

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 10/10/2018

TO: Grant County Healthcare Providers

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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Increase in suspected cases of Acute Flaccid Myelitis in Washington State since August 2018

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, issues the following alert to the healthcare provider community: be aware of a cluster of five suspected acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) cases that have been reported among Washington residents (cases are among children between 7 months and 5 years of age). DOH and CDC are conducting an investigation of this cluster. There have been no reported cases in Grant County, however a similar cluster of 9 children was also investigated by DOH in 2016.

Current situation in Washington

- A cluster of suspected acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) has been reported among Washington residents.
- As of October 9th, five WA cases are being evaluated by CDC neurologists and other AFM experts.
- All cases are among **children between 7 months and 5 years of age** who presented with acute paralysis of one or more limbs. All had a prodrome that included respiratory symptoms in the week prior to presentation with symptoms of AFM. Four of the five had fever of 100.4 F or greater.
- The earliest onset of limb weakness was on August 28, 2018 and the most recent on October 5th.
- The cases are residents of King County (2), Pierce County (1), Lewis County (1), and Snohomish County (1).

Actions requested

Report suspected cases of AFM promptly (see case definition below) to the Grant County Health District (509-766-7960). GCHD will provide assistance with the following:

- **Complete the AFM patient summary form when reporting patients to GCHD.**
 - (<https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/downloads/patient-summary-form.pdf>)
- **Collect surveillance specimens** from patients suspected of having AFM as early as possible in the course of illness (see details below)*.
- **Provide the following information:** 1) brain and spinal MRI images on a disc 2) MRI reports, 3) H&P notes, 4) neurology consult notes, 5) infectious disease consult notes, and 6) diagnostic laboratory reports
- **Order viral respiratory and viral stool cultures to be performed locally** if not already done.

Also, please notify your LHI if you are aware of patients of any age that previously presented to your facility and fit the case definition (please have CSF results or MRI report available).



Background

From January 1st to September 30th, 2018 a total of 38 people in 16 states across the United States have been confirmed to have AFM. Most of these have been in children. More information about national surveillance for suspected AFM cases, which started in 2014, can be found [here](#). No etiology for AFM has been established although potential associations with enteroviruses (including EVD68 and EVA71), adenovirus, herpes viruses, arboviruses including West Nile virus, and other viruses have been reported. Non-infectious causes have not been ruled out.

Resources

CSTE case definition

[Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologist \(CSTE\) case definition](#)

Clinicians should be vigilant and consider AFM in patients presenting with:

Onset of acute limb weakness

AND

A magnetic resonance image (MRI) showing spinal cord lesion largely restricted to gray matter and spanning one or more spinal segments

OR

Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) showing pleocytosis (white blood cell count >5 cells/mm³)

Specimen collection guidance

Collect specimens from patients suspected of having **AFM as early as possible in the course of illness** including:

- Cerebrospinal fluid (collected within 24 hours of the serum)
- Serum (collected within 24 hours of the CSF)
- Two stool specimens separated by 24 hours (whole stool)
- Upper respiratory tract sample nasopharyngeal swap or oropharyngeal swab
- Oropharyngeal swab should always be collected in addition to the nasopharyngeal specimen on any patient suspected to have polio.
- **Order a viral respiratory and a viral stool culture to be performed locally** if not already done.

*Whole blood should be sent refrigerated to CDC and arrive within 24 hours of collection.

Please note: All patients with no sensory or cognitive loss that present with a syndrome meeting the clinical criteria for AFM also meet the criteria for consideration as a possible paralytic poliomyelitis case, thus can be considered immediately notifiable to local health jurisdictions in Washington under WAC 246-101. Travel and immunization histories should be obtained as soon as possible on all suspected AFM cases to help rule out polio as a possible cause.

Additional information [about AFM](#) and about current surveillance for [AFM in the United States](#) can be found on CDC's website along with [information for healthcare professionals](#) and [frequently asked questions](#).

Contact GCHD for questions, sampling and shipping details.

Clinical Consultation

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