

8 March 2019

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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## Contents

### NOTE:

If you are viewing the Army Public Health Weekly Update using Internet Explorer on a government computer with Windows 10, the external hyperlinks will be disabled per the [Security Technical Implementation Guide](#) (V-64927).

As a workaround, opening the Update using **Chrome** will enable the links.

We're sorry for the inconvenience.

### U.S. MILITARY

- 16 cancer cases in one family: Base water contamination fight moves to Congress
- Arizona senator reveals she was raped by a superior officer while in the Air Force
- Joint Base San Antonio Air Force major faces charge related to wife's disappearance
- Lawmakers to DoD: You knew about water contamination. Why haven't you done more?
- The new plan to prevent veteran suicides: new grants, better research, more community focus

### GLOBAL

- 2nd man apparently free of AIDS virus following stem cell transplant
- Adults who had measles vaccination as kids may no longer be protected from viral disease
- Buttock implants linked to rare blood cancer also tied to breast implants
- Drug companies and doctors battle over the future of fecal transplants
- Ebola care rebounds in attack area; World Bank OKs funds
- EU study shows wide range in antibiotic prescribing for febrile kids
- Fast-acting depression drug, newly approved, could help millions
- Good news: Opioid prescribing fell. The bad? Pain patients suffer, doctors say
- Level 2 Travel Alert Regarding Polio Outbreak in Indonesia
- Lilly to launch half-price version of insulin
- MMR vaccine does not cause autism, another study confirms
- Scientists develop wireless sensors that monitor NICU babies
- Supplements don't prevent depression, study finds
- Tornadoes kill at least 23 in Alabama

### INFLUENZA

- APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report
- CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report
- ECDC: Flu News Europe
- NHRC: Operational Infectious Diseases - Weekly Surveillance Report
- WHO: Influenza Update

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### VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

---

- More than 15 tons of beef recalled for extraneous materials

### WELLNESS

---

- Can mouthwash raise your blood pressure?
- Cocoa may help treat common MS symptom
- IBD: A low-calorie plant diet relieves inflammation, repairs gut

### USAFRICOM

---

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: Why doctors without borders is suspending work in the Ebola epicenter in Congo
- Madagascar: Measles epidemic- 80,000 cases, nearly 1,000 deaths

### USCENTCOM

---

- Iraq/ Afghanistan: Here's what's coming next in the battle over burn pit benefits

### USEUCOM

---

- Iceland: Reports 2nd measles case
- Norway: Two reindeer killed due to suspicion of rabies

### USINDOPACOM

---

- Bangladesh: Nipah virus reported in Thakurgaon
- China: Urges crack down on concealing African swine fever
- Japan: Measles in Japan- Most are genotype D8
- Thailand: Chikungunya outbreak tops 2,000

### USNORTHCOM

---

- Canada: Salmonella outbreak rises to 555
- U.S: Flu activity stays high as 15 new deaths in kids reported
- U.S: New York City measles outbreak rises to 133 cases
- U.S: Texas reports more measles, tops 2018 total

### USSOUTHCOM

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- Paraguay: Hantavirus cases reported

## U.S. MILITARY

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### 16 cancer cases in one family: Base water contamination fight moves to Congress

4 March- Former Army reservist Spc. Mark Favors comes from a military family who has lived for generations near Colorado Springs' Air Force and Army installations. It's taken a severe toll, he said. Favors, 50, can count at least 16 relatives from the area who have been diagnosed with cancer; 10 have died. Six of those relatives have died since 2012, including his father at age 69 and two cousins, ages 38 and 54. "In my family alone, we have had five kidney cancer deaths," Favors said. "And those people only lived in the contaminated area." Many of Favors' relatives lived near Peterson Air Force Base, where scores of both on-base and off base water sources have tested significantly above the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended exposure of 70 parts per trillion of perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFAS) or perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). The compounds were part of the military's firefighting foam until just last year. The compounds have been linked to cancers and developmental delays for fetuses and infants. Peterson's contamination ranges from 79 to 88,400 parts per trillion in its on-base wells and 79 to 7,910 parts per trillion in public and private drinking wells off base. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

### Arizona senator reveals she was raped by a superior officer while in the Air Force

6 March- Arizona Sen. Martha McSally, a former Air Force colonel and one of the first female combat veterans elected to Congress, revealed she was raped by a superior officer during her military career but kept the attack secret out of fear of reprisal. "Like so many women and men, I didn't trust the system at the time," she said during a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "I blamed myself. I was ashamed and confused. I thought I was strong but felt powerless. The perpetrators abused their position of power in profound ways." The revelation came as the committee heard from other military sexual assault victims, and questioned Pentagon officials on whether have done enough to address the problem. Earlier this year, the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office found the number of service academy cadets reporting unwanted sexual encounters increased almost 50 percent over the last three years, to 747 incidents in 2018. [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.



