

# Bio Terror Bible

## EXPOSING THE COMING BIO-TERROR PANDEMIC

**BIOTERRORBIBLE.COM:** The following outbreaks occurred within the calendar year of 2012. While some of the following reports may have been legitimate outbreaks, most if not all of them appear to be generated man-made outbreaks with the overall goal of convincing American and the world that it is on the precipice of a major pandemic. The fact that these outbreaks exist in mass confirms that an upcoming bio-terror attack is in the cards and may be played in a last ditch effort to regain political, economic and military control of society.

**Title:** Anthrax Found In 26 Drinking Wells In India

**Date:** January 10, 2012

**Source:** [Bio Prep Watch](#)

**Abstract:** A group of students from Palamur University in Andhra Pradesh, India, found deadly anthrax bacteria in the ground water of more than 26 habitations during research for a project.

Pawan Kumar, the head of the department of microbiology, sent the students to nearby villages to obtain water samples of colored water from open water bodies to test in the laboratory. After examining the water, Kumar suspected that the samples contained *Bacillus anthracis*, the bacteria that causes anthrax. The Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology confirmed his fears, the [Deccan Herald](#) reports.

"The water has *Bacillus anthracis* bacteria which causes anthrax, a zoonotic disease that is transmissible to humans through handling or consumption of contaminated animal products," Kumar said, according to the [Deccan Herald](#).

The water samples were collected from Kodangal, Midjil, Papireddyguda, Khillaghanapuram, Atmakur, Aamanagallu, Lingala, Devarakonda and Alampur. The water had been contaminated from raw sewage, animal and blood products.

"The villagers in these places, even in a tourist spot such as Alampur, drink this water day in and day out," Venkat Reddy, a student, said, the [Deccan Herald](#) reports. "They are suffering from unknown diseases, many with ulcers so we want to go further and seek protected water for our people."

Humans can become infected with anthrax by handling products or consuming undercooked meat from infected animals. Infections can also occur from inhaling spores in contaminated anthrax products or in the intentional release of spores during a bioterrorist attack ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Anthrax Outbreak Hits National Park In Zimbabwe

**Date:** January 10, 2012

**Source:** [Bio Prep Watch](#)

**Abstract:** More than 165 animals are believed to have recently died in an ongoing anthrax outbreak in a Zimbabwe national park.

Caroline Washaya-Moyo, a public relations manager for the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, said that dozens of elephants, buffaloes and hippos have died in the Mana Pools National Park, according to AllAfrica.com.

"Our Chinhoyi office has since confirmed the anthrax outbreak following the death of the animals in Mana Pools," Washaya-Moyo said, AllAfrica.com reports. "The Authority engaged the Vet Offices who later collected samples from hippos for lab testing. The lab test confirmed that 88 hippopotamus died of anthrax."

Washaya-Moyo said that the situation was now under control, but also expressed concern that the outbreak might have spread to other areas of the protected reserve, which lies around the lower Zambezi River, according to DailyMail.co.uk.

Dr. Chris Foggin, a veterinary officer in the Department of Veterinary Services (Wildlife), confirmed the outbreak and detailed some of the measures that are being taken.

"A number of animals have died, but we have visited the area and we sealed it off and we are burning the carcasses to prevent any further spread, an action well considered now that the lab reports confirmed anthrax as the culprit," Dr Foggin said, AllAfrica.com reports ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Fears Over Outbreak After 12 Infected With New Swine Flu Strain In U.S.

**Date:** January 12, 2012

**Source:** [Daily Mail](#)

**Abstract:** Twelve Americans have been reported infected with a mutating and now possibly human-to-human transmitted form of the H1N1 Swine Flu virus called H3N2v.

An investigation undertaken by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention found that human infections of these viruses followed contact with swine as well as through 'limited human-to-human transmission.'

'While there is no evidence that sustained human-to-human transmission is occurring, all influenza viruses have the capacity to change and it's possible that this virus may become widespread,' the CDC explained through their website.

Two of the 12 reported have been in Indiana, three in Iowa, two in Maine, three in Pennsylvania, and two in West Virginia.

Out of 10 diagnosed with the virus excluding West Virginia's two victims - reported in the CDC's November report - three were hospitalized.

The CDC stated that the severity in illness following diagnosis with the virus has been found similar to previous flu virus infections with mild illness.

In a report released by the CDC on November 22, the three Iowa victims were identified as three children, explained as all having the virus with the same 'matrix gene segment' that was in the previous H1N1 virus.

'Prior to the three cases in Iowa, most human infections with this virus were associated with exposure to swine,' the CDC's report reads.

'In Iowa, however, no swine exposure has been identified. At this time, it appears that unsustainable human-to-human transmission may have occurred,' it explains.

While those three children, who were described as in close contact to one another, recovered from the virus, the CDC cautioned in their later 2011 report that, 'These viruses are substantially different from

human influenza A (H3N2) viruses, so the seasonal vaccine is expected to provide limited cross-protection among adults and no protection to children.'

During the H1N1 outbreak between 2009 and mid-2010, over 17,000 victims died worldwide.

The swine flu strain's catastrophic impact deemed it a pandemic. A second Alamance County school may have a case of whooping cough, school system officials said Thursday.

