



DATE:	12/5/2019
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Rachel Levine, MD, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Salmonella infections among patients in healthcare facilities in southeastern Pennsylvania
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	n/a
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

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

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING 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; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

- **The Pennsylvania Department of Health is investigating four *Salmonella* outbreaks at healthcare facilities in southeastern Pennsylvania.**
- **Consider *Salmonella* for patients experiencing diarrheal symptoms, especially if febrile.**
- **Obtain a stool sample and test for bacterial pathogens.**
- **Report any gastrointestinal outbreaks to local public health authorities or to DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is investigating four *Salmonella* outbreaks at healthcare facilities in southeastern Pennsylvania. To date, we have identified 29 case-patients who spent time during their incubation periods in one of four healthcare facilities experiencing outbreaks, which include two hospitals and two long-term care facilities (LTCFs). Known onset dates range from November 19-November 30, 2019. Case identification is ongoing, which is essential to identify exposure risks, ensure appropriate clinical management, and implement prevention strategies.

Symptoms of *Salmonella* include diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever. Diarrhea is sometimes bloody. Symptoms usually begin within 12 to 72 hours after exposure, but they can begin up to a week or more after exposure. *Salmonella* infections usually resolve in 5 to 7 days, **but may require hospitalization, especially for patients who are immunocompromised.** Invasive infections (for example, blood stream infections, meningitis) may occur. In rare cases, *Salmonella* infections can lead to death.

Clinicians are advised to consider *Salmonella* among patients presenting with diarrheal symptoms, especially if the patients also present with fever. Special consideration should be given to patients who develop diarrheal symptoms if they are currently admitted to or have been recently discharged from healthcare facilities.

Immunocompromised patients are more likely to experience severe illness and should be treated with antibiotic therapy.

Clinicians are advised to order stool cultures for patients suspected of having a *Salmonella* infection to obtain isolates for antimicrobial susceptibility testing. Positive culture-independent diagnostic tests (CIDTs), such as PCR tests, should be reflexed to culture.

Salmonella infections are reportable in Pennsylvania. Additionally, as per state requirements, send all *Salmonella* isolates or CIDT positive stool samples in Cary Blair to the Pennsylvania Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories.

The Department of Health also reminds healthcare facilities to immediately report suspected gastrointestinal outbreaks to local public health authorities (in Philadelphia, call 215-685-6742 [business hours] or 215-686-4514 [after hours]) or to DOH at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258). Any suspected clusters or increases above baseline should be reported, even if the reports have not been clearly identified as a *Salmonella* outbreak.

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; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of December 5, 2019, but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.