## Joint Base San Antonio Air Force major faces charge related to wife's disappearance

4 March- An Air Force major based in San Antonio bought a shovel, an ax, gasoline and a "burn barrel" a day after his wife was reported missing and then tried to destroy the receipt, according to investigators. Andre McDonald, 40, was indicted Sunday on a charge of tampering with or fabricating evidence in the disappearance of his 29-year-old wife, Andreen McDonald, who police believe is dead, the San Antonio Express-News reported. Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar said friends reported Andreen McDonald missing Friday and her husband purchased the materials Saturday morning. Law enforcement found the items Saturday evening after obtaining a second search warrant for the couple's home, Salazar said. "It led us to believe that these were implements that were going to be used to dispose of a body," Salazar said. The find "really drives home to us: We believe that Andreen McDonald is no longer living," he said. [Air Force Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Lawmakers to DoD: You knew about water contamination. Why haven't you done more?

6 March- The Pentagon's decision not to take action to protect military families from decades of exposure to cancer-causing chemicals until a 2016 Environmental Protection Agency warning did not sit well with members of Congress, who questioned Defense Department leadership on the issue at a hearing Wednesday...DoD has previously said that until the 2016 guidance from EPA on recommended exposure level limits, it did not know the severity of its exposure problem, which spurred it voluntarily providing filters and shutting some water sources, EPA's guidance is not enforceable. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## The new plan to prevent veteran suicides: new grants, better research, more community focus

4 March- The White House is creating a new high-level task force on preventing veteran's suicide which will include new community outreach grants aimed at former service members and expanded projects across a host of government agencies to coordinate research and prevention efforts. President Donald Trump will sign a new executive order on the initiative — dubbed the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide, or PREVENTS — on Tuesday afternoon at the White House. It's the latest in a series of steps by his administration to address the problem, which claims an estimated 20 veterans lives every day. Last year, the president signed a separate executive order providing more counseling and mental health care for recently separated service members, who face a significantly higher risk of suicide than other military groups. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## 2nd man apparently free of AIDS virus following stem cell transplant

4 March- A London man appears to be free of the AIDS virus after a stem cell transplant, the second success including the "Berlin patient," doctors reported. The therapy had an early success with Timothy Ray Brown, a U.S. man treated in Germany who is 12 years post-transplant and still free of HIV. Until now, Brown is the only person thought to have been cured of infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Such transplants are dangerous and have failed in other patients. They're also impractical to try to cure the millions already infected. The latest case "shows the cure of Timothy Brown was not a fluke and can be recreated," said Dr. Keith Jerome of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle who had no role. He added that it could lead to a simpler approach that could be used more widely. The case was published online Monday by the journal Nature and will be presented at an HIV conference in Seattle. The patient has not been identified. He was diagnosed with HIV in 2003 and started taking drugs to control the infection in 2012. It's unclear why he waited that long. He developed Hodgkin lymphoma that year and agreed to a stem cell transplant to treat the cancer in 2016. With the right kind of donor, his doctors figured, the London patient might get a bonus beyond treating his cancer: a possible HIV cure. [CBS News](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Adults who had measles vaccination as kids may no longer be protected from viral disease

2 March- From January to Feb. 20, 2019, the United States has recorded at least 159 cases of measles in 10 states. Amid surging cases of the viral disease, individuals who have not been vaccinated are urged to be immunized. Adults who had their vaccination as a kid may also consider getting another dose...Those who received the standard two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine after 1967 are considered protected against measles for life. People who are uncertain if they received the live or killed version of the measles vaccine in the 1960s are urged to be re-immunized. People born before 1957 were born in an era when the virus was so prevalent they are they are considered immune. Most of them are believed to have been naturally infected through measles outbreaks, but there are still some who are not immune to the virus. "We now recommend to people that are traveling abroad that are born in this time period of '57 to early '70s that they should be re-vaccinated when traveling overseas to areas that may have more measles," said Roy Buchinsky from University Hospital in Ohio. For those who are uncertain, doctors can now check a person's immunity levels with a blood test that can detect antibodies that fight the measles virus. [Tech Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