This new suspected case involves a student at Western Middle School in Elon, school officials said. The case was first reported by the World Health Organization.

With the H1N1 virus, most of those hospitalized were younger adults and children rather than the elderly ([Daily Mail, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Possible Whooping Cough Case Found At Second Alamance Co. School

**Date:** January 12, 2012

**Source:** Fox 8 News

**Abstract:** A second Alamance County school may have a case of whooping cough, school system officials said Thursday.

This new suspected case involves a student at Western Middle School in Elon, school officials said.

The case has not yet been confirmed by lab results, but doctors told school system officials they're confident it is a pertussis case.

The case involves a girl who had contact with a confirmed pertussis case outside the school system, officials said. She rides a bus that is shared with Western High School, school system officials said.

The school system is contacting parents whose children may have been exposed at the school.

That news came on the same day Alamance County Health Department officials announced three more confirmed pertussis cases at B. Everett Jordan Elementary School, bringing the total to eight.

The first case was reported at the elementary school Dec. 14, and more than 600 people were interviewed and given antibiotics.

Health officials said there were also 23 probable pertussis cases at the elementary school. The "probable cases" are those showing symptoms similar to pertussis but have not been confirmed by testing.

Health officials said they will never know if those people were actually infected ([Fox News 8, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Study Of Freakish Mystery Illness Finds No Cause

**Date:** January 26, 2012

**Source:** [Guardian](#)

**Abstract:** Imagine having the feeling that tiny bugs are crawling on your body, that you have oozing sores and mysterious fibers sprouting from your skin. Sound like a horror movie? Well, at one point several years ago, government doctors were getting up to 20 calls a day from people saying they had such symptoms.

Many of these people were in California and one of that state's U.S. senators, Dianne Feinstein, asked for a scientific study. In 2008, federal health officials began to study people saying they were affected by this freakish condition called Morgellons.

The study cost nearly \$600,000. Its long-awaited results, released Wednesday, conclude that Morgellons exists only in the patients' minds.

"We found no infectious cause," said Mark Eberhard, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention official who was part of the 15-member study team.

The study appears in PLoS One, one of the Public Library of Science journals.

Sufferers of Morgellons (mor-GELL-uns) describe a variety of symptoms, including fatigue, erupting sores, crawling sensations on their skin and — perhaps worst of all — mysterious red, blue or black fibers that sprout from their skin. Some say they've suffered for decades, but the syndrome wasn't named until 2002, when "Morgellons" was chosen from a 1674 medical paper describing similar symptoms.

Afflicted patients have documented their suffering on websites and many have vainly searched for a doctor who believed them. Some doctors believe the condition is a form of delusional parasitosis, a psychosis in which people believe they are infected with parasites.

Last May, Mayo Clinic researchers published a study of 108 Morgellons patients and found none of them suffered from any unusual physical ailment. The study concluded that the sores on many of them were caused by their own scratching and picking at their skin.

The CDC study was meant to be broader, starting with a large population and then went looking for cases within the group. The intent was to give scientists a better idea of how common Morgellons actually is.

They focused on more than 3 million people who lived in 13 counties in Northern California, a location chosen in part because all had health insurance through Kaiser Permanente of Northern California, which had a research arm that could assist in the project. Also, many of the anecdotal reports of Morgellons came from the area.

Culling through Kaiser patient records from July 2006 through June 2008, the team found — and was able to reach — 115 who had what sounded like Morgellons. Most were middle-aged white women. They were not clustered in any one spot.

That led to the finding that Morgellons occurred in roughly 4 out of every 100,000 Kaiser enrollees. "So it's rare," Eberhard said.

Roughly 100 agreed to at least answer survey questions, and about 40 consented to a battery of physical and psychological tests that stretched over several days.

Blood and urine tests and skin biopsies checked for dozens of infectious diseases, including fungus and bacteria that could cause some of the symptoms. The researchers found none that would explain the cases.

There was no sign of an environmental cause, either, although researchers did not go to each person's house to look around.

They took fibers from 12 people, which were tested at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. Nothing unusual there, either. Cotton and nylon, mainly — not some kind of organism wriggling out of a patient's body.

Skin lesions were common, but researchers concluded most of them were from scratching.

What stood out was how the patients did on the psychological exams. Though normal in most respects, they had more depression than the general public and were more obsessive about physical ailments, the study found.

However, they did not have an unusual history of psychiatric problems, according to their medical records. And the testing gave no clear indication of a delusional disorder.

So what do they have? The researchers don't know. They don't even know what to call it, opting for the label "unexplained dermopathy" in their paper.

But clearly, something made them miserable. "The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence," said Felicia Goldstein, an Emory University neurology professor and study co-author.

She said perhaps the patients could be helped by cognitive behavioral therapy that might help them deal with possible contributing psychological issues.

The study is not expected to be the last word on the subject.

Among those with additional questions is Randy Wymore, an Oklahoma State University pharmacologist who for years was the most reputable scientist to look into it and who has concluded Morgellons is not a psychiatric disorder.

On Wednesday, Wymore said he had not seen the CDC paper and was unable to comment on it. But when the study began, he questioned whether Kaiser patients with Morgellons would participate, especially if they were unhappy with how they were previously handled by their Kaiser doctors.

