

8 May 2020

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



U.S. Military | Global | Influenza | Veterinary/Food Safety | Wellness | Contact Us
USAFRICOM | USCENTCOM | USEUCOM | USINDOPACOM | USNORTHCOM | USSOUTHCOM

Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

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

- [Army may soon restart major unit training rotations](#)
- [DOD to implement T21 policies for tobacco sales beginning in August](#)
- [Homecoming for deployed soldiers altered by quarantine](#)
- [Lead paint, asbestos mitigation plans fall short in military family housing, IG finds](#)
- ['You can only watch so much Netflix': Military leaders in Japan worry about troops' mental health during pandemic](#)

GLOBAL

- [CDC maintains childhood immunization guidelines during COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 antibody test: Roche's Elecsys® Anti-SARS-CoV-2 test receives FDA EUA](#)
- [FDA issues emergency-use authorization for remdesivir to treat hospitalized patients with severe Covid-19](#)
- [Genital herpes is a substantial health concern worldwide: WHO](#)
- [Is telehealth here to stay?](#)
- [Malaria 'completely stopped' by microbe](#)
- [Migrants are among the worst hit by COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries](#)
- [New CRISPR-based test for Covid-19 could be a simple, cheap at-home diagnostic, scientists say](#)
- [WHO urges countries to investigate early COVID-19 cases](#)

INFLUENZA

- [AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary](#)
- [CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report](#)

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.



VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

- [Ritz Cheese Cracker Sandwiches recalled for undeclared peanut](#)

WELLNESS

- [Can high-intensity exercise improve your memory?](#)

USAFRICOM

- [Plague cases reported again in DRC](#)

USCENTCOM

- [Saudi Arabia reports 15 MERS cases in March 2020](#)

USEUCOM

- [Iceland to start lifting restrictions Monday as COVID-19 cases slow](#)
- [Spain emerges from strict COVID-19 distancing as pandemic issues keep U.S. on edge](#)
- [Russia COVID-19 update: 9600 cases reported, most one day total](#)

USINDOPACOM

- [Indonesia: Dengue cases spike in a time of COVID-19](#)
- [Sri Lanka: Warnings of possible dengue surge with onset of rainy season](#)
- [Taiwan: No new COVID-19 cases in nearly a week](#)

USNORTHCOM

- [U.S. starts study to find COVID-19 infection rate in children](#)

USSOUTHCOM

- [Brazil: 15 yellow fever cases reported in Santa Catarina](#)

U.S. MILITARY

Army may soon restart major unit training rotations

1 May- U.S. Army leaders are working on a plan to re-start large-scale training in the operational force, but it will likely be up to unit commanders from installation to installation to decide when training will resume again. "We are ... taking a hard look at how we get back to collective training both at home station and our combat training centers," Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville said today during a Pentagon briefing. "Getting back to collective training is crucial, but we need to make sure we have the right measures in place first. ... It's not going to be a one-size-fits-all solution." The Army has proposed a "risk-mitigation framework" to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, so that "we can safely return to training," Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy said during the briefing. "The virus did not impact the country uniformly, so we need to tailor our approach to the reopening by developing Army-wide standards and protocols," McCarthy said. The Army halted rotations to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California and the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, Louisiana in mid-March to limit the spread of the virus. NTC, JRTC and Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany, hold brigade-level training exercises for armor, infantry and Stryker brigade combat teams and are a key measurement for the service's combat readiness. So far, four BCTs have had their combat training center, or CTC, rotations postponed, a senior Army official told Military.com. "We were able to look into the future and decide we could delay their rotation until a later date," the senior official said. CTC rotations are important "because it's a deployment of a force to a combat training center, a redeployment of that force back its home station, but it's also a force-on-force [exercise]," the official said. [Military.com](#)

[top of page...](#)

DOD to implement T21 policies for tobacco sales beginning in August

5 May- Although most Americans are rightfully focused on the current health threat posed by the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, tobacco use is still the number one cause of preventable disease, disability and death in the United States. In recognition of the long-term harm caused by early onset tobacco use, President Donald Trump signed legislation in December 2019 amending the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and raising the federal minimum age for sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years. This legislation, known as Tobacco 21 or T21, makes it unlawful for any retailer to sell tobacco products — including cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, hookah tobacco, cigars, pipe tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery systems including e-cigarettes and e-liquids to any person younger than 21 years of age. Effective Aug. 1, the Department of Defense will no longer sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21, including service members. [DVIDS](#)

[top of page...](#)

Follow us!



