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Bulletin No. 6
April 15, 1974

Influenza Still Around

In the past several weeks influenza has spread from the Anchorage area to involve various parts of the State. Reports of increased influenza activity have been received from Sitka/Mt. Edgecumbe, Kake, Adak, Naknek and Dillingham. In the Anchorage area influenza seems to be occurring with increased frequency in the adult population as opposed to what occurred during the previous month when mostly children were involved.

This is all Influenza, Type B activity. So far, no Influenza, Type A, has been isolated in Alaska although type A has been noted in sporadic outbreaks in the lower-48.

Hepatitis in Cordova

A cluster of five cases of infectious hepatitis involving children has recently occurred in Cordova. Epidemiologic investigation has revealed no environmental contamination or common source to explain the outbreak. All five cases have recovered and family contacts have been treated with Immune Serum Globulin (ISG).

(Reported by Arthur Tilgner, M.D., Larry Ermold, M.D., and Ofelia Nava, PHN.)

Hepatitis Prophylaxis

Frequently questions arise as to who should receive ISG when cases of Hepatitis A (infectious hepatitis) occur. Numerous field studies during the past 20 years have documented the protective benefit of ISG against Hepatitis A. When administered within one to two weeks after exposure to Hepatitis A, it prevents illness in 80-90% of those exposed. ISG should be given as soon as possible after a known exposure.

Dose:

Under most conditions of exposure, protection is afforded by the intramuscular injection of .01 ml of ISG per pound of body weight.

Who Should Receive ISG?

ISG should be given to household contacts (i.e., those living in the household) regardless of age. ISG administration to school, work or hospital contacts is generally not indicated. Those individuals not part of the immediate household should be reassured that they are at no increased risk of developing hepatitis.