"There is always the question: How many of the study participants actually have Morgellons Disease?" he said, in an email.

The CDC is not planning additional study, however. The agency's expertise is in infectious diseases and environmental health problems, and the researchers saw no evidence of that.

"We're not mental health experts," one CDC spokeswoman said ([Guardian, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Found In 37 U.S. States

**Date:** January 31, 2012

**Source:** [U.S. News](#)

**Abstract:** Half a world away, doctors in India are fighting outbreaks of bacterial infections that are resistant to more than 15 types of antibiotics. But closer to home, a similarly scary bug is making the rounds in intensive care and other long-term units of American hospitals.

In at least 37 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, doctors have identified bacteria, including *E. coli*, that produce *Klebsiella pneumoniae* carbapenemase, or KPC—an enzyme that makes bacteria resistant to most known treatments. It's much more prevalent in America than bacteria that produce NDM-1, the enzyme that has Indian doctors "[hell scared](#)," and, according to Alexander Kallen, a medical officer at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, the final outcome isn't much different: superbacteria that are hard to kill.

"It's got a slightly different structure than [NDM-1]," he says of KPC. "But the bottom line is they're two different ways to produce bacteria that are resistant to a wide range of antibiotics."

That's bad news for infected patients—the mortality rate for patients infected with KPC-producing bacteria has been estimated to be as high as 50 percent. Doctors are advised to do their best to keep the bacteria from spreading, which explains why the problem is most prevalent in hospitals and other close-quarter medical units. Infected patients are often isolated.

KPC has been seen in a wide range of bacteria, including E. coli, Salmonella, and K. pneumonia, which often affects hospitalized patients.

These superbugs are resistant to nearly every weapon doctors can throw at them, including carbapenems, a class of antibiotic that the CDC calls the "last line of defense" against infections that are resistant to other types of antibiotics. There are a couple antibiotics that have been shown to kill these superbugs, but often at great risk to patients. In fact, the FDA has associated the use of these effective antibiotics with an "[increased risk of death](#)" in patients with pneumonia.

That leaves many doctors scratching their heads. KPC-bacteria often grow on medical equipment such as catheters and ventilators, so doctors can sometimes remove that equipment or perform surgery to try to eliminate the infection from a patient's body.

CDC researchers, including Kallen, say that hospitals who haven't been vigilant about isolating patients with KPC-producing bacteria may have missed their chance. According to a paper co-authored by Kallen released last year, "failure to recognize CRE infections when they first occur in a facility has resulted in a missed opportunity to intervene before these organisms are transmitted more widely."

The good news is that, at least for now, KPC-producing bacteria generally only infects people who already have compromised immune systems. "It can move into the wider community," says Kallen, "but we haven't seen much of that yet" ([U.S. News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Vietnam Reports 2nd Bird Flu Death In A Month

**Date:** February 1, 2012

**Source:** [Fox News](#)

**Abstract:** Vietnam has confirmed its second human death from bird flu in nearly a month, after going nearly two years with no reported fatalities.

The director of the Health Department in southern Soc Trang province said Thursday that test results confirm that a 26-year-old woman died of the disease Jan. 28 after being hospitalized in the provincial hospital three days earlier.

Truong Hoai Phong says the woman, who recently had a baby in another hospital, had slaughtered and eaten dead chickens the family raised. He says dead and sick poultry were reported in the woman's neighborhood.

Phong says the woman's house has been disinfected and samples from poultry and people who were in contact with the woman were being tested ([Fox News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Taco Bell Linked To Oct. Salmonella Outbreak

**Date:** February 1, 2012

**Source:** Reuters

**Abstract:** Yum Brand Inc's Taco Bell chain has been linked to a salmonella outbreak that sickened 68 people in 10 states late last year.

Taco Bell said in a statement on Wednesday that investigators found that some of the people who became ill ate at Taco Bell, while others did not.

"They believe that the problem likely occurred at the supplier level before it was delivered to any restaurant or food outlet. We take food quality and safety very seriously," Taco Bell said, echoing information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Jan. 19 final report on the outbreak.

The cluster of illness from salmonella enteritidis infections is believed to have begun in mid-October and ended by the time CDC issued its final report. Illnesses were reported in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New [Mexico](#), Ohio and Tennessee.

CDC said 31 percent of patients were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.

The outbreak had an air of mystery about it because CDC's final report said it was linked to a Mexican-style fast-food chain identified only as "Restaurant A."

Food Safety News was the first to identify Taco Bell as Restaurant A, citing a document from the Oklahoma State Department of Health's Acute Disease Service.

Taco Bell has been tied to two other outbreaks in the last six years.

In 2006, CDC identified contaminated lettuce served by Taco Bell restaurants in the northeastern United States as the source of an outbreak of a virulent strain of E. coli O157 that sickened 71 people.

Four years later, CDC confirmed that Taco Bell was linked to two outbreaks of rare strains of salmonella that made at least 155 people sick in 21 states. CDC originally linked that outbreak to an unnamed Mexican-style fast-food restaurant chain.

News of the 2011 outbreak comes as Taco Bell works to fully recover from a bogus, but ultimately sales-sending lawsuit over the contents of its seasoned ground beef.

Salmonella infections often cause diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps. The illness usually last four to seven days and most people recover without treatment.

