

22 November 2019

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center

NOTICE: There will be no Army Public Health Weekly Update next week.

Publication will resume on 6 December 2019.



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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.

Subscription or Comments

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Getting creative: Reducing opioid use for returning warriors

5 November- When service members return from tour of duty with debilitating battlefield injuries, opioid prescriptions are common in their recovery process. Opioids are effective in reducing pain in patients but can be highly addictive as a pain treatment option. As a result, the Defense Health Agency is exploring alternate pain management techniques to decrease the number of opioid prescriptions in military hospitals. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2017 that drug overdose deaths involving opioids skyrocketed from roughly 8,000 in 1999 to over 46,000 in 2017. Of these numbers, deaths involving prescribed opioids jumped from around 3,000 to almost 17,000. DHA's response has been an integrated approach to health that combines prescriptions with nonpharmacological pain treatments. DHA published a procedural instruction in 2018 that promotes physical and behavioral treatment techniques like acupuncture, massage, and music therapy as alternatives to address acute pain and prevent it from becoming chronic. Opioids would then be prescribed only when indicated. Dr. Chester Buckenmaier, a professor at the Uniformed Services University and a licensed acupuncturist, agrees that these other pain treatment techniques are key to the future of pain management. While Buckenmaier is an anesthesiologist by trade, he teaches students at USU to take alternate treatments into consideration as they study to be the health care providers of tomorrow. "The Defense Health Agency and USU are aggressively educating the next generation to look at these other techniques as first line treatments for pain," Buckenmaier said. "We're teaching them today that this is medicine." Outside the classroom, practitioners like Dr. Bhagwan Bahroo from the Psychiatry Continuity Service program at Walter Reed use yoga to treat pain in military hospitals. [Health.mil](#)

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New veterans suicide prevention plan may get green light

20 November- House Democrats and administration officials appear poised to push past simmering tensions to craft new veteran's suicide prevention legislation that would push grants to community providers in an effort to extend mental health care to more current and former service members. The proposal — still not finalized — would create a three-year pilot program which would award up to \$750,000 to organizations that provide local support services to veterans traditionally not served by the Department of Veterans Affairs, in an effort to assist them through times of crisis and hopefully link them to other existing federal support programs. The idea has languished in Congress since early summer, with concerns about which programs will be eligible and how the services provided will be monitored. VA officials have pushed the concept as a key step ahead in national suicide prevention efforts. About 20 veterans and current service members commit suicide every day, according to department estimates. Of that number, about 14 have no regular contact

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U.S. Army's Ready and Resilient Initiative Evaluation Process Guide

The IEP is an initiative planning, evaluation, and review process to assist with developing and expanding initiatives that are effective in improving the health of the Total Army Family. The IEP ensures you transparently document your work so others can learn from it. In addition, decision makers can make knowledgeable decisions for your initiative to either implement provide resources, or replicate it Army-wide.



with VA staff. "This is not an attempt to circumvent VA health care," said department Secretary Robert Wilkie in testimony before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee Wednesday. "This is an attempt at triage on the streets, and in our rural areas, to help us find those veterans we cannot touch, and perhaps save them from the consequences that they have experienced as a result of their service." A White House task force is examining the idea as part of a broader review of executive branch suicide prevention efforts, but its report on solutions isn't due until next March. Wilkie argued passing legislation quickly would allow officials to act more quickly to help veterans in distress. [Military Times](#)

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GLOBAL

Apple removes vaping apps from App Store

15 November- Apple has removed 181 vaping-related apps from its mobile App Store globally, the company said on Friday. "Recently, experts ranging from the CDC to the American Heart Association have attributed a variety of lung injuries and fatalities to e-cigarette and vaping products, going so far as to call the spread of these devices a public health crisis and a youth epidemic. We agree, and we've updated our App Store Review Guidelines to reflect that apps encouraging or facilitating the use of these products are not permitted," the company said in a statement. Apple said the apps are a mix of stores, social networks, news and games. They represent 0.00010% of the 1.8 million apps available through the mobile App Store, the company said. The company said it had been moving in this direction for months. In June, Apple prohibited the promotion of vaping products in its app store and had not approved any new vaping-related apps since. The apps now banned from the App Store will continue to work for customers who already have them downloaded on their devices, and they can be transferred to new devices. [CNN](#)

