

05 April 2019

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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Contents

U.S. MILITARY

- [2 pilots killed in Marine Corps helicopter crash in Arizona](#)
- [Hub and spokes: US pumps aid into Mozambique following massive cyclone](#)
- [Is the Pentagon breaking a law designed to help sexual assault victims?](#)
- [Move for more gender integration at Marine Corps boot camp ends; future unclear](#)

GLOBAL

- [Ask children about social media use, psychiatrists urged](#)
- [China to curb all types of fentanyl, following US demands](#)
- [Flossing and going to the dentist linked to lower risk of oral cancer](#)
- [Growing corn is a major contributor to air pollution, study finds](#)
- [Hospitals look to nursing homes to help stop drug-resistant infections](#)
- [How whole grains could help your liver](#)
- [Immune system therapy shows promise in fighting blood cancers: How does it work?](#)
- ['Molecular surgery' reshapes living tissue with electricity but no incisions](#)
- [Parkinson's disease: Risks, symptoms and treatment](#)

INFLUENZA

- [AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)
- [APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report](#)
- [CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report](#)
- [ECDC: Flu News Europe](#)
- [Long US flu season extends but shows signs of decline](#)
- [WHO: Influenza Update](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- [Hedgehogs linked to six additional Salmonella cases](#)
- [Kentucky's E. coli outbreak reaches Georgia, Ohio, and Tennessee](#)
- [NadaMoo! ice cream recalled because of undeclared almond](#)

Subscription or Comments

If you wish to be added to the APH Weekly Update mailing list, removed from the mailing list, or if you have comments or questions about the update, please [contact us](#). We welcome your comments. Please feel free to share this update with others who may be interested.



- Organic nut butters recalled for possible Listeria risk
- Pâté recall for milk and soy allergens not declared on label
- Rubber pieces trigger Purina cat food recall
- Sweden: Chronic Wasting Disease detected in moose
- Ten tons of beef patties recalled for containing purple plastic
- Undeclared milk prompts national recall for dark chocolate bars

WELLNESS

- Brain booster in a bottle? Don't bother
- Severe obesity raises particular travel health issues
- U.S. FDA warns of potential seizure risk in some users of e-cigarettes
- What does air pollution do to our bodies?

USAFRICOM

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: Reports 29 Ebola cases in two days
- Dengue fever: Reunion reports more than 3,000 cases in 2019
- Mayotte: Rift Valley Fever update- 114 cases
- Uganda: Bicycle ambulances help the pregnant, sick and injured

USCENTCOM

- Iran: Orders evacuation of 70 villages due to high flood risk

USEUCOM

- Bulgaria: Reports new bird flu outbreak
- South Wales: Measles strikes infants too young to be vaccinated
- Spain: Mumps outbreak in Madrid- Dozens of cases reported at Pontifical University of Comillas

USINDOPACOM

- Hawaii could be first US state to completely ban flavored vaping products
- Philippines: Measles and dengue news from the archipelago
- Philippines: Six neglected tropical diseases remain prevalent in the country

USNORTHCOM

- Canada: Measles cases reported in Calgary, Victoria and Toronto
- U.S.: California- Measles cases now 16, Health officials 'very concerned'
- U.S.: Florida- Measles case reported in Broward County
- U.S.: South Dakota- 2018 Legionnaires' disease increase prompts prevention workshop

USSOUTHCOM

- Venezuela: Maduro announces power rationing amid blackouts

U.S. MILITARY

2 pilots killed in Marine Corps helicopter crash in Arizona

31 March- Two Marine pilots have died in a helicopter crash during a training mission in southwestern Arizona, U.S. Marine Corps officials said Sunday. The AH-1Z Viper crashed Saturday night while the pilots were conducting a training mission as part of a weapons and tactical instructor course, according to the Marine Corps. The cause of the crash is under investigation. Capt. Gabriel Adibe, a Marine Corps spokesman, said the helicopter crashed on the vast Marine Corps Air Station Yuma training grounds but no additional information was immediately available. The names of the pilots who died have not been released pending notification of their families. [Marine Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

Hub and spokes: US pumps aid into Mozambique following massive cyclone

1 April- U.S. Africa Command has been allotted millions of dollars to help move aid supplies into Mozambique, which was hit by the strongest-ever cyclone in the Southern Hemisphere March 14-15. The Pentagon has authorized AFRICOM to conduct operations in Mozambique up to April 15 at a cost of \$15 million, said Brig. Gen. Robert Huston, the command's deputy director of operations. The U.S. Agency for International Development, which is the lead organ for the operation, also has provided \$6.2 million so far. Most of that money is going to fuel and other logistical costs associated with moving supplies long distances, with food and safe drinking water being among the top requirements for the 1.8 million people in urgent need of help. "The speed of response is important in disasters like this and there's a great tyranny of distance, but I'm pleased to say we've leaned forward from the very beginning," Huston told reporters during a teleconference Monday. "From a neighboring country — Botswana — our defense attache recognized we needed to get boots on the ground to get an idea of what the scale of the disaster was," Huston said. "And so they launched one of their airplanes immediately with four people on it to give us our initial overflight of territory so we could best target our response." The relief effort has since morphed to include a team from Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa on the ground in Mozambique, as well as a team in Djibouti, to help coordinate the operation. C-17 Globe masters are bringing aid supplies into Maputo, Mozambique, from United Nations World Food Program locations in Pisa, Italy, and Dubai, UAE. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

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2018 Health of the Force

The health of the individual Soldier is the foundation of the Army's ability to deploy, fight, and win against any adversary. Health of the Force provides an evidence-based portrait of the health and well-being of the U.S. Army Active Component (AC) Soldier population. Leaders can use Health of the Force data to inform health promotion and prevention measures, as well as drive cultural and programmatic changes necessary to achieve Force dominance.