CDC estimates that one in six people in the United States gets sick from eating contaminated food each year. Food-borne illnesses are blamed for about 3,000 deaths annually ([Reuters, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Flesh-Eating Bug That You Can Catch On The Bus Or Train Is Spreading In The UK

**Date:** February 2, 2012

**Source:** [Daily Mail](#)

**Abstract:** A flesh-eating form of pneumonia that is easily passed between healthy people on public transport is spreading across the UK, experts have warned.

The deadly strain of MRSA called USA300 passes easily through skin-to-skin contact. It can also survive on surfaces and so has the potential to be picked up on crowded buses and tubes.

It was first seen in the U.S but cases are now being reported in the community and not just hospitals in Britain.

Dr Ruth Massey, from the Department of Biology and Biochemistry at the University of Bath, said extra vigilance was required around this and similar MRSA bugs known as PVL-positive community acquired strains.

USA300 is resistant to treatment by several front-line antibiotics and can cause large boils on the skin. In severe cases, USA300 can lead to fatal blood poisoning or a form of pneumonia that can eat away at lung tissue.

Dr Massey said there were 1,000 cases of PVL-positive community acquired MRSA in England in the last year, of which 200 were USA300 strains.

'These community-acquired strains seem to be good at affecting healthy people - they seem to be much better than the hospital ones at causing disease.

'They don't rely on healthcare workers moving them around, which the hospital ones seem to.'

Dr Massey said USA300 is 'a really big issue in the U.S. and it's starting to emerge here.

'But hopefully because we are aware of it and are working to understand it, it won't become as big of a problem (in the UK).'

In a new research paper published in the Journal of Infectious Diseases, Dr Massey and colleagues analyse the way community-acquired MRSA are able to adapt and fine tune themselves to spread outside of hospitals.

MRSA bacteria in hospitals has not been able to migrate into the community in the same way.

Dr Massey said: 'Our research found that the composition of the cell wall of the bacteria is critical to the community-acquired bacteria being more toxic.

'The ability of the MRSA bacteria to secrete toxins is one of the main ways it causes disease.

'Using a sensing system, it carefully controls when it switches on its ability to do this, so as not to cause disease until it is firmly established within the human.

'Many antibiotics target the cell walls of harmful bacteria, and to resist this, the bacteria have to make changes to their cell wall.'

Community-acquired MRSA strains have cell walls that are different to those seen in hospitals, allowing them to sense their environment and switch toxin expression on at the right time.

Justine Rudkin, a PhD student working on the project, said: 'The community-acquired bacteria has evolved further, and is able to maintain a higher level of toxicity while also resisting treatment from antibiotics, making it a much larger problem.'

She added: 'While we are constantly learning more about MRSA, there is a serious threat posed by this newer strain of bacteria capable of causing disease and even death in perfectly healthy people.

'We need to respond seriously to this threat as it reaches Britain from the United States.'

Chris Thomas, professor of molecular genetics at the University of Birmingham, said: 'The key message is that strains of MRSA that are spreading in the community are better able to infect the young and



healthy, precisely because they are not actually trying so hard to be resistant as the bugs that have been encountered in hospitals for many years.'

He said there was now a 'need to worry about community super bugs that are fine tuned to spreading outside of hospitals and we all need to be extra vigilant about hygiene and unnecessary use of antibiotics.'

A spokeswoman for the Health Protection Agency (HPA) said: 'The paper highlights some important observations which helps us understand at the molecular level why hospital strains of MRSA are less virulent than the so-called community MRSA strains.'

'We have known about community MRSA for over a decade and, whilst they are responsible for a high burden of disease in North America, this is not the case in the rest of the world.'

'In England we have seen sporadic cases of this type of MRSA most often causing boils and abscesses, but it has not emerged as a major public health issue in this country.'

'The HPA are carrying out active surveillance of this type of bacteria and advise healthcare professionals on correct infection control procedures to reduce the likelihood of spread' ([Daily Mail, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Malaria Deaths Hugely Underestimated - Lancet Study

**Date:** February 3, 2012

**Source:** [BBC](#)

**Abstract:** Worldwide malaria deaths may be almost twice as high as previously estimated, a study reports.

The research, [published in the British medical journal the Lancet](#), suggests 1.24 million people died from the mosquito-borne disease in 2010.

This compares to a World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate for 2010 of 655,000 deaths.

But both the new study and the WHO indicate global death rates are now falling.

The research was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It used new data and new computer modelling to build a historical database for malaria between 1980 and 2010.

The conclusion was that worldwide deaths had risen from 995,000 in 1980 to a peak of 1.82 million in 2004, before falling to 1.24 million in 2010.

The rise in malaria deaths up to 2004 is attributed to a growth in populations at risk of malaria, while the decline since 2004 is attributed to "a rapid scaling up of malaria control in Africa", supported by international donors.

While most deaths were among young children and in Africa, the researchers noted a higher proportion of deaths among older children and adults than previously estimated. In total, 433,000 more deaths occurred among children over five and adults in 2010 than in the WHO estimate.

"You learn in medical school that people exposed to malaria as children develop immunity and rarely die from malaria as adults," said Dr Christopher Murray of the University of Washington in Seattle, who led the study.