Facebook



Twitter



YouTube



Instagram

APHC 2019 Novel Coronavirus Updates

This site provides Army-specific information and communication resources related to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The resources and tools available on this site may be shared with, tailored for, and/or used to create informational and educational materials for Army beneficiaries.



Homecoming for deployed soldiers altered by quarantine

2 May- It was an unusual homecoming for soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division. Instead of marching into a room full of eager family members on Fort Bragg, loved ones stood beside cars decked out with hand-painted signs, as buses carrying weary paratroopers fresh off a no-notice deployment to the Middle East drove by. Most of the traditional welcome-back fanfare has been replaced with a mandatory 14 day quarantine. The measure is meant to protect from the spread of COVID-19. This is certainly not the Fort Bragg soldiers left suddenly four months ago. On New Year's Eve, the division's Immediate Response Force was activated amid rising tension with Iran. Within days, more than three thousand paratroopers were deployed to the Middle East, some having just hours to say goodbye to loved ones. On Friday evening, Sgt. Ashley Boutte waited patiently for her husband, Sgt. Lawrence Boutte, an Apache helicopter mechanic. She didn't expect he'd be home in time for their first wedding anniversary in a few weeks. "It's nothing but a blessing," she told The Associated Press. But for some soldiers, reunions will have to wait. For the next two weeks, paratroopers will be quarantined to follow Department of Defense guidelines. Those who live with family members off base will be allowed to hunker down in homes and apartments, but others are immediately being taken to a containment area on Fort Bragg. They'll have Wi-Fi and workout equipment. And while the situation isn't ideal, public affairs officer Maj. Rich Foote said he hasn't heard many complaints. "It's understood. This is what they're coming home to, they get it," Foote said. [My North West](#)

[top of page...](#)

Lead paint, asbestos mitigation plans fall short in military family housing, IG finds

5 May- Military families living in 38,000 housing units owned and operated by the U.S. government face health and safety risks such as lead-based paint, asbestos, radon and contaminated drinking water because the services have failed to monitor these threatening living conditions, the Defense Department's Inspector General found. Inspectors at seven bases overseas and one in the U.S. found flaking paint that may have carried lead in homes, as well as materials that contained asbestos. They also uncovered problems with the management and mitigation of radon, the naturally occurring element that can seep into homes through foundations and cause lung cancer, and failures in monitoring drinking water supplies. At Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany, for example, base officials were not testing for legionella, the bacteria that causes Legionnaires' disease, even though U.S. and German government standards require it. The issues were so extensive across installations that the IG concluded that other government-run military homes likely have similar issues.

[Military.com](#)

[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.

'You can only watch so much Netflix': Military leaders in Japan worry about troops' mental health during pandemic

5 May- For most military personnel under restriction in Japan the battle against the coronavirus is mental rather than physical. Military officials have reported "fewer than 30" service members at Yokosuka Naval Base and a few more at other facilities testing positive for the virus out of 50,000 service members stationed here. Defense Secretary Mark Esper in March ordered the military to stop reporting new coronavirus cases at specific installations. All military bases in Japan have been under restriction since U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider last month declared a public health emergency through May 15. Most service members, their families and civilian employees attached to those bases have adjusted to restricted movements, wearing face masks and coping with limited dining and recreational opportunities. It remains unclear how much of an impact all this is having on troops' mental health, but there are signs leaders are concerned. Yokosuka, southwest of Tokyo in Kanagawa prefecture, has been under a shelter-in-place order since March 27 after three coronavirus cases were reported on base within 24 hours. Arguably, those restrictions are the toughest the U.S. military endures in Japan. [Stars and Stripes](#)

[top of page...](#)