Is the Pentagon breaking a law designed to help sexual assault victims?

30 March-The armed forces is failing to ensure that sexual assault victims are asked where they want their cases to be prosecuted, according to the results of a Defense Department Inspector General audit released last week. Investigators reviewed 82 cases at the Army's Fort Hood, Naval Station Norfolk, the Air Force's Joint Base San Antonio and Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, which recorded the highest number of unrestricted sexual assault reports in fiscal 2016. Nearly all of those cases involved officials failing to ask the victims or document if they would prefer their assailant tried by court-martial or in the civilian criminal justice system, something they are supposed to have been doing since the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, according to the IG. "It's really disappointing when Congress is trying to get the military to a better place with sexual assault and the military leadership doesn't take it seriously," said Don Christensen, a retired Air Force colonel, military attorney and president of Protect Our Defenders, a nonprofit group that helped get the victim preference regulation passed into law. The audit was mandated as part of the 2019 defense policy bill. In 77 of 82 cases reviewed from the four bases, officials either did not ask the victims for their preference or did not document that sexual assault victims had been asked about their preference, according to the audit. For 56 of those 77 cases, officials said the victims were asked but could provide no evidence of the victim's preference, according to the IG. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

Move for more gender integration at Marine Corps boot camp ends; future unclear

31 March- The Marine Corps' brief and limited experiment integrating female recruits into an all-male unit for their initial training at boot camp came to an end Friday. And as the recruit class graduated at Parris Island, S.C., officials said they were undecided about whether the Corps, which has long refused to fully integrate its recruit training, will ever do it again. This year for the first time, a platoon of female recruits was part of a company that included five all-male platoons. They were all housed in the same complex, but on different floors — unlike the usual practice that has all female recruits living and doing some of their training on a separate part of the base. Commanders and Marines in the course told The Associated Press they didn't notice any problems during the brief flirtation with increased integration. But the lack of disaster didn't appear to change minds in a Marine Corps that has steadfastly rejected congressional and other outside pressure to build combined platoons of female and male recruits at boot camp, like the other military services do. For the recruits, just surviving the rigorous course was all-consuming. "I showed up to train — everybody trains the same," said Pvt. 1st Class Harley Mesimore, 19, of Greensboro, N.C. "I was focused on myself and getting through the week and just getting out of here." Top Marine leaders have argued for years that young, female Marines perform better if they do the bulk of their early training in a separate unit where they can build their strength and

Army Mold Remediation Guidance

This document provides the Army's guidance for remediation of clean water damage and mold contamination. This guide has been designed to provide information to industrial hygienists, facility managers, and anyone else who needs assistance with mold remediation. It will guide them in making a reasonable judgment as to whether the situation can be handled in-house or if additional assistance is required (i.e., contracting out).



confidence. [Marine Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

Ask children about social media use, psychiatrists urged

30 March- Psychiatrists are being urged to ask children with mental health issues how long they spend online and what they use social media for. Questions about technology should be a routine part of assessments, the Royal College of Psychiatrists says. It is concerned about how time spent online impacts on mood, sleep, diet and behaviour. The government is expected to announce plans to regulate social media companies soon. The College's advice comes as evidence grows of a possible link between harmful content or time spent online, and poor mental health. It is planning to publish a report later this year about its stance on technology use and children's mental health, which will include recommendations for parents, children and doctors. [BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

China to curb all types of fentanyl, following US demands

1 April- China says it will crack down on all types of the synthetic opioid fentanyl, following a plea from the US. All fentanyl-related substances will be added to China's list of controlled narcotic drugs from 1 May, officials said. It follows a pledge Beijing made during US-China trade talks in December. The powerful painkiller, much of it believed to be made in China, is said to be driving a huge rise in drug addiction in the US. The number of deaths from painkillers such as fentanyl led to President Donald Trump declaring a national emergency in 2017. China's production of the drug has long been a source of tension between the two countries. "The US is concerned about all variants [of fentanyl] and it has all been resolved," Liu Yuejin, deputy director of China's narcotics control commission, told a news conference.

[BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Flossing and going to the dentist linked to lower risk of oral cancer

1 April- Regularly flossing and going to the dentist may be tied to a lower risk of oral cancer. That's according to findings presented March 31, here at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting. In the new study, researchers analyzed the dental health behaviors of patients who were diagnosed with oral cancer between 2011 and 2014 at the ear, nose and throat clinic at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center. The patients' behaviors were compared to those of non-cancer patients who came to the clinic for other reasons, such as dizziness or an earache. [Live Science](#)

[top of page...](#)

Growing corn is a major contributor to air pollution, study finds

1 April- You've probably heard statistics about how our diet affects the health of the planet. Like how a beef hamburger takes considerably more water and land to produce than a veggie burger or that around a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions stem from food production. In fact, there are websites that can calculate the carbon footprint of specific foods. But you may not have considered how the food we eat contributes to the quality of the air we breathe. Air pollution is the largest environmental health risk factor in the United States, and agriculture contributes in a number of ways. Fertilizer application, gas use, pesticide production and dust kicked up from tilling all affect air quality. But the sort of accounting done for the carbon footprint of foods hasn't been done for their air pollution footprint. That changed Monday with a study published in Nature Sustainability. It modeled how the production of a single crop, corn, contributes to air pollution in the United States. The researchers found that corn production accounts for 4,300 premature deaths related to air pollution every year in the United States. Ammonia from fertilizer application was by far the largest contributor to corn's air pollution footprint. [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