"What we have found in hospital records, death records, surveys and other sources shows that just is not the case."

The researchers also concluded malaria eradication was not a possibility in the short-term.

"We estimated that if decreases from the peak year of 2004 continue, malaria mortality will decrease to less than 100,000 deaths only after 2020," they write.

### **Disturbing Numbers**

The Lancet's editor, Richard Horton, told the BBC: "Right now we don't actually have any reliable primary numbers for malaria deaths in some of the most malarious regions of the world, so what numbers we have come from estimates.

"What this paper reports is a new way of estimating the number of malaria deaths, where they've used additional data sets and improved mathematical models from calculating mortality."

But despite what he calls the "disturbing" number of deaths recorded, he believes the underlying message of the report is that the disease can and is being controlled.

"Since 2004, the number of malaria deaths has dropped by about a third, and that's really been the time when the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria has swung into action" he said.

"Over the past decade, 230 million cases of malaria have been treated and the same number of bed nets have been distributed to people at risk of malaria, and the result of that has been this huge downturn. So what we know is that we're actually able to turn off malaria with our existing interventions."

Commenting on the new study, Professor David Schellenberg of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine said the researchers had "gone to great lengths to assemble information from a range of sources and to make adjustments for the inadequate data quality".

"We can argue about the strengths and weaknesses of their approach but should not be distracted by the details of the methods: however you look at it, far too many people are dying from malaria.

"The introduction of rapid diagnostic tests for malaria, recommended by the WHO in 2010 and increasingly available in endemic countries, affords an unprecedented opportunity to take the guesswork out of malaria diagnosis and to improve the reliability of information," he added.

The new survey involved a range of measures to try and obtain a better estimate of global malaria deaths. New data sets were examined and computer models built which factored in a host of elements such as transmission rates, healthcare access, drug resistance and bednet coverage.

The work also involved trying to judge the impact of the misclassification of deaths in the affected regions. This readjustment alone generated a rise of 21% in the number of malaria deaths ([BBC, 2012](#)).

**Title:** 100 Cruise Passengers Struck By Norovirus

**Date:** February 4, 2012

**Source:** [Boston.com](#)

**Abstract:** Officials with Princess Cruise Lines say a stomach virus affected nearly 100 passengers on a ship that arrived in South Florida. Meanwhile, passengers on another ship were complaining of gastrointestinal illness.

A total of 92 passengers and 13 crew members on the Ruby Princess were affected by the Norovirus, which causes vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain. The ship returns to South Florida on Sunday.

Meanwhile, there has been an increase in the number of cases of gastrointestinal illness among passengers on Crown Princess, which docked Saturday at Port Everglades.

Spokeswoman Julie Benson says the cases do not appear to be related. The cause of the illness has not yet been determined.

All cabins and public areas on the ships are being disinfected, which will delay their next departures ([Boston.com, 2012](#)).

**Title:** 2 Florida Bound Cruise Ship Liners Hit By Fast Spreading Virus

**Date:** February 4, 2012

**Source:** Fox News

**Abstract:** Passengers on board two different Florida-bound [cruise ships](#) have been hit by a fast spreading norovirus, The Miami Herald reports.

The gastrointestinal sickness struck two Princess Cruise Lines ships, the Ruby Princess and the Crown Princess, both en route to Fort Lauderdale.

Ahead of the liners next departures this weekend, the cruise companies sent out an “emergency notification” to passengers notifying them that their trip will be delayed due to a norovirus attack.

“It will be necessary for the ship to undergo a prolonged and additional disinfection in [Port Everglades](#) on Sunday,” the line said in its message to passengers, The Miami Herald reports.

Aboard Crown Princess, a total of 140 passengers and 18 crew have been affected by the illness. A total of 81 passengers and nine crew have been affected by the illness aboard Ruby Princess, according to Karen Candy, [manager of media relations](#) for Princess, in an e-mailed statement Friday afternoon, The Miami Herald reports.

“The ship continues to undergo the highest level of sanitation to stop the spread of illness, and a comprehensive disinfection of the ship’s public areas and all passenger cabins will occur during turnaround this Sunday using additional cleaning crew who will be brought aboard. As a result, passenger embarkation will be delayed until 2 p.m” ([Fox News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Virus Strikes Cruise Ship Out Of New Orleans

**Date:** February 5, 2012

**Source:** CBS

**Abstract:** A stomach virus outbreak delayed the departure of the cruise ship "Voyager of the Seas" from New Orleans in one of three outbreaks of illness aboard U.S.-based cruise ships reported over the weekend.

The 15-deck, 3,100-passenger Royal Caribbean Cruises ship was delayed in leaving Saturday for a seven-day trip by a couple of hours, Port of New Orleans spokesman Chris Bonura. He referred other questions to Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., which did not answer a call and email Sunday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notified Louisiana on Friday that a cruise ship might be coming in with a norovirus outbreak, state epidemiologist Raoult Ratard said Sunday.

The CDC did not say how many passengers were ill, Ratard said. "They let us know, but that's it. They don't give us details or anything. And we really don't need" details about norovirus, he said.

Agency spokesman Tom Skinner said he could not comment immediately because the CDC inspector who had been on the Voyager on Saturday was busy checking a cruise ship in Florida on Sunday. That ship was one of two homeported in Florida where weekend outbreaks were reported.