GLOBAL

CDC maintains childhood immunization guidelines during COVID-19

1 May- Immunizations remain a vital component of pediatric health care, even during the COVID19 pandemic. Immune systems are still developing in children and infants. Vaccinations result in the production of antibodies to protect people from potentially deadly diseases, explained Ann M. Morse, a family nurse practitioner at the North-Atlantic Regional Vaccine Safety Hub, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. "Immunizations allow the immune system to recognize that germ, virus, or bacteria and fight off that disease, or limit the severity of complications if exposed to the real disease," continued Morse. Immunizations also protect public health through herd immunity by preventing a widespread outbreak of highly infectious diseases, like measles or whooping cough. Despite the current climate of social distancing, vaccine-preventable diseases continue to circulate. Individuals who have not been vaccinated and contract the disease could spread it to susceptible individuals because those infected can be contagious up to a week before developing any symptoms, explained Morse. She added that if children stop receiving necessary vaccinations, herd immunity decreases, increasing the likelihood of other potential viral outbreaks, like measles. [Health.mil](#)

[top of page...](#)

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](#)

COVID-19 antibody test: Roche's Elecsys® Anti-SARS-CoV-2 test receives FDA EUA

4 May- On Sunday, Roche announced that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for its new Elecsys® Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody test. The test is designed to help determine if a patient has been exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus and if the patient has developed antibodies against SARS-CoV-2.

Elecsys® Anti-SARS-CoV-2 is an immunoassay for the in-vitro qualitative detection of antibodies (including IgG) to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in human serum and plasma. Through a blood sample, the test, which is based on an in-solution double-antigen sandwich format, can detect antibodies to the new coronavirus causing COVID-19, which could signal whether a person has already been infected and potentially developed immunity to the virus. Based on the measurement of a total of 5272 samples, the Elecsys® Anti-SARS-CoV-2 assay has 99.81% specificity and shows no cross-reactivity to the four human coronaviruses causing common cold. This means it can lower the chance of false positives due to the detection of similar antibodies that may be present in an individual, but are specific for coronaviruses other than SARS-CoV-2. Elecsys® Anti-SARS-CoV-2 detected antibodies with 100% sensitivity in samples taken 14 days after a PCR-confirmed infection. The importance of specificity and sensitivity of a particular test will be dependent on its purpose and disease prevalence within a given population. Hospitals and reference laboratories can run the test on Roche's cobas e analysers, which are widely available around the world. These fully automated systems can provide SARS-CoV-2 test results in approximately 18 minutes for one single test, with a test throughput of up to 300 tests/hour, depending on the analyser. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

FDA issues emergency-use authorization for remdesivir to treat hospitalized patients with severe Covid-19

1 May- The experimental drug remdesivir has been approved to treat hospitalized patients with severe Covid-19, the US Food and Drug Administration said in a letter on Friday. Remdesivir is the first authorized therapy drug for Covid-19 in the United States, FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn said on Friday. "This is an important clinical advance that showed a statistically significant reduction in time to recovery for patients with Covid-19 and is the first authorized therapy for Covid-19." Hahn said. The FDA issued an emergency-use authorization on Friday, saying the benefits of the drug outweigh its risks in patients. An emergency-use authorization is a lower regulatory bar than full FDA approval. Denise Hinton, the FDA's chief scientist, said in the authorization letter that there is "no adequate, approved, and available alternative to the emergency use of remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19." The FDA limited its authorization of the drug to adults and children with suspected or laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 and severe disease, which includes low blood oxygen levels, the need for oxygen therapy or the need for a ventilator or other intensive breathing support. Possible side effects of remdesivir include increased levels of liver

enzymes -- which may be a sign of inflammation or damage to cells in the liver -- and infusion-related reactions like low blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, sweating and shivering, the FDA said. President Donald Trump, speaking in the Oval Office on Friday, called remdesivir a "very promising situation." [CNN](#)

[top of page...](#)