Hospitals look to nursing homes to help stop drug-resistant infections

2 April- Hospitals and nursing homes in California and Illinois are testing a surprisingly simple strategy to stop the dangerous, antibiotic-resistant superbugs that kill thousands of people each year: washing patients with a special soap. The efforts — funded with roughly \$8 million from the federal government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — are taking place at 50 facilities in those two states. This novel collaboration recognizes that superbugs don't remain isolated in one hospital or nursing home but move quickly through a community, said Dr. John Jernigan, who directs the CDC's office on health care-acquired infection research. "No health care facility is an island," Jernigan says. "We all are in this complicated network." At least 2 million people in the U.S. become infected with some type of antibiotic-resistant bacteria each year, and about 23,000 die from those infections, according to the CDC. People in hospitals are vulnerable to these bugs, and people in nursing homes are particularly vulnerable. Up to 15 percent of hospital patients and 65 percent of nursing home residents harbor drug-resistant organisms, though not all of them will develop an infection, says Dr. Susan Huang, who specializes in infectious diseases at the University of California, Irvine. "Superbugs are scary and they are unabated," Huang says. "They don't go away." Some of the most common bacteria in health care facilities are methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, and carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, or CRE, often called "nightmare bacteria." *E. coli* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae* are two common germs that can fall into this category when they become resistant to last-resort antibiotics known as carbapenems. CRE bacteria cause an estimated

The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book

The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level on the APHC SIPRNet site:

<https://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/medcom-g2/SitePages/Home.aspx>

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

600 deaths each year, according to the CDC. [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

How whole grains could help your liver

4 April- Eating whole grains and cereal may reduce the risk of liver cancer. That's according to findings presented Tuesday (April 1) here at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). Eating a diet rich in whole grains and dietary fiber has been linked to numerous health benefits, including a lower risk of insulin resistance, high insulin levels in the blood and inflammation in the body — all of which are risk factors for hepatocellular carcinoma, the most common type of liver cancer. With that in mind, a group of researchers decided to see if there was an association between eating more grains and fiber and the risk of liver cancer. To do so, they used two large U.S. data sets: the Nurses' Health Study, which began in 1976 and comprised of all women, and the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study, an all-male study that began in 1986. [Live Science](#)

[top of page...](#)

Immune system therapy shows promise in fighting blood cancers: How does it work?

1 April- It's early in the trials, but a treatment used to help the immune system fight blood cancers is showing great promise against solid tumors as well. If shown successful, the treatment called CAR-T therapy could revolutionize cancer therapy by being an effective option for a wider range of cancer patients beyond leukemia and other blood cancers. According to a report from the American Association for Cancer Research, scientists presented the results of a phase 1 clinical trial at the AACR Annual Meeting 2019 on March 29 to April 3. Prasad S. Adusumilli, MD, says that patients who have advanced-stage solid tumors that are metastatic in the chest cavity usually see poor outcomes even with treatment. CAR-T is an excellent option, but beyond blood cancers, it has had little success. Now, Adusumilli and his team has developed a new CAR-T cell that can achieve success in solid tumors, and early tests show that this is a promising new treatment. [Tech Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

'Molecular surgery' reshapes living tissue with electricity but no incisions

2 April- Traditional surgery to reshape a nose or ear entails cutting and suturing, sometimes followed by long recovery times and scars. But now, researchers have developed a "molecular surgery" process that uses tiny needles, electric current and 3D-printed molds to quickly reshape living tissue with no incisions, scarring or recovery time. The technique even shows promise as a way to fix immobile joints or as a noninvasive alternative to laser eye surgery. The researchers will present their results today at the American Chemical Society (ACS) Spring 2019 National Meeting & Exposition. [Science Daily](#)

Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About APHC](#)

[Army Public Health
Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance
Monthly Report](#)

[Medical Threat Briefings
\(AKO\)](#)

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[APHC Homepage](#)

[APHC Training](#)

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[top of page...](#)

Parkinson's disease: Risks, symptoms and treatment

1 April- Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disease that primarily affects the part of the brain responsible for normal movement. People with the disease have a deficiency of dopamine, a brain chemical that helps control movement, according to Dr. Danny Bega, a neurologist at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. In Parkinson's, nerve cells in the substantia nigra, an area of the brain that produces dopamine, become impaired or die off. This results in the loss of dopamine-producing nerve cells in the brain and leads to symptoms such as tremors, slowed movements and muscle stiffness. About 60,000 Americans are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease each year, according to the Parkinson's Foundation. [Live Science](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary- Week 12

NORTHCOM- Influenza activity remained minimal or decreased for the majority of states. However, activity increased to moderate in Ohio, Rhode Island, and Florida and remained high in Utah, Oklahoma, and Virginia.

EUCOM- Influenza activity was minimal across EUCOM.

PACOM- Influenza activity was minimal across PACOM, except for Hawaii which had low activity.

CENTCOM- Data for these commands are not presented this week due to continued delays in receiving the TMDS data.

AFRICOM- Data for these commands are not presented this week due to continued delays in receiving the TMDS data.