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Behind the scenes of a radical new cancer cure

9 November- An unexpected early morning phone call from the hospital is never good news. When Joy Johnson answered, her first thought was that Sharon Birzer, her partner of 15 years, was dead. Her fears were amplified by the voice on the other end refusing to confirm or deny it. Just "come in and talk to one of the doctors," she remembers the voice saying. Johnson knew this was a real possibility. A few weeks earlier, she and Birzer sat in the exam room of a lymphoma specialist at Stanford University. Birzer's cancer had grown, and fast — first during one type of chemotherapy, then through a second. Out of standard options, Birzer's local oncologist had referred her for a novel treatment called chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy — or CAR-T. Birzer and Johnson knew the treatment was risky. They were warned there was a chance of death. There was also a chance of serious complications such as multi-organ failure and neurological impairment. But it was like warning a drowning person that her lifeboat could have problems. Without treatment, the chance of Birzer's death was all but certain. She signed the consent form. Johnson hung up

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.

the phone that early morning and sped to the hospital. She met with a doctor and two chaplains in a windowless room in the cancer ward, where happy photos of cancer "alumni" smiled down from the walls. This is getting worse and worse, Johnson thought. As she remembers it, the doctor went through the timeline of what happened for 10 minutes, explaining how Birzer became sicker and sicker, before Johnson interrupted with the thought splitting her world in two: "I need you to tell me whether she's alive or dead."

[Scientific American](#)

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California sues e-cigarette maker Juul for selling nicotine products to youth

18 November- The state of California on Monday sued e-cigarette maker Juul Labs Inc., alleging the San Francisco company engaged in a "systematic" and "wildly successful" campaign to attract teenagers to its nicotine devices. The lawsuit draws on internal correspondence and other evidence, asserting the company did little to prevent sales to underage customers. It also claims that Juul used a "flawed" age-verification process for online sales. Filed in California state court in Alameda County, the lawsuit also cites passages from a recent Reuter's investigation that documented how Juul disregarded evidence soon after its launch in 2015 that teenagers were attracted to the product. (here) The Reuters story documented how Juul rarely mentioned nicotine in early consumer marketing, while at the same time pitching retailers on Juul's unique addictive power. Juul spokesman Austin Finan said the company had not yet reviewed the complaint. "We remain focused on resetting the vapor category in the U.S. and earning the trust of society by working cooperatively with attorneys general, regulators, public health officials, and other stakeholders to combat underage use and convert adult smokers from combustible cigarettes," he said in a statement. The lawsuit seeks monetary damages based on violations of state laws governing false advertising and unfair competition, among others. [Reuters](#)

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Ebola vaccine approved in Europe in landmark moment in fight against a deadly disease

11 November- After more than two decades of research, the world finally has an approved Ebola vaccine. The European Commission granted marketing authorization to Merck's vaccine, known as Ervebo, on Monday, less than a month after the European Medicines Agency recommended it be licensed. It is currently being used in the Democratic Republic of the Congo under a "compassionate use" or research protocol similar to a clinical trial. "The European Commission's marketing authorization of Ervebo is the result of an unprecedented collaboration for which the entire world should be proud," Ken Frazier, Merck's chairman and chief executive officer, said in a statement. "It is a historic milestone and a testament to the power of science, innovation and public-private partnership," Frazier said, adding the company will work with the Food and Drug Administration in the United

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States and regulatory agencies in a number of African countries to license the vaccine. Frazier said Merck will also work with the World Health Organization on vaccine prequalification, a process in which the global health agency assesses vaccines and other medical processes in order to assure member countries that they are safe and effective. Developing countries often use WHO prequalification as guidance when they make their own decisions about whether to license a product. [Stat News](#)

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How best to use the few new drugs to treat antibiotic-resistant germs?