WDSU-TV reported that about 200 passengers on the New Orleans ship became ill from the virus, which causes vomiting and diarrhea and spreads rapidly in close quarters such as cruise ships and nursing homes.

To put things into perspective, Ratard said, on any given day about 10,000 people in the New Orleans area are likely to have diarrhea, about 30 percent of them — 3,000 — because of norovirus.

"In a closed space like a cruise ship, in a nursing home, in a hospital, you want to be extra careful. But the 3,000, they're all over the place," Ratard said ([CBS, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Chicken Salad Sandwiches Recall: 2,800 Sandwiches Have Possible Listeria Contamination

**Date:** February 7, 2012

**Source:** [Huffington Post](#)

**Abstract:** A South Carolina company is recalling about 2,800 of its chicken salad sandwiches because of concerns about possible listeria contamination.

The sandwiches, from the Grand Strand Sandwich Co. of Longs, S.C., were distributed in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. They carried the following labels: Grand Strand Sandwich, Lunch Box Sandwiches and Country Harvest Sandwiches, and came in 4.5 ounce and 5 ounce packaging.

According to the company, the sandwiches may contain eggs that were part of a previous recall from Michael Foods in Minnesota. The company that made the chicken salad for Grand Strand bought some of the hard cooked eggs from Michael Foods and isn't sure whether they were used in the Grand Strand Sandwiches.

"Just to be safe," Grand Strand said it was recalling some of its sandwiches.

The company says it is likely that some of the sandwiches may have already been consumed. There are no reports of illnesses in connection with the sandwiches.

Consumers can call Grand Strand Sandwich at 800-758-0476 with questions ([Huffington Post, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Mugabe Calls Typhoid Outbreak "Biological Warfare"

**Date:** February 8, 2010

**Source:** [Bio Prep Watch](#)

**Abstract:** Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party has blamed a typhoid fever outbreak that has impacted 1,500 people in the country's capital Harare on biological warfare.

Claudious Mutero, a spokesperson for Zanu-PF, made the claim in Harare. Meanwhile, Henry Madzorera, the Health and Child Welfare minister, cautioned that the outbreak would spread to other areas due to collapsing sewer and water infrastructure, [Africa Review](#) reports.

"The sanctions induced typhoid does not discriminate whether one is MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) or Zanu-PF as it attacks all people irrespective of their sex, ethnic or religious background,"

Mutero said, according to [Africa Review](#). "We suspect biological warfare by imperialists who are using nationals worldwide as conduits. Councilors must unite and call for the removal of these sanctions."

Mugabe blamed the sanctions imposed on his inner circle for Zimbabwe's economic collapse and said that the West was interested in re-colonizing the continent. Critics of Mugabe said that these claims of renewed imperialism are attempts to mask a failed land grab that ravaged the country's economy, which is based on agriculture.

"This is not the first time that Zanu-PF has made ridiculous claims against foreign countries," Madzorera said, according to [Africa Review](#). "A few years ago, the struggling party alleged that the foreign countries were responsible for the abnormal rainfall in the country."

Madzorera said that the government must put more money into sanitation and water to prevent recurring outbreaks.

"As a country, we should not be suffering from medieval diseases," Mazdorera said, [Africa Review](#) reports. "The problem is that we are receivers of a failed economy" ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

**Title:** With 40% Of Tests Positive For Latent TB, All Of Longmont High Will Be Tested

**Date:** February 9, 2012

**Source:** [Denver Post](#)

**Abstract:** About 40 percent of Longmont High School students and staff tested for tuberculosis have had positive results, a Denver Public Health official said Wednesday.

Dr. Randall Reves, director of the Denver Metro Tuberculosis Control Program, said that rate is unusual, but not unheard of.

Latent TB, unlike active TB, is not contagious. So far, the original case -- which was made public in early January -- is the only active case found in the school, Reves said.

TB cannot be transmitted unless a patient is actively ill, he said.

Because the rate of latent TB being found at the school has been higher than expected in the first two groups of students and staff tested, Reves has decided to test everyone at the school ([Denver Post, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Unusual Rate Of Latent TB Prompts More Testing At Longmont High School

**Date:** February 9, 2012

**Source:** [Times Call](#)

**Abstract:** About 40 percent of Longmont High School students and staff tested for tuberculosis have had positive results, a Denver Public Health official said Wednesday.

Dr. Randall Reves, director of the Denver Metro Tuberculosis Control Program, said that rate is unusual, but not unheard of.

"It just reflects that (the student's) particular case of TB was more infectious than average," Reves said.

Some types of sputum carry more bacteria than others, making those patients more contagious, he said.

Latent TB, unlike active TB, is not contagious. So far, the original case -- which was made public in early January -- is the only active case found in the school, Reves said.

TB cannot be transmitted unless a patient is actively ill, he said.

"They cough the bacteria into the air," Reves said. "It takes a lot of bacteria being coughed into the air to cause infection."

Because the rate of latent TB being found at the school has been higher than expected in the first two groups of students and staff tested, Reves has decided to test everyone at the school.

Beginning next week, public health officials will start testing ninth- and 10th-graders. To speed up the testing, skin tests will be given to most people, he said.