### 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.

## Links

[A-Z Index](#)

[About APHC](#)

[Army Public Health  
Weekly Update Archives](#)

[Medical Surveillance  
Monthly Report](#)

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

[Request APHC Services](#)

[APHC Resource Materials](#)

[APHC Homepage](#)

[APHC Training](#)

[Contact APHC](#)

## Buttock implants linked to rare blood cancer also tied to breast implants

1 March- Earlier research has shown that women who had breast implants are more likely to develop a rare type of cancer called anaplastic large cell lymphoma. Now, a new case report revealed the case of a woman who developed the deadly disease following a buttocks implant...Joseph Carey, assistant professor of clinical surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, and colleagues linked a 49-year-old woman's buttocks implants to ALCL. ALCL is an aggressive form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a white blood cell cancer that usually affects older adults and tends to occur more often in men than in women. In recent years, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has identified more than 450 cases of cancer linked to breast implants. The FDA said that most of the cases occurred among women with textured breast implants. In the report published in the Aesthetic Surgery Journal on Feb. 15, the gluteal textured implant is being tied to this condition. [Tech Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Drug companies and doctors battle over the future of fecal transplants

3 March- There's a new war raging in health care, with hundreds of millions of dollars at stake and thousands of lives in the balance. The battle, pitting drug companies against doctors and patient advocates, is being fought over the unlikeliest of substances: human excrement. The clash is over the future of fecal microbiota transplants, or F.M.T., a revolutionary treatment that has proved remarkably effective in treating *Clostridioides difficile*, a debilitating bacterial infection that strikes 500,000 Americans a year and kills 30,000. The therapy transfers fecal matter from healthy donors into the bowels of ailing patients, restoring the beneficial works of the community of gut microbes that have been decimated by antibiotics. Scientists see potential for using these organisms to treat diseases from diabetes to cancer. At the heart of the controversy is a question of classification: Are the fecal microbiota that cure *C. diff* a drug, or are they more akin to organs, tissues and blood products that are transferred from the healthy to treat the sick? The answer will determine how the Food and Drug Administration regulates the procedure, how much it costs and who gets to profit. [New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Ebola care rebounds in attack area; World Bank OKs funds

1 March- The Democratic Republic of the Congo's Ebola outbreak grew by three more confirmed cases today, and in a key development to support the response over the next 6 months, the World Bank said yesterday it has approved up to \$80 million in grants and credits. The World Bank support follows an urgent request from World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, PhD, earlier this week for \$148

million to support the Ebola response in the DRC. Earlier this week, the WHO said Tedros would visit the DRC, including the main epicenters of Katwa and Butembo. WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said the visit is still scheduled. Tedros had warned that without help from the global community the country is at risk of backsliding in its progress to contain the disease. Though cases over the past few weeks have shown a decreasing trend, fresh attacks on Ebola treatment centers (ETCs) in hot spots in Katwa and Butembo drove some confirmed patients into the community when they fled the violence, have led Doctors Without Borders (MSF) to evacuate ETC staff and have significantly slowed the response. In addition, the DRC health minister said yesterday that officials expect a surge of cases in the affected areas.

[CIDRAP](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **EU study shows wide range in antibiotic prescribing for febrile kids**

1 March- A new study of European emergency departments has found that antibiotic prescribing for children who show up with a fever varies widely across the continent, and many of those children are discharged with a broad-spectrum antibiotic. The findings appeared yesterday in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*. The cross-sectional, observational analysis of more than 5,100 children admitted to 28 emergency departments in 11 countries across Europe over a 16-month period found that about a third of the children who presented with a fever but no other illnesses received an antibiotic on discharge, with the prescribing frequency ranging from 19% in Switzerland to 64% in Turkey. More than 60% of those prescriptions, which were written mainly for respiratory tract infections, were for second-line antibiotics. While the study did not evaluate whether the antibiotics were appropriately prescribed, the authors say the findings indicate a significant amount of overprescribing is occurring, particularly in children with respiratory infections, and that the drivers of this inappropriate prescribing need to be identified and addressed at the hospital and national level. [CIDRAP](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **Fast-acting depression drug, newly approved, could help millions**

