...

- Visit a healthcare facility or traditional healer (as a visitor or patient) while in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Attend or participate in funeral rituals, including the preparation of bodies for funeral/burial?
- Have contact with bats, pigs, rodents, camels, or other livestock or wild animals in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Handle or consume raw meat or other products harvested from animals originating from an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Receive a tick bite in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Consume raw date palm sap originating from an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Work or spend time in a mine/cave in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?

As a resource for State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial public health departments, CDC is available 24/7 for consultation 770-488-7100

Decision is made to test for a special pathogen

- Test for other causes of illness¹

- Determine if patient requires transfer to a higher tier facility¹

Perform routine laboratory testing to monitor the patient's clinical status.

Use lab equipment with closed tube systems where the specimen container remains capped during testing. Centrifuges should have sealed buckets or sealed rotors that are loaded in a biosecurity cabinet (BSC). After centrifugation, open the sealed buckets or rotors inside a BSC or enclosed hood.

Malaria is the leading cause of travel-related hospitalization and death. Perform malaria testing in any patient with a febrile illness who recently returned from a malaria-endemic country, irrespective of adherence to malaria prophylaxis.

Decisions about testing for most special pathogens will be coordinated by the State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial public health department in coordination with CDC. For many special pathogens, testing is only available at CDC or select laboratories within the Laboratory Response Network.

Decision is made NOT to test for a special pathogen

Follow up clinical consultation is recommended to review the patient's clinical status and laboratory test results and to discuss discontinuation of WfP-specific IPC measures.

¹ Guidance and other resources:

Diagnosis for Consideration in a Returning Traveler with Fever: <https://www.cdc.gov/dpdx/returning-traveler.html>
 Viral hemorrhagic fever: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/index.html>
 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome: <https://www.cdc.gov/mers/index.html>

Health Care Facility Preparedness



- Remain up to date with all CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and public health notifications.
- Stay connected to local and Tribal health departments (LTHDs) and local emergency medical services providers.

Health Care Facility Preparedness



- Review and update plans for emerging infectious diseases.
- Review and update employee health plans.
- Educate staff.
- Participate in local and state emergency preparedness activities.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Conduct surveillance
- ✓ Stay up to date
- ✓ Communicate
- ✓ Educate

Resources

- CDC, [HAI Outbreak Investigation Toolkit](#)
- CDC, [Guide for Clinicians Evaluating and Ill person with VHF or Other High-Consequence Disease](#)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), [Health Alert Network \(HAN\)](#)

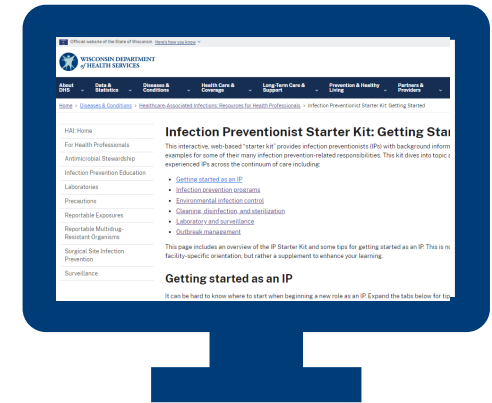
Send your questions and topic suggestions.

Submit your ideas to Ashley O'Keefe at ashley.okeefe@dhs.wisconsin.gov.



IP Starter Kit

- Interactive, web-based [resource](#)
- Background information, resources, and templates
- Covers topics applicable to IPs across care settings



HAI Prevention Program Contact Information



Email: dhswhaipreventionprogram@dhs.wisconsin.gov



Phone: 608-267-7711



Website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hai/contacts.htm

Upcoming Lunch and Learn Session

Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Topic: Reportable Conditions in WEDSS