The following week, officials will test the 11th- and 12th-graders who have not yet been tested, he said.

Rob Spear, whose child transferred to Longmont High School a week ago, said talking to his family doctor eased his concerns, but thought testing all the students was a good idea.

Some parents, however, are not happy that the entire school population wasn't tested immediately after the first student was diagnosed with active TB.

"Why wasn't it done before?" asked parent Janet Sena, who worries about a 2-year-old grandchild at home. "They made it seem like it was nothing."

Testing all students in January would not have been productive, Reves said, because the body needs time to develop the antibodies needed to react to the tests. The students who were first tested will have to be re-tested later this month; had more students been tested early, more would have to be re-tested, he said.

Usually, when an entire school population is tested, few people are found to be infected, he said.

"You then spend a tremendous amount of resources testing people who are not at risk," Reves said.

Another complication of testing large groups of people is that about half the skin or blood tests show false-positive results, he said. That means more people have to be X-rayed or undergo other tests to see if they have latent TB, he said.

Reyne Messer, who has two children attending Longmont High School, said she feels school district and health officials didn't take the TB threat seriously.

"TB's not something to laugh about; it's dangerous," Messer said Wednesday afternoon as she waited to pick her children up from school.

She is afraid that even latent TB will spread -- something Reves said is not possible -- and has considered pulling her children out of school, she said.

"To put my kids in danger, it wasn't fair," Messer said ([Times Call, 2012](#)).

**Title:** CDC Warns Untreatable Gonorrhea Is On The Way

**Date:** February 13, 2012

**Source:** [U.S. News](#)

**Abstract:** Gonorrhea, one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases in the United States, is increasingly showing resistance to one of the last known effective antibiotic treatments, leading

researchers from the Centers for Disease Control to "sound the alarm" about potentially untreatable forms of the disease.

"During the past three years, the wily gonococcus has become less susceptible to our last line of antimicrobial defense, threatening our ability to cure gonorrhea," Gail Bolan, director of the CDC's sexually transmitted disease prevention program, wrote in *The New England Journal of Medicine* last week.

According to the CDC, gonorrhea has a long history of developing immunity to antibiotics, but doctors have always had a stronger medicine up their sleeves to treat patients. Not anymore—about 1.7 percent of gonorrhea is now resistant to cephalosporins, the last line of defense against gonorrhea. That might not seem like much, but it's a 17-fold increase since 2006, when about one tenth of one percent of gonorrhea was believed to have resistance to cephalosporins.

According to Bolan, the strains are showing up most often in the western states, where 3.6 percent of gonorrhea has shown resistance to cephalosporins, and in men who have sex with men, with nearly 5 percent of gonorrhea showing resistance.

The disease has been estimated to affect 600,000 Americans annually, causing burning with urination, abdominal pain, itching, and genital discharge.

Nikki Mayes, a spokesperson for the CDC, wrote in an email that by using a combination of cephalosporins and other antibiotics, American doctors have been able to prevent anyone from getting a completely untreatable case of gonorrhea. But she says it's only a matter of time.

"The trends in decreased susceptibility that we're seeing, coupled with the history of emerging resistance and reported treatment failures in other countries point to the likelihood of treatment failures on the horizon," she writes.

Not much help is on the way, according to both Mayes and Nicole Mahoney, senior officer of the antibiotics and innovation project at PEW Charitable Trusts.

"As far as gonorrhea goes, I'm not aware of any new drugs in the pipeline," says Mahoney. "This is just one more example of a bigger problem—bacteria are developing resistance faster than we're inventing new medicines to fight them."

Mahoney says Congress and the Food and Drug Administration should encourage and reward pharmaceutical companies to devise new antibiotics. According to a PEW report, only two new classes of antibiotics have been introduced since 1968 because antibiotics are difficult to produce and are less profitable than other drugs.

Bolan writes in the medical journal that a vaccine to prevent gonorrhea "remains key to prevention and control," but that it is a "distant goal."

"The threat of untreatable gonorrhea is emerging rapidly," she adds ([U.S. News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** German Health Experts Left Baffled By Village Where Almost Every Household Has Resident Suffering Cancer

**Date:** February 13, 2012

**Source:** [Daily Mail](#)

**Abstract:** Health experts in Germany are baffled by a small village where cancer has hit almost every household.



Wewelsfleth, which has a population of 1,500, has been labelled the 'village of the damned' as new cancer cases are 50 per cent above average.

Researchers from the University of Lubeck who investigated the phenomenon, which includes breast, lung, oesophageal, womb and stomach cancers, could find no defining cause – although residents are blaming three nearby nuclear power plants and a shipyard where vessels used to be sprayed with highly toxic paint.

The villagers are now demanding a government inquiry. They think authorities over the years have remained silent as wind and rain blew in cancer-causing particles into their homes.

But experts say this is not the case. Research by academics at the University of Lübeck probed the various cancers that had struck down the villagers.

As well as probing the nuclear plants it also looked into the nearby shipyard, asbestos sheeting used on garage roofs, electro-smog from power lines and the lifestyle of those who fell victim to the cancers.

The study could find no defining link to any one cause. The villagers are now asking health authorities in Berlin to commission another study to get to the bottom of the 'plague of cancers,' as they call it.