5 March- A nasal spray version of the drug ketamine has shown promise as an antidepressant, even if its properties still aren't well understood. Of the 16 million American adults who live with depression, as many as one-quarter gain little or no benefit from available treatments, whether drugs or talk therapy. They represent perhaps the greatest unmet need in psychiatry. On Tuesday, the Food and Drug Administration approved a prescription treatment intended to help them, a fast-acting drug derived from an old and widely used anesthetic, ketamine. [New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Good news: Opioid prescribing fell. The bad? Pain patients suffer, doctors say

6 March- Three years ago this month, as alarms about the over-prescription of opioid painkillers were sounding across the country, the federal government issued course-correcting guidelines for primary care doctors. Prescriptions have fallen notably since then, and the Trump administration is pushing for them to drop by another third by 2021. But in a letter to be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Wednesday, more than 300 medical experts, including three former White House drug czars, contend that the guidelines are harming one group of vulnerable patients: those with severe chronic pain, who may have been taking high doses of opioids for years without becoming addicted. They say the guidelines are being used as cover by insurers to deny reimbursement and by doctors to turn patients away. As a result, they say, patients who could benefit from the medications are being thrown into withdrawal and suffering renewed pain and a diminished quality of life, even to the point of suicide. [New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Level 2 Travel Alert Regarding Polio Outbreak in Indonesia

2 March- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Level 2 Travel Alert regarding a polio outbreak in Papua Province, Indonesia. The CDC said on February 28, 2019, that this outbreak is caused by vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV), a sign of low oral polio vaccine coverage in Indonesia. VDPV cannot spread in the USA because of the high vaccination rates against polio and the oral polio vaccine is not used in the USA. The CDC is recommending that all travelers to Indonesia be fully vaccinated against polio. [Precision Vaccinations](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Lilly to launch half-price version of insulin

4 March- U.S. drug maker Eli Lilly and Co plans to sell a half-price version of its Humalog insulin injection, as it fends off criticism about rising drug prices. Lilly said on Monday the new version would be called Insulin Lispro, while Humalog would remain available for patients who want to continue accessing it through their current insurance plans. The news comes as the U.S. government intensifies its scrutiny of the pharmaceutical industry and rising U.S. prescription drug prices, a top voter concern and a priority of President Donald Trump's administration. The cost of insulin for treating type 1 diabetes in the United States nearly doubled over a five-year period, underscoring a national outcry over rising drug prices, Reuters reported in January. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)



## MMR vaccine does not cause autism, another study confirms

4 March- The measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine does not increase the risk of autism and does not trigger autism in children who are at risk, according to a new study of over 650,000 children. Researchers used a population registry to evaluate whether the MMR vaccine increased the risk of autism in children born in Denmark between 1999 and 2010. A total of 657,461 children were followed through August 2013, with the researchers documenting diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder as well as known risk factors including age of the parents, diagnosis of autism in a sibling, preterm birth and low weight at birth. Over 95% of the children received the MMR vaccine, and 6,517 were diagnosed with autism. The MMR vaccine did not increase the risk of autism in children who were not considered at risk for the disorder and did not trigger it in those who were, according to the study, published Monday in the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*. [CNN](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Scientists develop wireless sensors that monitor NICU babies

1 March- Scientists have created wireless sensors that will soon help cut the cord when monitoring premature and sick babies in NICU. Researchers are now preparing the sensors for a pilot trial that will start in April. John Rogers, a bioengineer and professor at Northwestern University, and his team developed sensors that do away with wires and harmful adhesives. The sensors use near-field communication (NFC), the same technology found in smartphones with contactless payments and wireless charging. To do this, the team attached the sensors to an ultrathin silicone that mimics the skin. This material clings to the skin without the help of adhesives. The sensors are waterproof and have spring-like electronics to help them adjust with body movements. It's worth mentioning that these sensors do not need batteries to work, hence making them as lightweight as possible. What runs them is a transmitter that's hidden under the patient's bed, which transmits power to the sensors. Again, it's the same concept found in smartphones with wireless charging capabilities. At the same time, the sensors send a baby's vital signs to a computer. To test its accuracy, researchers conducted testing on 20 preterm babies at NICUs affiliated with the Northwestern University. According to the researchers, the wireless sensors worked fine during the trial, which is detailed in the journal *Science*. However, the researchers acknowledged that this technology would still need to undergo further testing before they receive approval from the Food and Drug Administration. [Tech Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Supplements don't prevent depression, study finds

