



EPI WATCH

Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter

October 2018

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County
205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 824-6900
www.PinellasHealth.com

Director
Ulyee Choe, DO
Ulyee.Choef@flhealth.gov

Editor
JoAnne Lamb, MPH
Joanne.Lamb@flhealth.gov



Division of Disease Control and Health Protection

Disease Reporting

To report diseases and clusters of illness:

Phone: (727) 824-6932

Fax: (727) 484-3865 (excluding HIV/AIDS)

To report HIV/AIDS by mail:

Surveillance Room 3-138
205 Dr. MLK Jr St. N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Chagas Heart Disease (ChD)

Chagas is a disease transmitted by triatomine bugs that are also known as the “kissing bugs”¹. Chagas disease is transmitted through the feces of triatomine bugs². These bugs can live in different indoor household areas such as cracks and holes, and outdoor areas such as underneath porches, beneath rocks, brush piles and wood.

The protozoan parasite that causes Chagas disease is called *Trypanosoma cruzi*². Chagas disease is mostly associated with poorly constructed housing, suburban areas, and residing areas of high poverty or have high rates of migration. Although the rate of the disease is higher within immigrants from Latin America, it has been estimated that approximately 300,000 individuals live with *T. cruzi* infection in the U.S., with ~40,000 cardiomyopathy cases and up to 300 congenital infections annually³.

Chagas is endemic in 21 countries in the Americas and affects approximately 6 million people⁴. Due to better housing conditions and less efficient vectors, we observe fewer cases in the U.S. compared to Latin America. Moreover, climatic conditions are not well suited for the vector of this disease in northern U.S. and Canada, whereas the southern half of the U.S. have documented *T. cruzi* infection in vectors and non-human mammals.

The best approach to Chagas heart disease is to prevent such late-stage complications by more aggressively screening for and treating infections early. Some infection symptoms include **headaches, fever, swelling, cough, and abdominal pain**. Nevertheless, about 70 percent of the cases can be asymptomatic⁴. If treatment is administered in children or shortly after infection, Chagas can be cured. An antiparasitic treatment can stop or prevent the progression of the condition in adults⁴.



Photo of a triatomine bug, which if infected, can transmit *T. cruzi*. Photo courtesy CDC DPDM.



www.cdc.gov

In the U.S. and in other regions where Chagas disease is now found but is not endemic, control strategies are focused on preventing transmission from blood transfusions, organ transplantation and mother-to-baby.

For more information on Chagas diseases, please visit https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/gen_info/detailed.html

References:

- ¹Triatomine Bug FAQs. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/gen_info/vectors/index.html. Accessed on October 2018.
- ²Parasites - American Trypanosomiasis (also known as Chagas Disease). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/>. Accessed on October 2018.
- ³Bern C., Montgomery S.P. (2009) An estimate of the burden of Chagas disease in the United States. *Clin Infect Dis* 49:e52–e54
- ⁴Chagas in the Americas for the General Public. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13566:chagas-in-the-americas-for-the-general-public&Itemid=40721&lang=pt. Accessed on October 2018.

Flu Boo V

Flu shots for ages 3 and up

Don't boo hoo with the flu. Get a flu shot at no cost to you!

Wednesday, October 17
5 pm to 8 pm
(while supplies last)

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County
6350 76th Ave N, Pinellas Park, FL 33781

Fill out your registration form by visiting www.pinellashealth.com

Ebola in Democratic Republic of the Congo

CDC October update

As of October 2018, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is still reporting Ebola cases. The outbreak is taking place in the North Kivu (Kivu Nord) and Ituri provinces. The area has been identified as a [do not travel](#) zone by the U.S. State Department due to major outbreaks. There have been 120 confirmed Ebola cases and 70 confirmed deaths since the outbreak was declared. Health screening points have been established in 45 points of entry to the country¹.

Ebola is a rare and deadly disease that creates outbreaks periodically in African countries. Symptoms usually include **fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting and stomach pain**. You should monitor yourself for at least **21 days** after traveling to the area for any of these symptoms to develop. If you traveled to this area, **you should seek medical care** if symptoms are developed².

If you would like to read more about Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, please visit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/ebola-democratic-republic-of-the-congo> and also [here](#).

References:

¹Ebola virus disease – Democratic Republic of the Congo. World Health Organization (WHO). <http://www.who.int/csr/don/27-september-2018-ebola-drc/en/>. Accessed on October 2018.

²Ebola (Ebola Virus Disease). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>. Accessed on October 2018.

