



Bulletin No. 3
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Hepatitis in the Bethel Area

A large outbreak of infectious hepatitis A is expected in villages of the Yukon-Kuskokwim River Delta this spring and next fall. Cases are being reported from Kotlik, Emmonak, Bethel, Mountain Village and Kasiguluk. Primarily at risk are children under age 16. Most adults are presumed immune following a previous statewide epidemic in 1957.

Symptoms have been generally mild with fever, headache, and transient bilirubinuria or jaundice. Simple visual or Ictotest (R) urine screening is recommended for all children from this area presenting with fever, abdominal pain, headache and malaise.

Recommendations for containment of the epidemic include:

1. Careful and complete reporting by physicians of all icteric and anicteric cases so that gamma globulin can be expeditiously administered to family contacts. Use the toll free Zenith 1700 Rapid Telephone phone line for reporting.
2. Administration of gamma globulin to family contacts only:
 - 1/2 cc IM for patients less than 50 lbs.
 - 1 cc IM for patients more than 50 lbs. and less than 100 lbs.
 - 2 cc IM for patients more than 100 lbs.
3. Education of patients, contacts, and the public regarding proper hygienic and sanitary precautions. Briefly these are:
 - a. wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and before eating and handling food,
 - b. general cleanliness around the house, especially in the bathroom and kitchen,
 - c. proper disposal of human wastes and wash water,
 - d. confinement with symptomatic treatment of patients at home for one week or until the patient feels well. Further quarantine is unwarranted and practically useless in preventing spread of the disease,
 - e. it is not presently recommended that residents or occasional travelers to the area receive prophylactic gamma globulin.

If you have any further questions regarding this outbreak, please call Dr. Mike Moser at 279-9511 or write Center for Disease Control, 225 Eagle Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

Influenza A Isolated

Strains of influenza A Victorian virus have been isolated from the Bethel, Fairbanks, and Anchorage areas. The flu epidemic in these areas appears to have finally peaked. Current vaccines are moderately effective against this strain if given early enough for immunity to develop. Physicians who have patients with unusual flu-associated problems such as CNS syndromes, pericarditis, or pneumonia, or if death occurs, are invited to report to CDC at 279-9511.

Meningococcal Meningitis

A couple of cases of meningococcal meningitis have been reported from Kodiak. One case was Serogroup A and the other, Group C. There is no apparent relationship between the two cases.