5 March- Preventing depression isn't as simple as taking a dietary supplement every day, a new study suggests. The study found that people who took a multivitamin every day for a year were just as likely to develop depression as those who took a placebo. The study was spurred by earlier research suggesting that certain diets and low levels of certain nutrients are linked with a higher risk of depression. "Diet and nutrition held promise as one means to reach large numbers of people" and potentially lower their risk of depression, study co-author Ed Watkins, a professor of experimental and applied clinical psychology at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, said in a statement. "However, this trial convincingly demonstrates that nutritional supplements do not help to prevent depression."

[Live Science](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Tornadoes kill at least 23 in Alabama

3 March- The first tornado warning in central Alabama went out around 1 p.m. Sunday. In the hours that followed, a cluster of storms ripped through the Southeast, spawning multiple tornadoes, killing at least 23 and leaving a trail of rubble. As the storms pushed east, the tornadoes would leave a path of destruction that stretched from Alabama into Florida and Georgia. The reported deaths were all in Lee County, Ala., where two tornadoes — one at least a half-mile wide — wrecked homes and uprooted trees. It was unclear Sunday night whether the deaths had occurred in various locations or all in one place. Dozens of people were sent to hospitals. As darkness came, rescue workers searched for survivors, and more victims, often with little more than a flashlight or the lights of their vehicles to aid them. More than 150 people were part of the search-and-rescue operations near the Lee County communities of Smiths Station and Beauregard, which is about 60 miles east of Montgomery, said Rita Smith, a spokeswoman for the county's emergency management agency. Sheriff Jay Jones of Lee County told reporters that 23 people had been killed. The East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika, Ala., had received more than 60 patients as of Sunday night, said John Atkinson, a spokesman for the center. He said the conditions of the patients varied. [New York Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

## INFLUENZA

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### APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

For the week ending 23 February 2019 (Week 8): In week 8, a 22% decrease in the number of overall positive respiratory specimens was noted; 1330 were reported in week 7 compared to 1032 in week 8. Influenza A decreased by 21% in week 8 (932) when compared to week 7 (1178). A 46% decrease in the number of positive influenza B specimens was noted in week 8 (15) when compared to the number reported in week 7 (28). Nine influenza-associated hospitalizations with an onset date in week 8 were reported in the

Disease Reporting System internet; all were non-Active Duty beneficiaries. This brings the season total for 2018-2019 hospitalizations to 92. When compared to the season total at week 8 during the 2017-2018 influenza season, 41% fewer influenza-associated hospitalizations occurred in the 2018-2019 season. [APHC](#)

[top of page...](#)

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

Influenza Season Week 8 ending February 23, 2019

-Viral Surveillance: The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza viruses in clinical laboratories increased slightly. Nationally, during week 8, influenza A(H3) viruses were reported more frequently than influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses. During the most recent three weeks, influenza A(H3) viruses were reported more frequently than influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses in HHS Regions 2, 4, 6 and 7.

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

-Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths: 15 influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to CDC during week 8. [CDC](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **ECDC: Flu News Europe**

Week 8/2019 (18-24 February 2019)

-Influenza activity is widespread in the European Region. Specimens collected from individuals presenting with ILI or ARI to sentinel primary health care sites yielded an influenza virus positivity rate of 49%

-Influenza type A virus detections dominated with slightly more A(H1N1) pdm09 than A(H3N2) viruses. Very few influenza B viruses were detected.

-41% of specimens from patients with severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) in week 8/2019 were positive for influenza virus, and almost all were type A.

-Pooled data from 21 Member States and area reporting to the EuroMOMO project indicated excess mortality among person's ages 15-64 years and 65 years and older.

[European Center for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO](#)

[top of page...](#)

## NHRC: Operational Infectious Diseases - Weekly Surveillance Report

28 February- For Epi Week 7, 2019

- Military Recruits – 14 received
- DoD Beneficiaries – 102 received (test pending)
- CDC Border Infectious Disease Surveillance –72 received (test pending)

[Naval Health Research Center](#)

[top of page...](#)

## WHO: Influenza Update

4 March 2019 - In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere influenza activity continued to increase.

-In North America, influenza activity continued to increase in the United States of America, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 as the dominant subtype, followed by influenza A(H3N2).