13 November- Five years ago, Mary Millard went to the hospital for heart surgery. A contaminated medical instrument gave her an infection that led to septic shock. Her heart struggled, and her lungs and kidneys started to fail. "What I caught was pseudomonas, and it's a very virulent superbug," says the 60-year-old former nurse who lives in Baton Rouge, La. This bacterium no longer responds to most antibiotics, and "it lives in you permanently, so I'm on lifetime antibiotics," she says. Her doctor prescribed one of the most powerful antibiotics available, and there is no clear backup for her if that stops working. "It's kind of a wait-and-see. And that's what's scary." Millard is just one of about 2 million Americans who have been infected with a superbug. Tens of thousands die each year, and the numbers are vastly higher on a global scale. [NPR](#)

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LASIK eye surgery should 'absolutely' be banned, says former FDA adviser who voted to approve procedure

16 November- A former Food and Drug Administration adviser who originally voted to approve LASIK eye surgery now says the procedure should be taken off the market. "Essentially we ignored the data on vision distortions that persisted for years," Morris Waxler, a retired FDA adviser, told CBS News. "I re-examined the documentation ... and I said, 'Wow this is not good.'" Though an FDA patient survey found that more than 95 percent of patients were satisfied with their results following the surgery, which federal officials approved in 1998, others have suffered serious complications. Waxler told the outlet he estimates LASIK complication rates range between 10 and 30 percent. LASIK surgery uses a special laser to reshape the cornea to improve the eye's "focusing power," according to the FDA. On its website, the federal health agency details the risks associated with the procedure, which include loss of vision, "debilitating visual symptoms" — such as glare, halos and/or double vision — and severe dry eye syndrome. Additionally, there is no long-term data available on the procedure, meaning the "long-term safety and effectiveness of LASKI surgery is not known," according to the FDA. One LASIK patient told CBS News the surgery "ruined his life." "It's a devastation that I can't even explain," said Abraham Rutner, an electrician from Brooklyn, N.Y. "Things would appear double. Around the lights were like having starbursts." Waxler, who in 2011 petitioned the FDA to issue a voluntary recall of

LASIK but was denied, told CBS News the procedure should “absolutely” be banned. [Fox News](#)

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Skipping measles vaccine tied to triple risk of disease spread

18 November- An analysis of 16 years' worth of confirmed measles cases in the United States to better understand transmission patterns found that unvaccinated people are about three to four times more infectious than those with measles who have gotten one or two doses and that pockets of unvaccinated people are fertile ground for super spreading events. Factors apart from vaccination—such as contact patterns, high population density, and reduced or declining antibody levels—can contribute to measles transmission. The authors said the goal of the study was to more clearly tease out transmission, which could help target public health resources for preventing and controlling the disease. A team led by experts from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and including researchers from Britain and Australia, reported its findings today in JAMA Pediatrics.

[CIDRAP](#)

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Sleeping fewer than 5 hours a night tied to bone problems

20 November- Sleeping too little may increase the risk for osteoporosis. A study of menopausal women has found that sleeping less than five hours a night is associated with significantly increased low bone mineral density. The report, in the Journal of Bone and Mineral Research, compared 1,080 women who slept less than five hours with 4,025 who slept the recommended seven hours. Using bone scans, they found that after adjusting for other factors, women who slept less than five hours had significantly lower bone mineral density and higher odds of osteoporosis at the hip, spine and total body. “The difference we observed between these two groups was equal to about one year of bone aging,” said the lead author, Heather M. Ochs-Balcom, an associate professor of epidemiology at the University at Buffalo. “This is not a huge difference, but it tells us that, in yet one more aspect of health, sleep is important. Any chance we have to spread the message to improve sleep could be helpful in other aspects of physical and mental health.” The participants were generally healthy, and the study controlled for age, menopausal symptoms, physical activity and other factors. Still, the authors note this observational study does not prove that short sleep causes osteoporosis, only that the two are linked. It is possible, for example, that lower bone mineral density may be associated with other conditions that influence sleep behavior.

[The New York Times](#)

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Switch to vaping 'helps smokers' hearts'

16 November- Smokers can improve the health of their hearts within weeks of switching to e-cigarettes, the largest trial of its kind shows. The month-long study of 114 smokers suggests vaping has the potential to reduce heart attack and stroke risk. The team, at the University of Dundee, stressed vaping was "not safe" - just less harmful than tobacco. The British Heart Foundation said stopping smoking was the single best thing you could do for your heart. Chemicals in cigarette smoke narrow arteries as they get furred up with fatty deposits increasing the risk of a deadly blockage. Ultimately smoking doubles your risk of having a heart attack. But the researchers said the current evidence on vaping was "very poor" and often assessed the impact of a single e-cigarette on heart health. They monitored people's blood vessels a month after they were switched to e-cigarettes on the trial. They focused on how blood vessels expand when a wave of blood rushes through, by measuring "flow-mediated dilation". The more the blood vessels are able to expand the healthier they are. Flow-mediate dilation scores have been closely linked to the long-term risk of heart attacks and stroke. The results, published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, showed:

-Healthy non-smokers had a score of 7.7%

-Smokers had a score of 5.5%

-But those who switched to nicotine e-cigarettes for a month had a score of 6.7%

So, switching to vaping got those smokers about halfway back to a healthy score. "They're not quite normal, but their vascular function improved quite significantly, just within a month," said one of the researchers, Professor Jacob George. The study is too short to fully establish whether or not this improvement could be sustained in the long-term or if vaping would definitely save lives. It is also worth noting that vapers did not have a normal score. Prof George added: "The key take-home is these devices are not completely safe and should not be tried by non-smokers or children. "We now have clear evidence they're less harmful than tobacco cigarettes." The devices set off a catastrophic immune reaction in his lungs that left him on life-support with his breathing replaced by an artificial lung. But overall, the advice in the UK is that vaping is 95% safer than smoking and that smokers should switch and non-smokers should not take up vaping. [BBC News](#)

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Targeting gut microbes may help stroke recovery

19 November- When a clot blocks off circulation to the brain during an ischemic stroke, the loss of oxygen and nutrients can cause tissue to become damaged and die. Physicians have effective methods of clearing these occlusions: clot-busting proteins called tissue plasminogen activators and thrombectomy, a surgical technique. Removing the blockage is critical, but even after blood flow is restored, complications brought on by inflammation can lead to more cell death. Despite a decades-long search, scientists have yet to pinpoint effective ways of protecting the brain from poststroke damage. In recent years, a new potential player in stroke outcome has emerged: the microorganisms in our guts. Some of the first findings linking gut microbes to stroke just appeared about three years ago. In one study, researchers in New York City reported that interrupting the diversity of intestinal flora in mice with antibiotics affected the amount of brain damage caused by stroke. Another investigation in rodents, conducted by a German team, demonstrated that strokes disrupted mouse microbiomes—and that the altered composition of gut microbes could worsen outcomes after stroke. That research meant “2016 was a fantastic year for the gut-brain axis in the stroke field,” says Connie Wong, a stroke scientist at Monash University in Australia, who was not involved in the studies. The work has continued. More recently, Venugopal Venna, a stroke researcher at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and his colleagues have been examining whether age-related changes to the microbiome affect recovery. “Stroke is mainly a disease of aging,” Venna says. “Young people also get stroke but much less often.” In a study reported in *Annals of Neurology* last year, Venna and his colleagues examined whether age-related changes to the microbiome would influence recovery in mice. The scientists first depleted the rodents’ gut microbes with antibiotics, then used fecal pellets to introduce microbiota from either young or old animals. When the team induced ischemic strokes in the rodents a month later, it found that young mice with older microbiomes had worse outcomes than their counterparts with intestinal flora from younger animals. They had higher rates of mortality, greater neurological deficits, slower recovery of muscle strength and movement, and increased levels of inflammatory molecules. Meanwhile elderly mice fared better with young microbiomes than old ones.

[Scientific American](#)

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INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Week 45: 03 November 2019- 09 November 2019

NORTHCOM: ILI activity remained low. The majority of positive specimens continued to be influenza B.

EUCOM: ILI activity remained minimal. Among positive specimens, the majority were influenza A, with influenza A (H3N2) being the most prominent subtype among subtyped

specimens.

INDOPACOM: ILI activity remained low. The majority of positive specimens continued to be influenza A (not subtyped).

SOUTHCOM: ILI activity remained minimal in Cuba. The majority of specimens continued to be influenza A (not subtyped).