Genital herpes is a substantial health concern worldwide: WHO

2 May- The World Health Organization announced Friday that billions of people across the globe are living with herpes infections. According to the UN health agency, some 500,000,000 estimated people worldwide are living with genital herpes, and several billion have an oral herpes infection. About 13% of the world's population aged 15 to 49 years were living with herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) infection in 2016, the latest year for which data is available. HSV-2 is almost exclusively sexually transmitted, causing genital herpes. Infection can lead to recurring, often painful, genital sores in up to a third of people infected. Around 67% of the world's population aged 0 to 49 had herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) infection in 2016 – an estimated 3.7 billion people. Most of these infections were oral; however, between 122 million to 192 million people were estimated to have genital HSV-1 infection. HSV-1 is mainly transmitted by oral to oral contact to cause oral herpes infection – sometimes leading to painful sores in or around the mouth, or cold sores. However, HSV-1 can also be transmitted to the genital area through oral sex, causing genital herpes. The WHO also notes that people with HSV-2 infection are at least three times more likely to become infected with HIV, if exposed. Thus, HSV-2 likely plays a substantial role in the spread of HIV globally. Women are more susceptible to both HSV-2 and HIV. Women living in the WHO Africa Region have the highest HSV-2 prevalence and exposure to HIV – putting them at greatest risk of HIV infection. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Is telehealth here to stay?

4 May- With the surge of doctors' offices transitioning to telemedicine platforms during the coronavirus crisis, many patients are left wondering whether the remote services are a practical alternative for your average doctor visit. Telehealth and telemedicine platforms allow doctors and nurses to practice medicine virtually. You can easily get a prescription refill or ask your doctor questions at the click of a button without ever stepping foot into an office. The convenience of the "e-doc" is meant to streamline medicine and the services they provide. More recently doctors have been using the platform to keep their patients safe from the coronavirus. Dr. Carolynn Francavilla-Brown, a family practitioner who has been using telehealth platforms for the last three years, says her practice went from 10 percent of patients using the digital health platform to 95 percent when COVID-19 hit. "We are starting all encounters for our clinic via telehealth and then we are bringing people into the office if we already know they need to be there," Francavilla-Brown told Fox News. Mara McCrossin, a neurosurgical nurse practitioner for a private company who also uses

telehealth applications, agrees that it's helpful for those who don't have easy access to the doctor, however, she doesn't think it will replace a trip to the doctor entirely. "How a patient walks into a room can tell you a big story, and not having that ability to see the patient walk or move can actually delay care and not give you the full big picture as to what's going on with them," McCrossin told Fox News. Both health care professionals say remote health visits don't affect the way they care for their patients, but it can make diagnoses a little more challenging without a hands-on approach. "I still ask the same questions, [but] not being able to touch or feel a patient definitely plays a role [in treatment]," McCrossin said. When it comes to a regular doctor's office visit, it seems there is no replacement technology can provide. However, Francavilla-Brown believes telehealth platforms do have the potential to replace urgent care facilities. "Urgent care is such a mixed bag. There's some really high level urgent cares that can give I.V. fluids and do EKG's and rule out heart attacks, but most urgent cares are really treating a lot of urinary tract infections, viruses, colds. And so I think it largely can [eliminate the need for urgent care facilities]." [Fox News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Malaria 'completely stopped' by microbe

4 May- Scientists have discovered a microbe that completely protects mosquitoes from being infected with malaria. The team in Kenya and the UK say the finding has "enormous potential" to control the disease. Malaria is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes, so protecting them could in turn protect people. The researchers are now investigating whether they can release infected mosquitoes into the wild, or use spores to suppress the disease...The fine details still need to be worked out. But Microsporidia MB could be priming the mosquito's immune system, so it is more able to fight off infections. Or the presence of the microbe in the insect could be having a profound effect on the mosquito's metabolism, making it inhospitable for the malaria parasite. Microsporidia MB infections appear to be life-long. If anything, the experiments show they become more intense, so the malaria-blocking effect would be long-lasting. [BBC News](#)

[top of page...](#)

Migrants are among the worst hit by COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries

5 May- The Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia are struggling to contain the COVID-19 outbreak among migrant worker populations on whose labor the countries rely. Even amid stringent lockdowns, the disease has continued to spread through migrant communities, with many workers living in cramped labor camps, where they share bunk beds in tightly packed rooms. In Saudi Arabia, non-Saudi residents have comprised close to 80% of the more than 3,000 new confirmed coronavirus cases this week, according to the country's Health Ministry. Official figures in Gulf countries, where more than half of the population are foreigners, also suggest the disease is spreading fastest through migrant communities. [NPR](#)

[top of page...](#)

New CRISPR-based test for Covid-19 could be a simple, cheap at-home diagnostic, scientists say

5 May- The revolutionary genetic technique better known for its potential to cure thousands of inherited diseases could also solve the challenge of Covid-19 diagnostic testing, scientists announced on Tuesday. A team headed by biologist Feng Zhang of the McGovern Institute at MIT and the Broad Institute has repurposed the genome-editing tool CRISPR into a test able to quickly detect as few as 100 coronavirus particles in a swab or saliva sample. Crucially, the technique, dubbed a "one pot" protocol, works in a single test tube and does not require the many specialty chemicals, or reagents, whose shortage has hampered the rollout of widespread Covid-19 testing in the U.S. It takes about an hour to get results, requires minimal handling, and in preliminary studies has been highly accurate, Zhang told STAT. He and his colleagues, led by the McGovern's Jonathan Gootenberg and Omar Abudayyeh, released the protocol on their STOPCovid.science website. Because the test has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration, it is only for research purposes for now. But minutes before speaking to STAT on Monday, Zhang and his colleagues were on a conference call with FDA officials about what they needed to do to receive an "emergency use authorization" that would allow clinical use of the test. The FDA has used EUAs to fast-track Covid-19 diagnostics as well as experimental therapies, including remdesivir, after less extensive testing than usually required. [STAT News](#)

[top of page...](#)

WHO urges countries to investigate early COVID-19 cases

5 May- The World Health Organization said on Tuesday that a report that COVID-19 had emerged in December in France, sooner than previously thought, was "not surprising", and urged countries to investigate any other early suspicious cases. The disease later identified as COVID-19 was first reported by Chinese authorities to the WHO on Dec. 31 and was not previously believed to have spread to Europe until January. "This gives a whole new picture on everything," WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier told a U.N. briefing in Geneva, referring to the French report. "The findings help to better understand the potential virus circulation of COVID-19," he added, saying other earlier cases could emerge after retesting samples. A French hospital which retested old samples from pneumonia patients discovered that it treated a man who had COVID-19 as early as Dec. 27, nearly a month before the French government confirmed its first cases. There is not currently any suggestion that the virus emerged from anywhere other than Wuhan, China. It is thought that, instead, the French case was somehow connected to a person who travelled from there in December before the virus had been identified or reported by China, the WHO spokesman said.

[Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Week 17 (19 April 2020 — 25 April 2020):

NORTHCOM- ILI activity decreased to minimal. Influenza B predominated during the first half of the season and then Influenza A became the predominating strain for the remainder of the season, specifically A(H1N1).

EUCOM- ILI activity decreased to minimal. Among positive influenza specimens, the majority have been influenza A.

INDOPACOM- ILI activity decreased to minimal. The majority of positive influenza specimens have been influenza A. Among subtyped influenza A specimens, the majority were A(H1N1).

SOUTHCOM- ILI activity remained minimal. The majority of influenza specimens continued to be influenza A.

CENTCOM- ILI activity remained minimal. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)
[top of page...](#)

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

Key Updates for Week 17, ending April 25, 2020: Laboratory confirmed flu activity as reported by clinical laboratories remains low. Influenza-like illness activity continues to decrease and is below the national baseline. The percent of deaths due to pneumonia or influenza (P&I) is high but the increase is due primarily to COVID-19, not influenza. Reported pediatric flu deaths for the season are high at 170. [CDC](#)

[top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Ritz Cheese Cracker Sandwiches recalled for undeclared peanut

