

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Nontuberculous Mycobacterium Infections following
Cosmetic Surgery Performed in the Dominican Republic



DATE:	6/29/2017
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Karen M. Murphy, PhD, RN, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Nontuberculous Mycobacterium Infections following Cosmetic Surgery Performed in the Dominican Republic
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	Statewide
COUNTY:	Statewide
MUNICIPALITY:	Statewide
ZIP CODE:	Statewide

This transmission is a “Health Advisory” that provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL.

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE.

FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE.

LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

Key points:

- A multi-state outbreak of *Mycobacterium abscessus/chelonae* infections associated with cosmetic surgery performed in the Dominican Republic has been identified. Although the investigation is ongoing, at this time there are at least 18 suspect and confirmed cases from several states.
- Please report to the Pennsylvania Department of Health any suspect cases of nontuberculous *Mycobacterium* skin and soft tissue infections in patients who report recent cosmetic procedures in the Dominican Republic.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is investigating a possible case of nontuberculous *Mycobacterium* (NTM) infection following cosmetic surgery procedures (also known as “lipotourism”) performed in the Dominican Republic. The Pennsylvania case, if confirmed, would be part of an ongoing multistate outbreak among medical tourists who underwent cosmetic surgical procedures at Centro Internacional de Cirugia Estetica (CIPLA) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Confirmed cases also have exposure to other healthcare settings in the Dominican Republic.

All confirmed cases are women. All report having undergone elective cosmetic surgery procedures, including liposuction, abdominoplasty, and breast lifts or reduction, in the Dominican Republic in March and April 2017. Symptoms and findings have included abdominal abscesses, pain, wound discharge, and fever. Most wound cultures have been positive for *Mycobacterium abscessus/chelonae*. Treatment has included hospitalization, surgical debridement, and several week courses of intravenous antibiotics.

We request that providers review records and report patients with cellulitis, soft tissue infection, or cutaneous abscess in which NTM was identified (including *M. abscessus*, *M. chelonae*, *M. massiliense*, and *M. fortuitum*) or whose wound specimens were acid fast smear positive only (since January 1, 2017). Physicians should inquire about previous surgical procedures in these patients and obtain NTM cultures whenever possible.

Outbreaks of NTM infections associated with cosmetic surgery in the Dominican Republic have occurred in the past and have been reported here:

Brief Report: Nontuberculous Mycobacterial Infections After Cosmetic Surgery --- Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2003--2004
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5323a4.htm>

Notes from the Field: Rapidly Growing Nontuberculous *Mycobacterium* Wound Infections Among Medical Tourists Undergoing Cosmetic Surgeries in the Dominican Republic — Multiple States, March 2013–February 2014
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6309a5.htm>

To assist the investigation, we request that providers:

- 1) Review records and report patients with cellulitis, soft tissue infection, or cutaneous abscess in which NTM was identified (including *M. abscessus*, *M. chelonae*, *M. massiliense* and *M. fortuitum*) or whose wound specimens were acid fast smear positive only (since January 1, 2017). Physicians should inquire about previous surgical procedures in these patients and obtain NTM cultures whenever possible;
- 2) Suspect NTM, and obtain mycobacterial cultures, in newly presenting patients or in those who have not responded to standard antibiotic treatment with cellulitis, soft tissue infection, or cutaneous abscess post cosmetic procedures regardless of the culture results. In such patients, we recommend alerting your microbiology laboratory that you suspect mycobacteria;

Please report all cases meeting the above criteria to the Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH. Any NTM culture or AFB+ culture in a patient suspected to be part of this outbreak should be saved at the clinical laboratory until further instructions can be provided. Additional testing through public health laboratories may be indicated.

Any questions or concerns regarding these recommendations should be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH or 1-877-724-3258. Questions can also be directed to the Bureau of Epidemiology at 717-787-3350.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

This information is current as of June 29, 2017, but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.