CENTCOM: Due to issues in received TMDS data, ILI activity data are not available for CENTCOM this week. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

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APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

Week ending 9 November 2019 (week 45):

Flu activity currently remains low in the Army population. Significant increase (32.5%) in the number of positive respiratory specimens when compared to the previous week was noted; There were 197 positive specimens in week 44 and 261 in week 45. Data from all regional health command were not received. About 1.2% of 1,140 specimens tested for influenza A were positive. The majority of the influenza A-positive specimens are reported from RHC-A [n=4(25%)] and RHC-C [n=11(68%)]. One hospitalization was reported in week 45, bringing the season total to five. Out of the 2,757 clinical specimens tested, 9.4% were positive. Influenza A and B accounted for 6.1% and 67.1%, respectively. The majority of positive specimens were in younger populations; those under 18 years of age accounted for 87% overall of positive respiratory illness specimens in week 45 while Active Duty Soldiers, 18 to 29 year-olds, accounted for 66.6% of positive specimens. [APHC](#)

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

Week 45: Ending November 9, 2019

According to this week's FluView report, seasonal influenza activity in the United States is increasing. [CDC](#)

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WHO: Influenza Update

11 November 2019 - Update number 354, based on data up to 27 October 2019:

-In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels in most countries. However, influenza activity continued to increase across the countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

-In the Caribbean, and tropical South American countries, influenza activity was low overall, except for Cuba and Jamaica. In Central American countries, influenza activity was elevated

in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

-In tropical Africa, influenza activity remained elevated in some countries of Western Africa.

-In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low across reporting countries, but started to increase in Iran (Islamic Republic of).

-In South East Asia, influenza activity continued to be reported in Lao PDR.

-In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity was low in most countries, though influenza B virus detections continued to be reported in Chile.

-Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections. [WHO](#)

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VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Cheese Nips recalled due to small plastic pieces

21 November- A limited quantity of Cheese Nips, 11 oz. box, products in the United States are being recalled by Mondelez Global due to the potential presence of small food-grade yellow plastic pieces. The plastic pieces come from a dough scraper that was incorporated into the production process of a small amount of product. The company reported that they became aware of this issue when yellow plastic pieces were noticed on the manufacturing equipment. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Company recalls ground beef associated with Salmonella outbreak

17 November- Central Valley Meat Co. of Hanford, CA, is recalling about 34,000 pounds of ground beef that may be contaminated with Salmonella Dublin amidst an outbreak, according to the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Public health officials are concerned that some product may be 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 was notified of an investigation of Salmonella Dublin illnesses on Sept. 9. Working in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state and local public health partners, FSIS determined that there is a link between ground beef products from Central Valley Meat Co. Inc. and this illness cluster," according to the recall notice posted by the FSIS. "The traceback investigation indicated that a case-patient consumed ground beef produced by Central Valley Meat Co. Inc. Based on epidemiological investigation, 10 case-patients have been identified in 6 states with illness onset dates ranging from Aug. 8, 2019 to Sept. 22, 2019. The recalled ground beef items were produced on July 23, 2019. [Food Safety News](#)

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Dozens sick in outbreak; company refuses FDA's request to recall tuna

15 November- Authorities are investigating an ongoing outbreak of scombrototoxin fish poisoning traced to yellowfin tuna. They have blocked all incoming shipments of the fish from a Vietnamese company that has refused to initiate a recall. Public health officials have confirmed at least 47 people from unspecified states as outbreak patients. The most recent illness began Oct. 15, according to an outbreak investigation notice posted today by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The first patient, known of at this time, became ill on Aug. 8. Scombrototoxin fish poisoning occurs when fish begins to spoil and histamine levels in it increase. Histamine cannot be destroyed by freezing or cooking. The FDA reported that all yellowfin tuna from Truong Phu Xanh Co. Ltd. of Vietnam with 2019 production dates is implicated and should be thrown away. Stores, restaurants and other foodservice operators are expected to pull the tuna, but the FDA wants consumers to shoulder some responsibility, too. The agency's notice tells consumers to ask whether yellowfin tuna — also called ahi tuna — being sold is from the specific company named by the FDA. FDA officials have not used the agency's power to force the Vietnamese company to recall the tuna, even though the firm has been determined to have supplied the fish. "FDA asked for the supplier of yellowfin tuna associated with most of the illnesses, Truong Phu Xanh Co. Ltd. of Vietnam, to initiate a voluntary recall of all of its imported yellowfin tuna with production dates from January 2019 to the present. At this time, the firm has not recalled any product," the FDA reported today. "Because scombrototoxin fish poisoning causes temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences this incident did not meet the threshold for the use of FDA's mandatory recall authority." [Food Safety News](#)

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Vitamin Cottage recalls Natural Grocers soybeans in 20 states