4 May- Mondelez Global is recalling a limited quantity of Ritz Cheese Cracker Sandwiches Family Size because it contains undeclared peanuts. The outer packaging is labeled as the cheese variety, but the product contains the peanut butter variety of the snack. The outer carton does, however, have an allergen advisory statement saying that the product "May contain peanuts." And the individually wrapped six-cracker sandwiches are properly labeled as Ritz Peanut Butter Cracker Sandwiches and declare peanut as an ingredient. Anyone who is allergic to peanuts who eats this product does run the risk of a serious or life-threatening

allergic reaction. There are no reports of any illness or allergic reaction reported to the company to date. This recall is being issued as a precaution. This product was sold at retail stores nationwide. The recalled product is Ritz Cheese Cracker Sandwiches Family Size, packaged in a 21.6 ounce carton. The UPC number on the package is 0 44000 03826 7. The best when used by dates for the recalled products include 18SEP20, 20SEP20, 28SEP20, 29SEP20, 30SEP20, 01OCT20, and 02OCT20. These dates are found on the left side of the carton. If you bought this product and are allergic to peanuts, don't eat it. Throw it away or take it back to the place of purchase for a full refund. You can also contact the company for more information about the recall. Symptoms of a food allergic reaction can include tingling of the lips, mouth, and tongue, itching, and hives, swelling of the mouth and throat, and difficulty breathing. Anyone experiencing those symptoms should see a doctor as soon as possible. [Food Poisoning Bulletin](#)

[top of page...](#)

WELLNESS

Can high-intensity exercise improve your memory?

29 April- A recent study published in the journal Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism has some very exciting findings in the fight against memory loss and dementia. I probably don't need to tell you how debilitating dementia can be if you've experienced it with someone you care about. If you haven't, count yourself lucky. The World Health Organization (WHO) says that around 50 million people worldwide have dementia. Nearly 60 percent live in low- and middle-income countries. Every year, there are nearly 10 million new cases. And to make matters worse, the total number of people with dementia is projected to reach 82 million in 2030 and 152 million by 2050. Currently, there's no treatment or cure for dementia or even a way to alter its progression. That makes preventative treatments, such as the study I'm focusing on today, even more exciting. Thankfully, numerous new treatments are being investigated, which are at various stages of clinical trials. So it's not all doom and gloom. [Scientific American](#)

[top of page...](#)

USAFRICOM

Plague cases reported again in DRC

4 May- After going several week without a reported human plague case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), new cases were reported between mid-February and mid-March. Since the beginning of the year a total of 20 suspected bubonic plague cases with 7 deaths (case fatality ratio 35%) were notified in 5 health zones: Aungba (4 cases et 2 deaths), Linga (7 cases and 5 deaths), Rethy (6 cases and no deaths), Aru (2 cases and no deaths) and Kambala (1 case and no deaths). From week 1 to 52 of 2019, a total of 48 cases of bubonic plague including eight deaths have been reported in the country. Plague is an

infectious disease caused by the bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*. It is found in animals throughout the world, most commonly rats but other rodents like ground squirrels, prairie dogs, chipmunks, rabbits and voles. Fleas typically serve as the vector of plague. People can also get infected through direct contact with an infected animal, through inhalation and in the case of pneumonic plague, person to person. *Yersinia pestis* is treatable with antibiotics if started early enough. There are three forms of human plague; bubonic, septicemic and pneumonic. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USCENTCOM

Saudi Arabia reports 15 MERS cases in March 2020

5 May- The National IHR Focal Point of Saudi Arabia reported 15 Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) cases in March 2020, including five deaths. About half the cases were reported in Riyadh, while the rest were reported in Makkah, Najran, and Al Qassim regions. Two had been exposed to camels or camel milk before they got sick, according to officials. The majority of cases (13) were in men and no healthcare workers were infected in March. Nearly all the cases had underlying medical conditions to include diabetes mellitus, hypertension and/or chronic renal failure. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USEUCOM

