



# Epi Watch

A Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter



April, 2010

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**Epi Watch** is a monthly newsletter from the Pinellas County Health Department. For more information, or to add your e-mail address to the distribution list, please contact the Editor.

The Florida Department of Health is holding the following symposium:  
**Improving Prevention and Treatment of Rabies and Tetanus Through Utilization of CDC Guidelines and Statewide Resources.**  
**Date: Friday, May 14, 2010**  
**Time: 11:00am – 3:00pm**  
**Location: Orlando, FL**  
 For more details, please e-mail:  
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*“The reason for collecting, analyzing and disseminating information on a disease is to control that disease. Collection and analysis should not be allowed to consume resources if action does not follow.”*

*Foegen, W.H. et al. (1976). Int. J of Epidemiology, 5:29-37.*

**To report diseases by phone call:**  
 (727) 824-6932

**To report diseases by fax (other than HIV/AIDS) use:**  
 (727) 820-4270

## Using ESSENCE to Find Cases Where Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis may be Needed

The Pinellas County Health Department (PinCHD) routinely collects reports from health care providers, Pinellas County Animal Services, and individual clients to find county residents that have been bitten by animals. In March 2010, the PinCHD began to utilize the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE) as another resource to find victims of animal bites that sought care at local Emergency Departments (ED). The use of ESSENCE allows the Health Department to detect cases where post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for rabies may be necessary.

On a daily basis, surveillance staff use a specially designed query in the ESSENCE system that searches all chief complaints for the following keywords: “cat bite” (including “kitten”), “dog bite” (including “puppy”), and “animal bite” (including “raccoon”, “fox”, “bobcat”, and “bat”). This data is excluded to query only bites from mammals that can transmit rabies and not from insects, reptiles or other humans.

On average, the PinCHD receives between 200 and 300 reports annually of individuals that were possibly exposed to rabies from traditional sources, including Animal Services. It is anticipated that ESSENCE will provide information on 600 to 700 additional events per year. These reports are subsequently investigated by PinCHD Epidemiology staff and, if the situation warrants, PEP is recommended. From January 1 to April 20 2009, 16 individuals from the 69 reported exposures were offered PEP. During this time period in 2010, 20 out of 184 exposure reports were offered the prophylaxis. Because this method of using ESSENCE was implemented in March, 2010, it is important to note that the increase in the number of exposure reports from January to April 2009 compared to the same time period in 2010 is not completely attributable to the use of this system to find more cases.

While it is still required to report cases of possible rabies exposure to the health department, implementing this surveillance technique provides PinCHD the opportunity to offer PEP to residents whose bites may have otherwise gone unreported and also helps identify animals that may pose a threat to other residents.

The PinCHD staff will continue to monitor ESSENCE for reports of animal bites and improve reporting rates for any possible rabies exposures. It also remains important to continue informing the community on the importance of taking proper precautions around animals, both domestic and wild.

**Please note the following updates to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website concerning rabies vaccine:**

Limited voluntary recall of rabies vaccine lot :  
<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/resources/news/2010-04-21.html>

Updated information for uninsured/underinsured patient assistance programs for rabies biologics : [http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/medical\\_care/programs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/medical_care/programs.html)

# Selected Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	2010 March	2010 Year to date	2009 Year to date	2009 Total
AIDS	13	29	36*	158
Animal Rabies			1	1
Arboviral Illness (Human):				
Dengue				
EEE				
SLE				
WNV				
CA/LaCrosse				
Campylobacteriosis	3	8	6	30
Chlamydia	320	919	964	4007
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)			1	1
Cryptosporidiosis		5	1	23
Cyclosporiasis			1	2
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7				
<i>E. coli</i> Shiga Toxin (+)				
Giardiasis	2	6	6	34
Gonorrhea	82	284	369	1518
<i>H. influenzae</i> :				
Invasive Disease	3	5	2	8
Hansen's Disease	1	1		1
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)				
Hepatitis, Acute Viral:				
A			2	6
B	1	1	7	28
C	1	3	1	3
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman +HBsAg	3	13	7	24
Hepatitis, Chronic Viral				
B	36	66	48	187
C	153	388	348	1383
HIV	24	58	35*	196
Lead Poisoning: Children < 6 years:				
Legionellosis	1	1	1	10
Listeriosis				
Lyme Disease	1	1		3
Malaria			1	3
Meningitis:				
Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic	1	2	5	7
Meningococcal Disease		1	1	3
Mercury Poisoning				
Mumps				2
Pertussis	1	2		4
Rabies, possible exposure	2	6	14	75
Salmonellosis	8	23	26	289
Shigellosis		2	1	5
Streptococcal Disease, Inv. Group A		1	6	14
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. Disease (DR)	5	7	14	35
<i>S. pneumoniae</i> , Inv. Disease (Suscept)	2	6	15	28
Syphilis:				
Total	3	21	57	183
Infectious (P and S)	3	7	20	67
Early Latent		10	27	82
Congenital				
Late Syphilis (Late Latent; Neurosyphilis)		4	10	34
Tuberculosis	3	7	3	18
<i>Vibrio</i> Infections				8

Provisional cases reported by the Pinellas County Health Department. Blank cells indicate no cases reported. For a complete list of reportable diseases and guidelines for reporting, please visit: [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/epi/index.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/index.html)

\* Year to date data cannot be compared to the first few months of 2009 due to data entry issues with the new eHARS system at that time.

A decrease in the total number of HIV and AIDS cases reported in 2009 in this issue of Epi Watch reflects current data. The reasons for the decrease are being reviewed and may be due to the recent removal of duplicate cases.