15 November- Vitamin Cottage Natural Food Markets Inc. is recalling Natural Grocers brand organic soybeans after company testing showed mold in some product samples. "Consumers who may have purchased this product are advised to discontinue use and either throw it away or return it to the store for credit or refund," according to the company recall notice posted by the Food and Drug Administration. "Production of the product has been suspended while the Food and Drug Administration and the company continue their investigation into the source of the problem." The Lakewood, CO, company reported distributing the recalled soybeans to 154 grocery stores in its chain. Those stores are in Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. [Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

Giving in to arthritis pain will only make things worse- Here's how to keep moving

12 November- Some days, it seems regular exercise has become a panacea — good for the heart, good for blood pressure, good for glucose levels, good to limit sad days and depression. But what about people tormented with the pain and stiffness of osteoarthritis, particularly in the knees and hips? What are they supposed to do? There was an era when ethical medical practice demanded a no-movement solution for people in pain. Not anymore. Today, the more than 50 million adult Americans with arthritis are advised to seek the same 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise as everyone else. Arthritis is actually a blanket term for more than 100 related conditions that frequently attack the knees, hips, feet, spine and hands. Osteoarthritis, the most common form, is a wear-and-tear condition that results from aging, being overweight, injuries and genetic factors. When a joint's articular cartilage — the tissue that covers the ends of bones — wears down, bones start rubbing against bones. This often causes pain, swelling and stiffness. [The Washington Post](#)

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Smart and healthy tips to fend off holiday weight gain

9 November- Gaining weight during the holiday season is a regular occurrence for many of us, especially when our dining tables are filled with so much good food during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. And, with all these holidays close together, it's tough not to gain some weight, with even The New England Journal of Medicine saying that there is a significant increase of weight gain during the Thanksgiving season in the United States. However, gaining weight is not a Christmas holiday exclusive, as the same journal has also published a study saying it can happen to all major holidays in countries around the world. You can start the new year with an extra pound or two, and although the number may seem little, repeating the same routine does not benefit you, and you'll only keep on gaining weight--and that is because it is harder to lose than gain weight. [Tech Times](#)

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USAFRICOM

Angola reports dozens of polio cases in 2019

The number of polio cases in Angola has reached 44, according to Health Minister Sílvia Lutucuta Friday. According to the official, the occurrences happened in the provinces of Bié, Malanje and Lunda Sul (one case each), Moxico and Benguela (two), Huíla (three), Lunda Norte (four), Luanda (six), Huambo (11) and Cuanza Sul (13). [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Ethiopia chikungunya update: Nearly 2,000 additional cases reported

18 November- In a follow-up on the chikungunya outbreak in Ethiopia, nearly 2,000 additional suspected cases have been reported in recent weeks, bringing the outbreak total from Dire Dawa City Administrative City and Araf regions to 53,238 cases since the end of July. Symptoms of chikungunya disease usually begin 3–7 days after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people infected with chikungunya virus develop some symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms can include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. The symptoms of chikungunya disease are similar to those of dengue and Zika. Dengue and Zika are two other diseases spread by the same mosquitoes that transmit chikungunya. People at risk for more severe disease include newborns infected around the time of birth, older adults (65 years or older), and people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USCENTCOM

Dengue in Pakistan: Outbreak closes in on 50K cases

18 November- Last week, the World Health Organization reported that Pakistan is battling one of the worst dengue outbreaks the country has experienced. As of early November, more than 45,000 people in Pakistan have been infected with the dengue virus in 2019. Now according to a report today from the news source, Dawn, we see that an additional 5,000 cases were reported in the past two weeks. This has brought the outbreak total for 2019 to 49,587, nearly double the most cases reported in a year in 2011 (27,000). Sindh has reported the most cases with 13,251, followed closely by Islamabad (13,173) and Punjab with 9855. The death toll this year stands at 79. Spokesperson for the Ministry of National Health Services (NHS), Sajid Shah, said "It is for the first time in the history of Pakistan that Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) has been activated at the National Institute of Health for dengue outbreak." Pakistan reported their first dengue outbreak in 1994. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Polio: More wild poliovirus cases in Pakistan, Philippines vaccination campaign

15 November- Pakistan reported an additional two wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) cases during the past week, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Both of the cases were reported from Lakki Marwat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. This brings the total WPV1 cases in Pakistan to 82 this year and 102 total in endemic countries. This is up from twelve cases reported in Pakistan in all of 2018. According to a Morbidity and Mortality