SOUTHCOM- Data for these commands are not presented this week due to continued delays in receiving the TMDS data. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

[top of page...](#)

APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

Week ending 23 March 2019 (week 12): A thirty-nine percent decrease in the overall number of positive respiratory specimens in week 11 was noted when compared to week 12; there were 1137 samples in week 11 and 689 in week 12. The largest reductions in the number of positive respiratory specimens from week 11 to week 12 were observed among influenza A and respiratory syncytial virus, decreasing by 41% and 31%, respectively. The majority of the influenza A positive specimens continue to be reported from non-Active

Duty beneficiaries; accounting for 72% (436) of the cases in week 12. One influenza associated hospitalization with an onset date in week 12 was reported in the Disease Reporting System internet; this case was an unvaccinated, non-Active Duty beneficiary. Outpatient visits for influenza-like illness in Active Duty Service Members are down 6% in week 12, when compared to week 11. [APHC](#)

[top of page...](#)

CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report

Influenza Season Week 12 ending March 23, 2019

-Viral Surveillance: The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza viruses in clinical laboratories decreased. Nationally, during the most recent three weeks, influenza A(H3) viruses were reported more frequently than influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses and in all 10 HHS Regions.

-Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality: The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the system-specific epidemic threshold in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Mortality Surveillance System.

-Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: One influenza-associated pediatric death was reported to CDC during week 12. [CDC](#)

[top of page...](#)

ECDC: Flu News Europe

Week 12/2019 (18-24 March 2019)

-Of 45 countries reporting on geographic spread only 11, located in northern, southern, and western areas of the European Region, reported widespread activity. Specimens collected from individuals presenting with ILI or ARI to sentinel primary health care sites yielded an influenza virus positivity rate of 38%, similar to the rate of 39% in the previous week.

-Of 45 countries reporting on intensity, 41 reported baseline or low intensity. No countries reported high intensity levels.

-Influenza type A virus detections dominated with more A(H3N2) than A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses among sentinel and non-sentinel source specimens. Few influenza B viruses were detected.

-Of the specimens from patients with severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) collected in week 12/2019 that were tested for influenza viruses, 21% were positive and almost all were type A.

-Pooled data from 22 Member States and areas reporting to the EuroMOMO project indicated that the excess mortality observed in previous weeks has returned to normal levels. [European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

Long US flu season extends but shows signs of decline

29 March- The flu season in the United States has now reached 18 straight weeks above baseline levels but shows signs of easing, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today in its weekly FluView update. Partly because of increased activity of the H3N2 strain, however, the CDC issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) advisory yesterday to clinicians about the prolonged season and the need for antiviral drugs for some patients. The past five seasons have averaged 16 weeks, with the longest being 20 weeks...The CDC said it recommends antiviral drugs for all hospitalized, severely ill, and high-risk patients with suspected or confirmed influenza. It recommends them for treating the flu regardless of the patient's vaccination status because of their proven efficacy in reducing illness and severe outcomes. [CIDRAP](#)

[top of page...](#)

WHO: Influenza Update

1 April- In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere influenza activity decreased overall.

- In North America, influenza activity appeared to decrease with influenza A(H3N2) the dominant virus, followed by influenza A(H1N1)pdm09.
- In Europe, influenza activity decreased across the continent. Both influenza A viruses co-circulated.
- In North Africa, influenza activity was still reported in some countries.
- In Western Asia, influenza activity appeared to decrease overall, with exception of some countries where activity remained elevated.
- In East Asia, although decreased influenza activity continued to be reported. Increased detections of influenza A(H3N2) and B (Victoria-lineage) viruses were reported in the recent weeks.
- In Southern Asia, influenza appeared to decrease with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus predominating.
- In the Caribbean, Central American countries, and the tropical countries of South America, influenza and RSV activity were low in general.
- In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels, with the exception of some parts of Australia where influenza activity remained above inter-seasonal levels.
- Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections. [WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

Hedgehogs linked to six additional Salmonella cases

31 March- In a follow-up on the multistate Salmonella outbreak linked to pet hedgehogs, federal health officials have reported six additional cases in the past two months. A total of 17 people infected with the outbreak strain of Salmonella Typhimurium have been reported from 11 states. Two people were hospitalized and no deaths have been reported. The outbreak strain making people sick was identified in samples collected from eight hedgehogs in Minnesota, including three hedgehogs from two ill patients' homes. Ill people reported buying hedgehogs from various sources, including pet stores, breeders, or online. A common supplier of hedgehogs in this outbreak has not been identified. Health officials say hedgehogs can carry Salmonella bacteria in their droppings while appearing healthy and clean. They advise to always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching, feeding, or caring for a hedgehog or cleaning its habitat. Adults should supervise handwashing for young children. Don't kiss or snuggle hedgehogs, because this can spread Salmonella germs to your face and mouth and make you sick and don't let hedgehogs roam freely in areas where food is prepared or stored, such as kitchens. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Kentucky's E. coli outbreak reaches Georgia, Ohio, and Tennessee

4 April- Kentucky's E. coli outbreak has now reached Georgia, Ohio, and Tennessee. In Kentucky, the number of sick people has more than doubled. As of last Friday, 20 E coli O103 cases had been reported to public health authorities. As of Wednesday afternoon, 44 Kentuckians have contracted E. coli. Health investigators are continuing to investigate this outbreak in which, so far, no single source has been identified. Dr. Mel Bennett is leading Kentucky's investigation. Dr. Bennet says that early reports showed fast food to be a source of concern. Investigators have been able to narrow it down further. Now beef, chicken, and sliced American cheese are being investigated. E. coli infections have also been reported in Georgia, Ohio, and Tennessee. The 44 E. coli cases that have already been reported in Kentucky already make this the largest E. coli outbreak in Kentucky since 2000. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

