

EpiNews

Palm Beach County Health Department Division of Epidemiology & Disease Control

1050 15th Street West, Riviera Beach, FL 33404

Savita Kumar, MD, MSPH, Director

Phone: (561) 840-4564 SC 263-4564

FAX: (561) 845-4496 SC 263-4496

Weekends/Evenings: (561) 840-4500

E-mail: Michael_Beard@doh.state.fl.us



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Introduction

EpiNews: This is the first issue of a planned quarterly newsletter, which will cover current issues Public Health Epidemiology and Disease Control in Palm Beach County. The purpose of the newsletter is to communicate important information to individuals and organizations who have a common interest in ongoing Public Health issues as well as encouraging networking between staff, health care providers, and organizations. We look forward to having the opportunity to share news and relay important information to you. *EpiNews* will accompany the EPI Division's Quarterly Report Summary of Communicable Diseases and Public Health Indices and will be distributed at the end of each quarter when data becomes available. Please forward your comments or suggestions to Michael Beard, editor of *EpiNews* by phone, FAX, or e-mail.

"DEDC": The Division of Epidemiology and Disease Control is a vital public health component of the Palm Beach County Health Department. The division is responsible for communicable disease surveillance, investigation and control. This includes investigation and surveillance of more than 90 reportable diseases and outbreak and environmental investigations ranging from foodborne illness outbreaks to environmental exposures and cancer clusters. The Division conducts studies and compiles and presents data for Health Department and public usage. It is said that Epidemiology is at the core of any public health program. Our dedicated staff strives to help by offering solutions and assisting with management of disease cases in Palm Beach County.

Disease Highlights

Hepatitis C: It is estimated that nearly 4 million Americans are infected with Hepatitis C virus. Due to increased screening of blood, organ, and tissue donors the incidence of acute cases has decreased. At the same time, the number of persons developing chronic liver disease from prior infection is rising. Complete reporting is necessary to improve the Health Department's ability to identify persons or groups at risk. Through reporting/notification procedure, we can work together to detect cases and to ensure effective treatment and prevention. This also presents the opportunity to educate both patients and close contacts regarding the disease.

Invasive Infections Caused by *Neisseria Meningitidis* and *Haemophilus Influenza*: Just a reminder - It's that time of year when an occasional case of these two infections is reported to our office. The State Health Office requires that specimens of CSF or blood (cerebral spinal fluid) be sent to the State Lab in Jacksonville for sero-grouping or typing. Specimens must be submitted with a requisition, or a bacteriology green slip clearly labeled as to the type of testing wanted. The requisition should also include the source of specimen, gram stain results and suspected organism. It should be a fresh sub-culture, not over forty-eight hours old, boldly outlined on chocolate slant and no petri dishes. Send by overnight mail to: Office of Laboratory Service, Jacksonville Central Laboratory, Attn.: Bacteriology, 1217 Pearl Street, Jacksonville, FL 32231, (phone 904-359-6211)

Communication

ICP Meeting: The Disease Control Staff of the Division will be hosting a meeting with the Infection Control Practitioners of Palm Beach County hospitals and nursing homes on April 13, 1999. Look for an invitation in the mail.

In the News

Typhoid update: In February two cases of typhoid fever were investigated by the Epidemiology Division. These cases were part of an outbreak associated with an imported fruit product called mamey.

**Communicable Diseases and Selected Public Health Indices
Palm Beach County, Florida**

4th Quarter
Oct-Dec 1998

	Number This Qtr	Number to Date This Yr	Number to Date Last Yr
<i>Enteric, Hepatitis, Meningitis</i>			
Campylobacteriosis	24	78	111
Shigellosis	32	210	135
Salmonellosis	70	216	167
Hepatitis A	11	40	44
Giardiasis	33	77	130
Hepatitis B	7	26	44
Meningitis & Invasive Disease due to Neisseria Meningitidis	2	6	13
Meningitis & Invasive Disease due to Haemophilus Influenzae	0	3	9
<i>AIDS</i>			
Number New AIDS Cases Reported	98	527	611
<i>HIV***</i>			
Number HIV Tested	2,778	12,105	13,679
Number HIV Positive	126	536	458
Percent HIV Positive	4.5%	4.4%	3.3%
<i>STD</i>			
Primary/Secondary Syphilis	5	14	10
Congenital Syphilis	1	1	0
Gonorrhea	222	906	950
Chlamydia	298	1,074	1,375
<i>Tuberculosis</i>			
Total Tuberculosis Cases	24	84	63
Total Tuberculosis Cases <15 Yrs. of Age	0	1	0
<i>Live Births</i>			
Total Infant Births	3,405	13,038	12,552
Infant Births, White	2,410	9,235	9,003
Infant Births, Non-White	989	3,782	3,541
<i>Infant Deaths</i>			
Total Infant Deaths	16	75	88
Infant Deaths, White	5	36	45
Infant Deaths, Non-White	11	39	43
<i>Food Related Complaints and Outbreaks</i>			
Number of Complaints	92	437	397
Suspected Foodborne Illness Outbreaks	1	23	21
Confirmed Foodborne Illness Outbreaks	1	2	6
<i>Childhood Lead Testing</i>			
Lead Poisoning (Venous Testing >=10)	20	59	67

Data provided is provisional

N/A = Not Applicable

***Data Representing PBCHD clients only

Palm Beach County Health Department
For Information - Please call (561) 840-4564
S. Kumar, M.D., MSPH, Director
Michael Beard, Program Specialist