-In Europe, influenza activity remained elevated across the continent and was reported as widespread in most of the countries. Influenza A viruses co-circulated.

-In North Africa, influenza activity remained elevated.

-In Western Asia, influenza activity peaked in some countries and increased in other, with all seasonal influenza subtypes co-circulating.

-In East Asia, influenza activity appeared to decrease overall, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus predominating.

-In Southern Asia, influenza activity remained elevated overall with influenza A viruses 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...](#)

## VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

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### More than 15 tons of beef recalled for extraneous materials

3 March- Washington Beef, LLC, at Toppenish, WA on Saturday recalled approximately 30,260 pounds of ground beef chubs products that may be contaminated with extraneous materials, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The ground beef chubs were produced on Dec. 27, 2018, and include a "Use or Freeze by" date of 01/20/19. The recalled product is in 1, 3 and 10-pound packages from 71 to 90 percent lean. All was packed on Jan. 22, 2019 for institutional use only. The recalled beef bears the establishment number "EST. 235" inside the USDA mark of inspection. These items were shipped nationwide. The un-named extraneous materials were discovered by a consumer complaint to the company on February 28, 2019. There have been no confirmed reports of adverse reactions due to consumption of these products. Anyone concerned about an injury or illness should contact a healthcare provider. FSIS is concerned that some product may be frozen and in consumers' freezers. Consumers who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them. These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase. FSIS routinely conducts recall effectiveness checks to verify recalling firms notify their customers of the recall and that steps are taken to make certain that the product is no longer available to consumers. When available, the retail distribution list(s) will be posted on the FSIS website. [Food Safety News](#)  
[top of page...](#)

## WELLNESS

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### Can mouthwash raise your blood pressure?

5 March- New research, published in the journal *Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology*, shows that an antiseptic compound found in mouthwash destroys "friendly" oral bacteria that help maintain normal blood pressure levels. An oral microbiome with a good balance between these different kinds of bacteria can keep disease at bay. Studies have found that when this balance is upset it "contributes to oral and whole-body systematic diseases" as diverse as inflammatory bowel disease, Alzheimer's, rheumatoid arthritis, obesity, atherosclerosis, and diabetes. New research points out that a balanced oral microbiome helps maintain good cardiovascular health by helping the conversion of dietary nitrate into nitric oxide (NO) — a signaling molecule that helps maintain normal blood pressure. Worryingly, however, the new study shows that chlorhexidine, an antiseptic substance in mouthwash, may kill NO-producing bacteria, which in turn, may raise systolic blood pressure. [Medical News Today](#)  
[top of page...](#)

## Cocoa may help treat common MS symptom

5 March- New research, which features in the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry, finds that having a cocoa drink every day for 6 weeks helps combat fatigue in people living with multiple sclerosis...Based on these previous findings, Shelly Coe, who works in the Department of Sport, Health Sciences and Social Work at the Oxford Brookes Centre for Nutrition and Health in the United Kingdom, and a team of scientists set out to examine whether cocoa would have the same beneficial effects on fatigue in people with MS. [Medical News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

## IBD: A low-calorie plant diet relieves inflammation, repairs gut

6 March- Repeated cycles of a low-calorie, plant-based diet have shown promise as a treatment for inflammatory bowel disease. Scientists at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles recently tested what they describe as the "fasting-mimicking" diet on a mouse model of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). In a study paper that now features in the journal Cell Reports, they describe how, compared with water-only fasting, periodic 4-day cycles of the fasting-mimicking diet "partially reversed" hallmarks of IBD in the mice. They saw that the diet reduced inflammation and increased populations of stem cells in the mice's intestines. Stem cells are essential for tissue repair and regeneration. [Medical News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

### USAFRICOM

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## Democratic Republic of the Congo: Why doctors without borders is suspending work in the Ebola epicenter in Congo

1 March- The aid group Doctors without Borders is suspending its work in the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The move comes after two separate attacks on its treatment centers there. The organization says, at best, it will be weeks before it returns. "When I send my teams I need to be sure that they are going to come back alive," says Emmanuel Massart, the on-the-ground emergency coordinator for Doctors Without Borders in the region. "The attacks were really, really violent." [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Madagascar: Measles epidemic- 80,000 cases, nearly 1,000 deaths