NadaMoo! ice cream recalled because of undeclared almond

3 April- Little Red Rooster Ice Cream Company announced a limited recall of approximately 26,000 pints of its “NadaMoo! Strawberry Cheesecake Non-Dairy Frozen Dessert” because they contain an undeclared almond ingredient. The recall was initiated as soon as it was discovered that the pie crust inclusions in the Strawberry Cheesecake product (containing almond flour as an ingredient) were inadvertently filled into packaging that did not declare that ingredient. This could potentially expose consumers to an undeclared allergen; “People who have an allergy or severe sensitivity to almonds run the risk of a serious or life-threatening allergic reaction if they consume the recalled products.” No adverse reactions had been reported as of the posting of the recall notice on the Food and Drug Administration’s website. The recalled ice cream products have a “Best By” date of “08/09/2020” printed at the bottom of the pint. In addition, the recalled pints also have a UPC code of “854758001020” listed below the barcode on the back of the pint. [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Organic nut butters recalled for possible Listeria risk

4 April- Wakefern Food Corp. is recalling five varieties of Wholesome Pantry Organic nut butters because they could be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. Wakefern was notified by their supplier, Oskri Organics Corporation of Lake Mills, WI, that several nut butters produced in their facility had tested positive for *Listeria* bacteria; “Though no Wholesome Pantry Organic nut butters tested positive for the bacteria, a voluntary recall was initiated out of an abundance of caution.” No illnesses had been reported in connection with the implicated products as of the posting of the recall notice. “Customers were notified of the recall via in-store signs, website announcements, telephone calls, and email messages. Customers who purchased these products should return them for an immediate refund or replacement.” [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Pâté recall for milk and soy allergens not declared on label

31 March- Market of Choice, Inc., in Eugene, OR, Saturday recalled approximately 1,094 pounds of pork and poultry pâté products due to misbranding and undeclared allergens, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The products contain milk and soy, known allergens, which are not declared on the product label. The pork and poultry pâté items were produced on various dates prior to March 26, 2019. The products have a 30-day shelf life. [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Rubber pieces trigger Purina cat food recall

31 March- The Nestlé Purina PetCare Company (Nestlé) has recalled a single batch of Muse cat food due to foreign matter contamination. The recalled product may contain translucent yellow pieces of rubber with a blue backing, which could present a choking hazard to cats... The recalled products were distributed nationwide through pet specialty and e-commerce retailers. The company initiated the recall after receiving complaints from pet owners who found the rubber pieces in the product. Nestlé has not received any reports of injury or illness to date and has made changes to its process to avoid a repeat of the problem. Consumers with questions regarding this recall may contact the company at 1-800-982-3885, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week. [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Sweden: Chronic Wasting Disease detected in moose

28 March- The Statens Veterinärmedicinska Anstalt, or National Veterinary Institute of Sweden (SVA) reported this week (computer translated) on the first Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) case in a 16-year-old moose in Norrbotten County. The animal was euthanized as it was walking in circles, emaciated and seemed to be blind. Samples from the brainstem were positive in the screening test and confirmed positive for transmissible spongiform encephalopathy with Western Blot (BioRad TeSeE) by the SVA. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Ten tons of beef patties recalled for containing purple plastic

3 April- Enid, OK-based Advance Pierre Foods, Inc. has recalled approximately 20,373 pounds of ready-to-eat (RTE) beef patties that may be contaminated with extraneous materials, specifically soft purple plastic, reports the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)... The recalled products bear establishment number "EST. 2260E" inside the USDA mark of inspection. These beef patties were shipped to food service locations nationwide. While the product was distributed to schools, it resulted from a commercial sale and was not part of food provided by the USDA for the National School Lunch Program. [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Undeclared milk prompts national recall for dark chocolate bars

2 April- Theo Chocolate of Seattle, WA, is recalling 3-ounce "Sea Salt 70% Dark Chocolate" bars because they may contain undeclared milk, which was not declared on the label, according to a recall notice posted on the Food and Drug Administration's website. People who have an allergy or sensitivity to milk run the risk of serious or life-threatening allergic reaction if they consume these products. The recalled 3-ounce "Sea Salt 70% Dark Chocolate" bars feature lot code 3092529 with a "Best-By date" of "1/2020." Consumers can find the lot code and Best-By date on the back side of the bar's packaging. According to the recall notice, the recalled products were distributed nationwide to select retailers from January 30th, 2019 to March 11th, 2019. [Food Safety News](#)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

Brain booster in a bottle? Don't bother

1 April- Attention all consumers seeking to protect brain health: You can save hundreds of dollars a year and enhance the health of your brain and body by ignoring the myriad unproven claims for anti-dementia supplements and instead focusing on a lifestyle long linked to better mental and physical well-being. How many of these purported brain boosters have you already tried — Ginkgo biloba, coenzyme Q10, huperzine A, caprylic acid and coconut oil, coral calcium, among others? The Alzheimer's Association says that, with the possible exception of omega-3 fatty acids, all that were properly tested thus far have been found wanting. I admit it's very appealing to think you can maintain your cognitive powers by swallowing a few pills a day instead of adopting a brain-healthy diet, getting regular exercise and adequate sleep, among other health-preserving measures like not smoking. But you'd only be fooling yourself and wasting precious dollars that could be better spent on nutritious foods and a good pair of walking shoes. "No known dietary supplement prevents cognitive decline or dementia," Dr. Joanna Hellmuth stated emphatically in JAMA in January. "Yet," she added, "supplements advertised as such are widely available and appear to gain legitimacy when sold by major U.S. retailers." Dr. Hellmuth, a neurologist at the University of California, San Francisco, Memory and Aging Center, reminds consumers that supplement manufacturers do not have to test their products for effectiveness or safety. Lacking sound scientific backing, most are promoted by testimonials that appeal to people worried about developing dementia. Citing a \$3.2-billion industry that promotes brain health benefits from dietary supplements, Dr. Hellmuth said in an interview, "It's a confusing landscape. Lots of patients and families see bold claims in newspaper ads, on the internet and on late-night TV that various supplements can improve memory." [New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