Tainted Bootleg Alcohol: Iran

Drinking alcohol has been illegal in Iran since 1979; however, this has not stopped about 10 percent of the population to be able to drink alcohol. Most of the alcohol is local and prepared at home. The primary issue is that people create illegal mixes that affect their health. It has been shown that dozens of people die every year due to alcohol poisoning. One component that has been identified to be included is high levels of methanol¹. Methanol is a clear, colorless liquid commonly found in paints, varnishes, solvents, and used as an alternative fuel source¹. Some symptoms of methanol poisoning through ingestions include **headache, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, liver function abnormalities, blurred vision**, among others. More information regarding methanol poisoning can be found [here](#).

In recent events, there have been new deaths related to tainted alcohol in Iran. In this case, around **42 people were killed**, and more than a dozen were blinded. At this point, they do not know what was included in this mix, as it seems to be different from methanol. Nevertheless, this raises the issue of alcohol being illegal in Iran, and how people have been poisoned due to dangerous mixes made by locals.

Methanol poisoning is rare but fatal. Many cases have been documented for different [countries](#). Therefore, it is essential to look at guidelines, such as those provided by [WHO](#), to be aware of these illegal alcohol practices.

References:

¹Shafi, H., Imran, M., Usman, H. F., Sarwar, M., & Tahir, M. A. (2016). Eight fatalities due to drinking methanol-tainted alcohol in Pakistan: A case report. Egyptian Journal of Forensic Sciences, 6(4), 515-519.

Health Advisories and Alerts

[Multistate outbreak of Salmonella Newport infections](#)

[Outbreak of Listeria Infections Linked to Deli Ham](#)

[Outbreak of Salmonella Infections Linked to Ground Beef](#)

[Earthquake and Tsunami in Indonesia](#)

Select Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	Pinellas		YTD Total		Pinellas County Annual Totals		
	September 2018	September 2017	Pinellas 2018	Florida 2018	2017	2016	2015
A. Vaccine Preventable							
Measles	0	0	7	11	0	0	0
Mumps	0	0	2	142	2	0	0
Pertussis	2	2	18	267	35	18	17
Varicella	2	3	44	633	24	74	38
B. CNS Diseases & Bacteremias							
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	0	0	15	2	2	3
Meningitis (Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic)	0	0	4	82	7	7	6
Meningococcal Disease	0	0	1	19	0	0	1
C. Enteric Infections							
Campylobacteriosis	22	15	211	3798	207	137	104
Cryptosporidiosis	1	5	29	473	40	27	49
Cyclosporiasis	0	1	4	71	6	5	3
<i>E. coli</i> Shiga Toxin (+)	1	2	10	717	9	3	2
Giardiasis	1	2	32	875	45	41	30
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
Listeriosis	0	0	1	38	0	2	2
Salmonellosis	19	36	171	5150	278	188	196
Shigellosis	1	3	37	1127	26	19	174
D. Viral Hepatitis							
Hepatitis A	14	0	48	257	0	2	4
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman +HBsAg	1	0	14	308	25	28	37
Hepatitis B, Acute	2	2	35	633	51	68	57
Hepatitis C, Acute	1	4	38	466	30	49	32
E. VectorBorne/Zoonoses							
Animal Rabies	0	0	4	112	2	4	1
Rabies, possible exposure	10	9	107	3108	140	131	114
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	0	6	0	1	2
Dengue	0	0	0	34	0	2	3
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	2	2	11	150	17	11	6
Malaria	0	0	0	46	0	0	2
West Nile Virus	0	0	0	18	0	1	1
Zika Virus Disease	0	0	1	157	5		
F. Others							
Chlamydia	353	230	3314	n/a	4188	4133	4168
Gonorrhea	117	117	1105	n/a	1574	1566	1439
Hansen's Disease	0	0	0	17	0	0	0
Legionellosis	6	4	21	483	23	19	18
Mercury Poisoning	0	0	1	36	1	0	1
Syphilis, Total	20	22	305	n/a	382	400	289
Syphilis, Infectious (Primary and Secondary)	6	8	138	n/a	160	188	151
Syphilis, Early Latent	12	8	100	n/a	128	146	83
Syphilis, Congenital	0	0	2	n/a	5	2	3
Syphilis, Late Syphilis (Late Latent; Neurosyphilis)	2	6	65	n/a	89	64	52
Tuberculosis	2	0	21	n/a	28	31	14
<i>Vibrio</i> Infections	1	1	4	187	11	8	11

n/a = not available at this time.

Reportable diseases include confirmed and probable cases only. All case counts are provisional. Data is collected from the Merlin Reportable Disease database, surveillance systems maintained at the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County, and Florida CHARTS <http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/default.aspx>. STD data in PRISM is continually updated. Please note, data from the previous month takes up to an additional month or more to be correctly updated.