



Public Health Brief

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Outbreak of Acute Flaccid Myelitis – 10/17/18

The CDC is investigating a large surge in reported cases of Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM) for 2018 and reported 62 confirmed cases in 22 states through October 16, 2018. These 62 confirmed cases are part of a larger group of 127 reported cases that the CDC has received notice on and is investigating, along with state and local health departments and hospitals. The CDC has decided to include in its releases, the number of reported patient cases under investigation (PUIs), as well as confirmed cases, so that health care providers, health care agencies, federal, state and local officials, and the general population will be aware of the current outbreak situation. This is a large uptick in cases compared to last year (2017) which reported a total of 33 cases in 16 states.

AFM is a rare (one in one million), but serious condition, that causes inflammation in a person's spinal cord, causing weakness in the arm(s) and/or leg(s). The majority of cases are in children and adolescents, most of them in younger children. It is believed to be a complication associated with certain viruses such as enteroviruses (both polio and non-polio), adenoviruses, and West Nile virus. These viruses are contagious and spread, with the exception of West Nile, like colds and flus; West Nile is spread by mosquitos with rare transmission via blood transfusions, donated organs, and from mother to baby through pregnancy, delivery or breast feeding.



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What EMS should know:

If a patient, particularly a child/adolescent, presents with weak or paralyzed limbs, they should be transported to the hospital for further evaluation. Careful attention should be paid to the washing of hands, and decontaminating all objects & surfaces that may have been contaminated. Wearing appropriate PPE also decreases the risk of transmission. Notify the hospital, before arrival, of the patient's status.

More complete info on AFM can be found in the *Outbreaks/Emerging Diseases* section of the HIP. All further updates will be made in the *Outbreaks/Emerging Diseases* section.

For more information see: <https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/about-afm.html>

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