Severe obesity raises particular travel health issues

2 April- International travelers who are obese may face difficulties with flights, hotel access and certain leisure activities, say researchers who suggest the travel industry and travel health specialists should address these issues. Based on interviews with severely obese men and women about their experiences with international travel, the small study found that airport facilities and procedures, physical discomfort and embarrassment on flights, and limitations associated with obesity were recurring themes, according to the report in the *Journal of Travel Medicine*. "Obesity is a common condition and we know that obese individuals are subject to physical restrictions and weight bias in their everyday lives," said lead author Dr. Gerard Flaherty of the School of Medicine at the National University of Ireland Galway. "There is a dearth of research relating to the actual travel experiences of travelers with chronic medical illness, how their underlying conditions impact their travel or how travel affects the management of their pre-existing illness," he told Reuters Health by email. Flaherty and colleagues interviewed 12 patients who were attending a bariatric lifestyle modification program in Ireland. Most were in their 50s and each had a body mass index in the "obese" or "severely obese" category. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S. FDA warns of potential seizure risk in some users of e-cigarettes

3 April- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday warned of potential safety risks from the use of e-cigarettes after it found certain users had suffered from seizures. The announcement here comes at a time when the regulator is aiming to curb the surge in teenage use of the popular nicotine devices, which the FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, due to leave the agency this month, has termed as an "epidemic". The agency said it had observed a slight increase in the reports of seizures since last June and has identified 35 cases of seizures following use of e-cigarettes between 2010 and early 2019. The seizures, which mostly involved youth or young adult users, had occurred after a few puffs or up to one day after use. E-cigarettes have been a divisive topic in the public health community, with some focusing on the benefit of shifting smokers to less harmful nicotine products, while others fear it would create a new generation addicted to nicotine. Seizures or convulsions are known potential side effects of nicotine poisoning and have been reported in relation to intentional or accidental swallowing of nicotine-containing e-liquids, according to the FDA statement. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

What does air pollution do to our bodies?

2 April- The countdown has begun to the launch of one of the world's boldest attempts to tackle air pollution. From next Monday, thousands of drivers face paying a new charge to enter central London. The aim is to deter the dirtiest vehicles in an effort to reduce diseases and premature deaths. The initiative comes as scientists say the impacts of air pollution are more serious than previously thought. The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, told the BBC the threat of air pollution, which is mostly invisible to the naked eye, was "a public health emergency". He added: "One of the things that has troubled me is that because we can't see the particulate matter, the nitrogen dioxide, the poison, you don't take it seriously." But over the last few decades, research has revealed how gases like nitrogen dioxide and tiny particles, known as particulate matter or PM, can reach deep into the body with the danger of causing lasting damage. [BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Reports 29 Ebola cases in two days

30 March- Health officials in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have reported (computer translated) 29 new Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) cases in the past two days, the largest 2-day spike since the outbreak began, bringing the total cases to 1,059. On March 27, 14 new confirmed cases were reported in Katwa (6), Vuhovi (4) and one each in Beni, Lubero, Oicha and Mandima. On March 28, 15 new confirmed cases were reported, including 5 in Vuhovi, 4 in Katwa, 2 in Mandima, 2 in Oicha and 2 in Beni. The death toll in this second largest Ebola outbreak has reached 660. The DRC Ministry of Health says mobility is the main cause of reactivation of the epidemic in areas of health where the transmission of the virus had already been stopped like Beni and Oicha. Due to a relatively well developed road network, the population of North Kivu is very mobile and travels frequently from one health zone to another. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Dengue fever: Reunion reports more than 3,000 cases in 2019

2 April- In a follow-up on the dengue outbreak on the island of Reunion, health officials report an additional 682 confirmed cases the week of Mar. 11, bringing the total to 3,048 cases since January 1. Dengue activity is most active in The Saint-Louis River, Saint Louis, Saint Pierre, L'Etang-Sale and Cabris Ravine, while new transmission zones have been identified in Petite-Ile, Saint-Leu, Entre-Deux, Saint-Paul Bois de Nèfles, and The Port. Since the beginning of 2019, 5 deaths have been reported. Since the beginning of the epidemic in 2018, 9,924 indigenous cases and 11 deaths have been recorded. Health officials say in

order to limit the spread of dengue fever in the island, the active participation of the local residents in the implementation of preventive measures is essential: Seek immediate medical attention in case of symptoms, protect yourself from mosquito bites with repellents and eliminate anything that may contain water (breeding sites) around your home.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Mayotte: Rift Valley Fever update- 114 cases

1 April- In an update on the Rift Valley fever (RVF) situation in Mayotte, health officials report 114 human cases have been reported since November 2018. Since the beginning of the health alert, human cases have remained mainly in the center and north-west of the island. The disease is usually manifested by an influenza-like illness: high fever (39 °), muscle and / or joint pain, severe headache, tiredness. In the vast majority of cases, healing occurs within a few days. It is recommended to consult a doctor as soon as the signs appear so that the samples in search of the disease are made. In addition, samples taken by veterinarians on sick animals or during abortions have identified 84 outbreaks of sick animals (including 69 cattle). The animal foci are mainly located in the center and north-west of the island but some animal foci have been found in the commune of Mamoudzou. Breeders are required to report promptly to veterinarians any abortions or stillbirths occurring in their animals or sick animals in order to take samples in search of the disease. An order prohibiting the marketing of untreated milk has been in force since 27/02/2019. A decree prohibiting the export of live animals, raw meat and milk produced by the ruminant farms of the country has been in force since 20/03/2019. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Uganda: Bicycle ambulances help the pregnant, sick and injured