Iceland to start lifting restrictions Monday as COVID-19 cases slow

2 May- A little more than two weeks ago, Minister of Health Svandís Svavarsdóttir and Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir announced they would start gradually lift restriction starting Monday, May 4. On April 14th, the day of the announcement, they noted more than 1700 people have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in Iceland and the number of new infections were slowing. As of today, Iceland has reported 1798 cases, including 10 deaths. The prevalence of the virus among the general population seems to be about 1%, according to the large-scale screening undertaken by the biotech company deCode. It remains necessary to maintain a certain level of restrictions, in order to prevent a second wave of infections. Thus, the Chief Epidemiologist proposes measures will be lifted incrementally and reviewed every three to four weeks. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Spain emerges from strict COVID-19 distancing as pandemic issues keep U.S. on edge

2 May- In the latest pandemic developments, people in Spain were allowed out of their home for exercise today after a 7-week lockdown, and in the United States, details emerged about COVID-19 spread in a New York City nursing home that killed nearly 100 people and may be the nation's largest such outbreak. Today the global total rose to 3,419,184 reported cases, which includes 242,296 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins online dashboard. The 1,126,519 US cases make up almost a third of the global total, and 66,051 Americans have died from their infections. Spain, which has the world's second most cases in the world, saw its outbreak quickly escalate after cases soared in Italy, and with cases and deaths declining, officials are now relaxing some parts of the strict distancing measures that kept people indoors for all but essential trips. At a media briefing today, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said the country is now seeing the rewards from long weeks of sacrifice, Reuters reported. But he warned that the virus will continue to spread until there is a vaccine, and that people will need to take personal responsibility to curb the spread. He announced that, starting May 4, people will have to wear facemasks while riding on public transportation. Earlier this week, Spain announced a four-step reopening plan and said it hopes to return to a "new normal" by the end of June. [CIDRAP](#)

[top of page...](#)

Russia COVID-19 update: 9600 cases reported, most one day total

2 May- In a follow-up on the COVID-19 outbreak in Russia, the health ministry reports as of May 2, 2020, 124,054 cases of new coronavirus infection (COVID-19) and 1,222 deaths as a result of the disease were registered in Russia. 15,013 people were discharged for recovery. For the day of May 1, 2020, the country again registered the largest number of new cases of the disease for the entire period of the epidemic – 9,623. The city of Moscow has reported more than 62,000 cases. The data indicate that the virus continues to spread actively and a high probability of infection remains. Deputy Director of the Scientific and Research Center for Phthisiopulmonology and Infectious Diseases of the Ministry of Health of Russia Vladimir Chulanov indicates that the increase in the number of new cases of the disease may be a result of a violation of the self-isolation regime. "Currently, the main and most effective measure to prevent the further spread of a new coronavirus infection is strict adherence to a self-isolation regime," said Vladimir Chulanov. Recall that at present there is no reason to believe that the situation has stabilized and security rules can be neglected. Therefore, compliance with the regime of self-isolation and solidarity with the measures taken by the state remain the most important factors in the fight against the epidemic.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Indonesia: Dengue cases spike in a time of COVID-19

6 May- While Indonesia, like virtually every country, battles the rise in coronavirus disease, or COVID-19 cases and deaths, a mosquito borne disease prominent in much of the tropical world is spiking in the country year to date. According to the Indonesia Health Ministry, 39,860 people have been diagnosed with dengue fever in the first three months of the year, a 15.7 percent rise compared with the same period last year. In 2019, 137,761 cases were reported, double the number in 2018. With the one-two punch of COVID-19 and dengue, people are concerned with Indonesia's already struggling medical infrastructure. "Even before COVID-19, the capacity and quality of medical infrastructure was already an issue in Indonesia," said Pandu Riono, an epidemiologist at the University of Indonesia. "Other diseases... are not only getting less treatment, but are transferred to other hospitals with probably less-proper facilities. This is very concerning because not only is their condition getting worse, but the mortality rate from other diseases might also increase." [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Sri Lanka: Warnings of possible dengue surge with onset of rainy season