4 March- While health authorities report seeing decreases in the number of measles cases in Madagascar in recent week, the numbers are still astounding (reporting more than 7,000 new cases in the most recent week). According to UN officials, since the beginning of September 2018, 82,905 cases have been reported in all 22 regions of the country. There is an attack rate of more than 3,100 per 100,000 population nationally. In addition, 926 deaths have been reported. The bulk of the cases and deaths are reported in children 14 and under and some 2/3s of cases were unvaccinated. The Phase 2 supplementary immunization activities (SIA) was conducted Feb. 18-22 targeting young children. [Outbreak News Today](#)  
[top of page...](#)

### USCENTCOM

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## Iraq/ Afghanistan: Here's what's coming next in the battle over burn pit benefits

6 March - House lawmakers on Tuesday advanced legislation to improve tracking of troops' exposure to toxic chemicals from war zone burn pits, but the real political fight over how to help those ailing veterans is set for later this spring. A group of lawmakers led by California Democrat Rep. Raul Ruiz is planning a push to classify combat burn pit exposure as the presumed cause of a range of lung diseases for veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, opening the door for easier access to medical care and disability benefits. The proposal is likely to face fierce opposition from VA leadership, which has emphasized the need for clear scientific links between war zone exposures and illnesses later in life before making large-scale benefits decisions. The department's official position is that "research does not show evidence of long-term health problems from exposure" to burn pits. [Military Times](#)

[top of page...](#)

### USEUCOM

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## Iceland: Reports 2nd measles case

4 March- Iceland health officials on Saturday reported a confirmed measles case in an 11-month-old child. The unvaccinated child was in the same flight as a person with infectious measles during a flight last month. The child was admitted to Hringinn's Children's Hospital Friday. Officials say the likelihood of further transmission is low as long as you're vaccinated. The initial case, traveling from the Philippines on Feb. 14, was onboard flights from London to Reykjavik on February 14 and on Air Iceland Connect from Reykjavik to Egilsstaðir. Officials note at present there are no known additional infected individuals; however, it is

possible to get infected until March 7, when then 3 weeks have passed since the person with measles was traveling both abroad and here in Iceland. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **Norway: Two reindeer killed due to suspicion of rabies**

4 March- The Governor of Svalbard ordered the killing of two reindeer found in Tverrdalen due to suspicion of rabies. The animals were sick and could not stand upright. Samples of both animals are sent to the Veterinary Institute in Oslo for examination on Monday. The Governor of Svalbard encourages people to be aware and report if they see reindeer or other animals that have unnatural behavior and dead animals. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

### **USINDOPACOM**

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## **Bangladesh: Nipah virus reported in Thakurgaon**

4 March- The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) in Bangladesh is reporting that between February 9 and 24, five members of a family in Baliadanga upazila, Thakurgaon died after complaining of fever, headache, nausea, and pain in muscles and joints. The IEDCR reports one of them was found to have carried the deadly Nipah virus (NiV). Although not confirmed, it is presumed that the four others also contracted the deadly virus. An IEDCR team was dispatched to investigate and quarantine the area. They strongly urge people to not drink date juice before it is treated. It is also providing gloves and masks to people in the affected area. From 2001-2018, Bangladesh reported 303 Nipah virus cases, accounting for 211 deaths (approximately a 70 case fatality rate). [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **China: Urges crack down on concealing African swine fever**

4 March- China needs to step up its prevention and control of African swine fever, said the agriculture ministry in a statement on Monday, as the disease continues to spread across the world's top pork-producing nation. Authorities should combat illegal activities such as concealing outbreaks, selling and arbitrarily disposing of sick and dead pigs, and feeding kitchen waste to pigs, said the ministry following a meeting with 18 other ministries. China has reported 110 outbreaks of the disease in 28 of its provinces and regions since August 2018. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)



## Japan: Measles in Japan- Most are genotype D8

7 March- The outbreak of measles in Japan continues with 33 additional cases reported in the week of Feb. 18-24, according to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases in Tokyo. This brings the total to 258 cases in the first eight weeks of 2019. Osaka prefecture has reported the most cases with 94, followed by Mie (50) and Aichi (25). In Mie Prefecture, where the outbreak started from the beginning of 2019, multiple measles cases (secondary infection) were reported from the participants of a meeting which was held in December 2018. After that, cases were reported from among contacted persons such as family members, or at hospitals and schools. In Osaka Prefecture, where they reported more cases than Mie Prefecture, multiple outbreaks have occurred. It was reported that the sales person of shopping facility had measles, and the patient spread measles to colleagues and customers in February 2019. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Thailand: Chikungunya outbreak tops 2,000