1 April- In the early months of her pregnancy, Sandra Naigaga had to walk more than four kilometres to get to antenatal care at the health centre in Kibibi, Uganda. Uganda has high maternal and newborn death rates, with 15 women dying every day from childbirth and pregnancy-related issues. That worried Naigaga in those initial months of pregnancy. That fear however subsided in late 2018 when the NGO First African Bicycle Information Organization (FABIO) introduced its free bicycle ambulance service to the two major health centres in the region. Naigaga is one of the hundreds of women, elderly persons, children and the sick in her area who regularly use bicycle ambulances to get prompt medical attention. In many remote areas, many of the roads are impassable for vehicles, so the bicycles with their specialised trailers to carry patients are the only way for many to get to a health centre. "As pregnant women, we are always weak," says Naigaga, "They take us to hospital, we get treatment and they take us back home." In Uganda, 77 of the country's 121 districts lack an ambulance service and fewer than 7% of patients arrive at hospital by ambulance. That lack of transport prompted FABIO to develop its first bicycle ambulance service in 2006 in Uganda's then war-torn northern region. Their goal since has been to

create something that is both environmentally friendly and easy to maintain. [Al Jazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Iran: Orders evacuation of 70 villages due to high flood risk

2 April- Iranian authorities have ordered the evacuation of 70 villages in Khuzestan province near the Dez and Kharkheh rivers due to flood risk, according to state-run IRNA news agency. The announcement comes a day after Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif blamed sanctions imposed last year by US President Donald Trump's administration for hampering rescue operations in flood-stricken areas of the country, where 45 people have died so far. "America's 'maximum pressure' policy on Iran is impeding aid efforts by #IranianRedCrescent to all communities devastated by unprecedented floods," Zarif said in a Twitter post on Monday night. The sanctions, he said, have prevented Tehran from getting badly needed equipment, including relief helicopters. "This isn't just economic warfare; it's economic TERRORISM," he said. A senior US official said on Monday the government is considering implementing additional sanctions against Iran that would target areas of its economy that have not been hit before. [Al Jazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

Bulgaria: Reports new bird flu outbreak

3 April- Bulgaria's food safety agency authorities reported on Wednesday an outbreak of the bird flu virus on a duck farm in the village of Yoglav in central Bulgaria and said birds on the farm were being culled. A 3-km protection zone had been set around the farm and the movement of domestic, wild and other birds and has been banned within it, as has the sale of eggs and poultry, the food safety agency said in a statement. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

South Wales: Measles strikes infants too young to be vaccinated

3 April- Health officials in New South Wales, Australia (NSW Health) are reporting the diagnosis of measles in two infants too young to be vaccinated, who probably acquired the infection from recent cases in Sydney... People in the same locations at the same times as the infants who may be susceptible to measles such as: children under the age of 12 months, people with a weakened immune system (e.g. from cancer therapy or high dose steroid use) and those who do not have evidence of having received two doses of measles

containing vaccine or past measles infection. Symptoms include fever, sore eyes and a cough followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy rash spreading from the head and neck to the rest of the body. "If you develop symptoms, please call ahead to your GP to ensure you do not wait in the waiting room with other patients," NSW Health Director of Communicable Diseases, Dr. Vicky Sheppard said. Cases of measles in infants such as these highlight the importance of ensuring that all people able to be vaccinated have received two doses of measles vaccine. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Spain: Mumps outbreak in Madrid- Dozens of cases reported at Pontifical University of Comillas

29 March- Health officials in Madrid, Spain are reporting a mumps outbreak at the Higher Technical School of Engineering (ICAI) of the Pontifical University of Comillas, according to a Que report. Director General of Public Health in Madrid, Juan Martínez said they recommend the people of Madrid check if their vaccinations are up-to-date. In the case of this university center, where several second-year engineering students have been affected, the notification of the outbreak arrived on March 19 and 33 cases of mumps have already been identified, a virus that, although of a mild nature, is highly contagious. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USINDOPACOM

Hawaii could be first US state to completely ban flavored vaping products

1 April- Hawaii is considering a proposal to ban flavored e-cigarette liquids in order to control teenage vaping, which is described by public health officials as an epidemic. The bill, if passed, would make Hawaii the first U.S. state to adopt the measure. The Hawaii Health Department published a report in 2017 that revealed 16 percent of middle school students and 26 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes. The National Youth Tobacco Survey, meanwhile, found that youth vaping increased 78 percent in 2018 across the United States. The goal of the bill is to make e-cigarettes and other tobacco products unpalatable to young users. "They look at cigarettes and they say, 'Cigarettes are disgusting. Tobacco is disgusting,'" said Trish La Chica, a lobbyist for the Hawaii Public Health Institute. "So take away the cotton candy, take away the flavors that look like they belong in an ice cream shop, and they wouldn't be attracted to start in the first place." The proposal will affect all flavors of e-cigarette liquids such as Cookie Monsta and Maui Mango, with the exemption of menthol. San Francisco has adopted a similar measure in 2017, becoming the first city in the United States to do so. [Tech Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