Weekly Reports (MMWR) today, the current status of polio eradication in Pakistan has serious global implications: the increased risk for WPV1 spreading beyond Pakistan's borders is high; if transmission in Pakistan is not quickly controlled and back on track toward interruption. The Pakistan program's failure in progress toward polio eradication is related to both community and program management challenges. Community challenges are increasingly strident refusals to vaccinate and children chronically missed by immunization activities. In addition, WPV1 has been widely detected in sewage across Pakistan. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USEUCOM

Sweden reports increase in *Cryptosporidium*, most in Stockholm

16 November- Swedish health officials, aka Folkhalsomyndigheten have reported an increase in the parasitic infection, cryptosporidiosis in recent weeks, particularly in November. About half of the country's regions have reported cases in all ages, but primarily in adults. Most cases are seen in the Stockholm region. The Public Health Agency and the National Food Agency have started an outbreak investigation to identify if there are one or more common sources of infection that are unknown so far. As part of the investigation, cases are interviewed about what they ate and drank before they became ill.

Cryptosporidiosis is a diarrheal disease caused by a microscopic parasite called *Cryptosporidium*. The illnesses spread when people come into contact with fecal matter from an infected person or animal. The parasite is able to survive outside the human body for long periods of time and is highly resistant to chlorine. Symptoms of cryptosporidiosis often include watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, vomiting, and loss of appetite, weight loss and low-grade fever. People typically become ill about a week after exposure, but this can range from two to 14 days. Most people recover in one to two weeks, but they will continue to shed the parasite in their stools for at least two weeks after symptoms end.

Approximately 10 percent to 15 percent of cases require hospitalization for their illness. Illness can be especially severe or prolonged in people with weakened immune systems.

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Marshall Islands: Dengue outbreak now 1,165 cases

20 November- The government of the Marshall Islands in an update shows the dengue fever outbreak that began in June has now reached 1,165 cases. Of this total 393 were laboratory confirmed. The most cases have been reported in Majuro (839), followed by Ebeye (272), Utrik (36) and Aur (18). One patient died in Majuro. [Outbreak News Today](#)
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Samoa measles: Case tally up to 716, 6 deaths; 'Worst is yet to come'

17 November- The Samoa Ministry of Health reported the latest on the measles outbreak in a Situational Update that shows the number of suspect measles cases has grown to 716, including 48 confirmed and six deaths through Nov. 10. Cases have primarily been reported in Upolu (539), followed by Faleata East (65) and Sagaga le Falefa (53). This prompted officials to declare a state of emergency, ordering all schools, including the National University of Samoa, to be closed as a deadly measles outbreak continues to spread. In addition, the Samoan Government ordered children under the age of 17 not to attend public gatherings in an attempt to stop the virus spreading. It also made vaccinations a mandatory legal requirement for all people of Samoa who have not yet received a vaccination injection. In an interview with the New Zealand news source, Scoop, University of Auckland vaccinaologist, Dr. Helen Petousis-Harris, "Many of the Pacific Nations have quite good immunisation coverage, comparable to New Zealand. For example, Tonga's uptake of measles vaccine is about 85 – 99% depending whether you believe WHO-UNICEF or Tongan administrative data. In Fiji, the uptake is 94% reported by WHO-UNICEF and >80% by local administrative data. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Canada: Lyme disease cases up in Quebec

15 November- Officials with the Quebec Health Ministry are reporting an increase in Lyme disease cases through the first 10-plus months of 2019. From the beginning of the year through Nov. 5, health officials report 371 cases. This compares with 304 in 2018 and 329 in 2017, in fact, 2017 was the year with the highest number of cases. The most Lyme cases have been reported in the Eastern Townships, followed by the Montérégie, Montreal and the Outaouais region. Dr. Geneviève Baron, the head of public health in the Eastern Townships and a member of the Canadian Lyme Disease Research Network, told CBC that "each year there are new regions where the tick is now found, so we're seeing the effect of

climate change.” “Their habitat is expanding, so they have a lot more hosts to feed on,” Baron said. People shouldn’t panic if they see a tick, however, she said. The numbers of Lyme disease cases in Canada has increased significantly in the past decade—144 cases in 2009 to 2025 in 2017. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: Erie County- Encephalitis cases reported