7 March- Officials with the Bureau of Epidemiology with the Thailand Ministry of Health have reported a total of 2063 chikungunya cases from 19 provinces, through Mar. 4. The southern part of the country has seen the most cases. No deaths have been reported. The areas with the highest morbidity include Phuket, Songkla, Pattani and Pangnga. More than half the cases were reported in people 15 to 44 years of age. Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes. It causes fever and severe joint pain, which is often debilitating. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue, and rash. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

### USNORTHCOM

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## Canada: Salmonella outbreak rises to 555

2 March- Canadian health officials issued an update on the active outbreak investigation of Salmonella illnesses linked to a frozen breaded chicken product yesterday. As of March 1, 2019, there have been 555 laboratory-confirmed cases of Salmonella illness investigated as part of the illness outbreaks across the country: British Columbia (42), Alberta (84), Saskatchewan (18), Manitoba (27), Ontario (201), Quebec (115), New Brunswick (28), Nova Scotia (18), Prince Edward Island (6), Newfoundland and Labrador (12), Northwest Territories (1), Yukon (1), and Nunavut (2). [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **U.S: Flu activity stays high as 15 new deaths in kids reported**

1 March- Flu activity across the country remains at elevated levels but shows some signs of slowing, yet 15 influenza-related deaths in children were reported, bringing the season total to 56, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported today in its weekly update. In addition, the H3N2 strain—which typically causes more severe symptoms—has overtaken 2009 H1N1 as the predominant strain. Europe is likewise seeing co-circulation of H1N1 and H3N2, according to a report yesterday from across the Atlantic. [CIDRAP](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **U.S: New York City measles outbreak rises to 133 cases**

6 March- In a follow-up on the measles outbreak in Brooklyn and Queens, city health officials report a dozen new cases, bringing the total to 133 since October. Most of these cases have involved members of the Orthodox Jewish community. The neighborhood of Williamsburg saw 11 new cases during the past week, while one travel-related case was reported in Brighton Beach. The majority of individuals diagnosed with measles have been children, of whom more than 90 percent were unvaccinated. Several patients acquired measles while traveling abroad to the United Kingdom, Israel and Ukraine. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

## **U.S: Texas reports more measles, tops 2018 total**

7 March- In a follow-up on the measles situation in Texas, the Texas Department of State Health Services is now reporting 10 measles cases in the state in 2019. This is more than the total reported in all of 2018. Texas reported nine cases of measles in 2018 and one in 2017. The latest case is in an adult traveler visiting Guadalupe County from the Philippines, where there is an ongoing measles outbreak. Measles is a highly contagious respiratory illness transmitted when an infected person coughs or sneezes virus particles into the air. It's so contagious that if one person is sick and spreading measles, nine out of 10 people around them who aren't immune will get it, too. The illness usually starts a week or two after someone is exposed to the virus with symptoms like a high fever, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. A few days later, the telltale rash breaks out as flat, red spots on the face and then spreads down the neck and trunk to the rest of the body. A person is contagious about four days before the rash appears to four days after. People with measles should stay home from work or school during that period. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

## Paraguay: Hantavirus cases reported

2 March- The number of hantavirus cases in Capiatá in Paraguay's Central Department has risen to five, according to a Hoy news report (computer translated). All the cases are reported in children between 2 and 7 years old. The first case confirmed by a private laboratory continues to be hospitalized in intensive care and the rest presented improvement and already receive outpatient treatment, confirmed Dr. Sandra Irala of Health Surveillance. Irala pointed out that the cases that are initially positive should have a cross-section of studies for final confirmation, so the samples were sent to Argentina where there is a reference laboratory for the detection of this type of virus. The person acquires the virus by inhaling the air contaminated with the virus that is transported through dust particles, which is why it is recommended before cleaning, especially of tanks, first, open doors and windows to ventilate the environment and then moisten the soil to then proceed with the sweep. The possibility of acquiring the hantavirus is if you have a history of having visited the Chaco area or if you were in a country that registers outbreaks of hantavirus such as southern Argentina. The disease has a 30% mortality rate and in Paraguay about 20 cases are registered each year, all in the Chaco. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

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

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