1 May- Sri Lanka health officials have reported 18,835 dengue fever cases through the first four months of 2020 and are warning of a possible surge in cases with the onset of the rainy season. Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi pointed out that in the recent past there was a greater rise in dengue infections in urbanized and congested areas while the most number of cases was reported mid-year (May to July) in the Southwest Monsoon season and at the end of the year (October to January) in the Northeast monsoon season. The minister warned that with the focus on COVID-19 if measures are not taken to address the dengue situation, the country will have to face an unfortunate fate. Therefore, she instructed the health officials to take action to implement a proper program to address the dengue issue and instructed them to pay special attention to the construction sites which have been stopped due to the current situation in the country, to ensure these sites don't become dengue breeding grounds. The first dengue case was reported in the country in 1962 and the first epidemic was reported in 1965-1966. According to records of the Epidemiology Unit, during the period from 1970 to 1980 there had been dengue epidemics reported and in 1996 it was included into the list of diseases and compulsory to be reported. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

Taiwan: No new COVID-19 cases in nearly a week

1 May- The Taiwan CDC reported today there were no new COVID-19 cases in the country since April 25. The case and death toll remains unchanged at 429 total cases and six deaths. The total cases include 343 cases of overseas migration, 55 cases of local cases and 31 cases of Dunmu fleet. The Central Epidemic Command Center reminds the public to practice hand hygiene and cough etiquette. When entering the country from abroad, if you have fever, cough and other uncomfortable symptoms, you should take the initiative to notify the airport and port quarantine personnel and cooperate with the epidemic prevention measures; after returning to the country, you should implement a 14-day home quarantine. The city care center, and follow the instructions to seek medical treatment, do not take public transportation; when visiting the doctor, be sure to inform the doctor about travel history, occupation, contact history and whether it is clustered (TOCC) for timely diagnosis and notification. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

USNORTHCOM

U.S. starts study to find COVID-19 infection rate in children

4 May- The National Institutes Of Health said on Monday it has started enrolling participants in a study to find out the infection rate of COVID-19, caused by the new coronavirus, in children and their families in the United States. The government-funded study, which will be conducted completely remotely, looks to determine how many children infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, develop symptoms of the disease. The study also looks to determine whether there are differences in the rates of infection between children who have asthma or other allergic conditions and children who do not. "One interesting feature of this novel coronavirus pandemic is that very few children have become sick with COVID-19 compared to adults," said Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health. Fauci said the study will determine if this is because children are resistant to the infection, or because they are infected but do not develop symptoms. The study, called Human Epidemiology and Response to SARS-CoV-2, or HEROS, will enroll 6,000 people from 2,000 families already participating in NIH-funded pediatric research studies in 11 cities, the agency said. [Reuters](#)

[top of page...](#)

Brazil: 15 yellow fever cases reported in Santa Catarina

2 May- Recent data released by the Directorate of Epidemiological Surveillance (Dive-SC) shows 15 people have been infected with yellow fever in Santa Catarina State, according to Brazilian media. Six cases were diagnosed in residents of the city of Blumenau. In addition to Blumenau, residents of five other municipalities contracted the disease this year. In Pomerode and Indaial there are six people, three in each city. Camboriú, Jaraguá do Sul and São Bento Sul, in the North of SC, account for one case each. The number of deaths remains the same: there are two deaths in 2020, both registered in March. The first death is of a man in Camboriú, according to state records. The victim was 42 years old and was hospitalized in Balneário Camboriú. The second record occurred on March 31, of a 52-year-old man in the municipality of Indaial. None of the victims were immunized against the disease. [Outbreak News Today](#)

[top of page...](#)

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

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

The *Army Public Health Update* is a collection of articles taken from public sources to offer awareness of current health issues and the media coverage given to them. The articles do not necessarily represent U.S. Army Medical Command opinions, views, policy, or guidance, and should not be construed or interpreted as being endorsed by the U.S. Army Medical Command.

The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* does not analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the U.S. Army and is not a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence is available from the [National Center for Medical Intelligence](#).

External Links: The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the U.S. Army of the website or the information, products, or services contained therein. For other than authorized activities such as military exchanges and MWR sites, the U.S. Army does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. Such links are provided consistent with the stated purpose of this product.

Although we avoid links to sites that may be blocked, all sites may not be accessible from all locations. While we verify the links at the time of publication, we cannot guarantee that they will be active in the future.

The *Army Public Health Weekly Update* is published by the Public Health Communication Directorate, Army Public Health Center.