17 November- The Erie County Department of Health has reported two cases of rare encephalitis cases in October, according to a Go Erie report. Communicable diseases supervisor for the health department, Sue Carlson, R.N. says the two cases weren’t related. “We know one of them recovered and we don’t know the outcome of the other person.” According to Encephalitis411, Encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain, can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere, at any age, killing roughly 20% of its victims. Encephalitis effects about 20,000 Americans annually. This can be caused by a variety of pathogens to include herpes virus, varicella zoster and mosquito-borne viruses like West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis, among others. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: Maryland- E. coli cluster reported, linked to salads bought at Sam’s Club

19 December- Maryland state health officials are reporting and investigating a cluster of Escherichia coli O157:H7 (E. coli O157) infections. To date, seven cases have been reported. All the cases reported eating Ready Pac Bistro® Bowl Chicken Caesar Salad purchased from various Sam’s Club locations in Maryland. There has been one hospitalization and no deaths associated with these cases. Officials advise consumers not to eat Ready Pac Bistro® Bowl Chicken Caesar Salad, lot #255406963, “Best By” date Oct. 31, 2019. Testing of unopened salad purchased by one of the patients identified the presence of E. coli O157 in the romaine lettuce. In addition to Sam’s Club, these salad bowls are distributed to many other retailers. The investigation is ongoing and additional laboratory testing is pending. There have been prior outbreaks of E. coli O157 linked to romaine lettuce. Symptoms of E. coli O157 infection often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody) and vomiting. Some people may have a fever. Most people with an E. coli O157 infection start feeling sick three to four days after eating or drinking something that contains the bacteria. However, illnesses can start anywhere from one to 10 days after exposure. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: Measles investigation in Georgia- More cases in Cobb County

18 November- The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has identified the likely source of the current measles outbreak in Cobb County. Five previously unreported cases of measles in one family in Cobb County occurred in early October. These five cases are presumably linked to out of state travel where other cases of measles have been reported. These five individuals are now out of the infectious stage. DPH is also confirming two additional cases of measles. These two cases are siblings of a previously confirmed case. These siblings have not been at school, so there are no additional school exposures. Unvaccinated individuals who were exposed by a middle school student earlier this month are still being kept at home, away from the public during the 21-day incubation period that ends Nov. 22. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Dengue in Brazil: 484,779 cases in Minas Gerais

20 November- The State Secretariat of Health of Minas Gerais has reported 484,779 confirmed and suspected dengue cases this year, including 153 deaths, according to a Otempo report. This "alarming" numbers prompted health officials to launch a campaign aimed at reinforcing the importance of eliminating outbreaks. "This year was extremely tough compared to dengue. It was the second worst year, close to what happened in 2016. Maybe this year was the worst in number of hospitalizations and deaths. We need to reinvent ourselves to face Aedes best weapon is to fight the focus", Undersecretary of Health Surveillance Dario Brock Ramalho. According to Health Secretary Carlos Eduardo Amaral, "This year \$12 million has been transferred to cities to fight the disease. We plan to pass on some values to support the municipalities. At the beginning for prevention, and later, in case of epidemics. At that time, we already transferred \$ 12 million to the municipalities at the beginning of the year. , and should transfer another \$ 10 million. This amount of \$ 10 million will be for a general form, but already with the guidance of trying to give a stimulus to dengue. And we should spend another \$ 12 million by the end of year."

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Syphilis in Brazil: Most cases in nearly a decade

12 November- Health authorities in Brazil are reporting the highest number of syphilis cases since 2010, according to a Folha De S. Paulo report. There were 158,000 cases of primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis syphilis, or 75.8 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 2018. This is up from 59.1 cases per 100,000 in 2017. Health officials are attributing this rising incidence to greater detection and decreased condom use, especially among people with multiple

sexual partners. In addition, problems in the supply of penicillin in recent years also helped to boost the disease in different countries. Syphilis is a sexually-transmitted disease (STD) that can cause long-term complications if not treated correctly. Symptoms of syphilis in adults include a painless sore that will go away without treatment followed by a non-itchy body rash. If left untreated syphilis can lead to damage through the body including neurological and cardiovascular complications. Syphilis also increases the risk of HIV infection and, for women, can cause problems during pregnancy and for the newborn.

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