Philippines: Measles and dengue news from the archipelago

30 March- In the Western Visayas, fear over vaccines due to the Dengvaxia debacle are beginning to wane as higher coverage for measles vaccine is being observed. DOH-Center for Health Development 6 (Western Visayas) Medical Officer III, Dr. Mary Jane Roches Juanico, said Friday that as of March 27, about 55 percent or 328,056 of the 595,023 target children from six months to 59 months had already been vaccinated. Phase 1 of the SIA, which covered 32 local government units (LGUs), vaccinated 132,144 children while Phase 2, which involved 101 LGUs, was able to reach out to 134,823 children. Dr. Juanico said that those who refused shot in schools still expressed fear of vaccination due to the Dengvaxia scare. As of March 28, the region has already registered 1,621 suspected cases with six deaths. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Philippines: Six neglected tropical diseases remain prevalent in the country

1 April- The Philippines are battling large outbreaks of the vaccine-preventable disease, measles and the vector-borne disease, dengue fever currently; however, health officials are reminding the public of another group of infectious diseases-the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). In the Calabarzon Region, where various sanitary inspectors, environmental and occupational health coordinators from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon and regional staff gathered for a two-day "Integrated Orientation on NTD-WASH", the Department of Health reminded them that the Philippines still had six NTDs that were still prevalent in the country today—filariasis, schistosomiasis, helminthiasis, leprosy, rabies and food and water borne diseases. "If these health concerns are not properly and immediately addressed, it will continue to contribute to the high prevalence of NTDs in the country, that is why we will be increasing the coverage of eligible population for mass drug administration to 85 percent to be able to prevent and eliminate NTDs," according to DOH Regional Director Eduardo C. Janairo. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

Canada: Measles cases reported in Calgary, Victoria and Toronto

31 March- Alberta Health Services (AHS) has confirmed that an individual with lab-confirmed measles has been in public settings in Calgary while infectious...Individuals who were exposed on March 29th, in the locations and timeframes noted above, AND do not have history of receiving two doses of measles-containing vaccine, will be offered

immunization April 1, 2019 at Brentwood Village Mall AHS Immunization Clinic at 302 3630 Brentwood Road NW from 11:00 am to 6:30 pm as a preventative measure. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S.: California- Measles cases now 16, Health officials ‘very concerned’

31 March- Through Mar. 27, California health officials have reported 16 total measles cases in nine counties, this compares with 21 cases reported during the whole of 2018. In 2019, two outbreaks linked to patients with international travel have been reported in California. Of the 16 confirmed measles cases, 11 outbreak-associated cases, have been reported. Dr. James Watt with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) says the agency is “very concerned” with the rising tally. Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. It is widespread in many parts of the world, including Europe, Africa, and Asia. Measles begins with a fever that lasts for a couple of days, followed by a cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis (pink eye), and a rash. The rash typically appears first on the face, along the hairline, and behind the ears and then affects the rest of the body. Infected people are usually contagious from about 4 days before their rash starts to 4 days afterwards. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S.: Florida- Measles case reported in Broward County

31 March- The Florida Department of Health in Broward County (DOH-Broward) has reported an imported measles case. The case in Broward was acquired outside of the United States, according to Dr. Paula Thaqi, the director of DOH-Broward. Dr. Bindu Mayi, a professor of microbiology at Nova Southeastern University’s College of Medical Sciences in Broward said an immediate goal is to trace back whoever came in contact with the individual. Then health officials “have to see what they need to do to protect additional people who have been exposed.” According to the CDC, measles starts with fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and sore throat. It’s followed by a rash that spreads over the body. Measles is highly contagious and spreads through coughing and sneezing. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

U.S.: South Dakota- 2018 Legionnaires’ disease increase prompts prevention workshop

31 March- South Dakota officials saw a doubling of Legionnaires’ disease cases in 2018 compared to 2017, reporting 33 cases statewide. This included an increase in the Sioux Falls area, in which 16 people became ill and one died. This prompted the Department of Health to host an upcoming workshop for cooling tower owners, operators, installers, and water treatment consultants on the proper operation and maintenance of cooling towers to

prevent cases of Legionnaires disease. The presenter for the training will be Chris Boyd, general manager of NSF International and former Assistant Commissioner of Environmental Sciences and Engineering for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. During his time in New York City, he led the agency's response to the largest Legionella outbreak in the city's history. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Venezuela: Maduro announces power rationing amid blackouts

1 April- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced a 30-day plan to ration electricity after nationwide power cuts that have inflicted misery on millions of people and ignited protests, including one near the presidential palace in Caracas. The rationing plan will help deal with the outages that have also cut off the water supply and communications for days at a time, Maduro said on Sunday in a speech on national television in which he also warned against any unrest in reaction to the blackouts. "I have approved a 30-day plan to regulate the [electricity] output," Maduro said as the country experienced its fourth major power outage in the month of March. Maduro blamed the blackout on a "terrorist attack against the electricity system" by Washington and the "putschist opposition". Earlier on Sunday, Venezuela's Communication Minister Jorge Rodriguez said that public and private sector workers would stop working at 2pm (18:00 GMT) on Monday while school children will be given another day off while work continued to repair the network. The opposition has attributed the power outages to a lack of investment in the national grid, poor upkeep and a failure to tackle repairs. [Al Jazeera](#)

[top of page...](#)

[U.S. Military](#) | [Global](#) | [Influenza](#) | [Veterinary/Food Safety](#) | [Wellness](#) | [Contact Us](#)

[USAFRICOM](#) | [USCENTCOM](#) | [USEUCOM](#) | [USINDOPACOM](#) | [USNORTHCOM](#) | [USSOUTHCOM](#)

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