Wewelsfleth mayor Ingo Karstens, who lost both of his wives to cancer, said: 'It feels like a curse' ([Daily Mail, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Rio Faces Dengue Epidemic: Brazil Health Minister

**Date:** February 16, 2012

**Source:** [France 24](#)

**Abstract:** Brazilian Health Minister Alexandre Padilla on Thursday warned that Rio de Janeiro faced a major dengue epidemic, although he said the virus strain prevalent was not fatal.

"I believe that Rio could this year face one of the worst dengue epidemics in its history, in terms of number of cases," he said in a television interview.

Padilla said the dengue virus strain prevalent in Rio was not the most serious and was not fatal.

The official Agencia Brasil said since the start of the year, 3,499 dengue cases have been recorded in Rio, compared with 2,322 last year, but none were fatal.

The government said that nationally cases dropped 62 percent this year to 40,486.

Dengue affects between 50 and 100 million people in the tropics and subtropics each year, resulting in fever, muscle and joint ache.

But it can also be fatal, developing into hemorrhagic fever and shock syndrome, which is characterized by bleeding and a loss of blood pressure.

The news comes as Carnival frenzy sweeps Brazil and the South American powerhouse prepares for a week of sizzling samba dancing, glittering parades and unabashed merry-making in Rio and other cities ([France 24, 2012](#)).



**Title:** First Case Of Legionnaire's Disease Found At A Dentist

**Date:** February 17, 2012

**Source:** [GMA](#)

**Abstract:** Doctors on Friday reported the first known case of Legionnaire's disease, a rare infection usually linked to faulty air conditioning and hot-water systems, that was caused by a visit to the dentist.

The case report, published in The Lancet, describes an unnamed 82-year-old woman in Rome who was hospitalized with fever and breathing problems in February 2011.

Swiftly diagnosed with infection by the Legionella pneumophila germ, she died two days later of septic shock despite being given heavy doses of antibiotics.

During the two- to 10-day time it would have taken for the bacteria to incubate, the patient had only left her house twice, both times to attend appointments at the dentist.

Samples of water were taken from the dentist's tap, from the waterline—the tube that supplies water to tooth scalers and handpieces used by the dentist—and from the high-pressure pump supplying the waterline itself.

All three sources tested positive for L. pneumophila, but especially in water taken from the pump.

Genetic sequencing found that the germs there matched the bacteria which killed the patient. The bug turned out to be a particularly virulent sub-strain called Benidorm.

After cleaning with hydrogen peroxide solution and bleach, the water unit was free of contamination.

The case is unusual, as outbreaks of Legionnaire's disease are generally caused by air-conditioning systems, hot-water systems, spas and fountains that are not properly cleaned or maintained.

Warm temperatures and periods of water immobility provide a breeding ground for the bacteria. Distributed in fine droplets by a spray, the bacteria are then breathed in. Elderly people or individuals with poor immune systems are those most at risk.

Previous research has shown that dental waterlines can be contaminated by the germ, but this is the first known case where illness has occurred.

"As far as we are aware, no case of Legionnaire's disease has been associated with this source of infection," says the report, headed by Maria Luisa Ricci at the Istituta Superiore de Sanita in Rome.

"The case here shows that the disease can be acquired from a dental unit waterline during routine dental treatment. Aerosolized water from high-speed turbine instruments was most likely the source of the infection."

The case report puts down a series of recommendations, including use of filters, continuous circulation of disinfected water and using sterile water instead of tap water ([GMA, 2012](#)).

**Title:** NC Reports First Flu-Related Child Death Of Season

**Date:** February 20, 2012

**Source:** [WGHP 8 News](#)

**Abstract:** North Carolina has reported its first flu-related child death for the season.

A six-year-old died of complications from an influenza infection on Feb. 4, state health officials said Monday. The child, whose identity will not be released, was at-risk for complications from the flu due to underlying medical conditions, officials said.

"We extend our deepest sympathy to the family on the loss of their child," said Dr. Laura Gerald, NC Health Director. "Unfortunately, this reminds us that flu is a serious illness and can be potentially devastating to people at any age."

Influenza kills an estimated 25,000 in the U.S. each year and causes more than 220,000 hospitalizations.

Officials said about 1/2 of the children who died last season as a result of the flu were not at-risk for complications.

Officials said flu activity across the state has been mild for the season, although there has been a recent increase in the number of infections reported.

Most infections can be prevented with a flu vaccine, which is recommended for anyone over six-months-old ([WGHP 8 News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Experts Fear Diseases 'Impossible To Treat'

**Date:** February 20, 2012

**Source:** [Independent](#)

**Abstract:** Britain is facing a "massive" rise in antibiotic-resistant blood poisoning caused by the bacterium E.coli – bringing closer the spectre of diseases that are impossible to treat.

Experts say the growth of antibiotic resistance now poses as great a threat to global health as the emergence of new diseases such as Aids and pandemic flu.

Professor Peter Hawkey, a clinical microbiologist and chair of the Government's antibiotic-resistance working group, said that antibiotic resistance had become medicine's equivalent of climate change.

The "slow but insidious growth" of resistant organisms was threatening to turn common infections into untreatable diseases, he said. Already, an estimated 25,000 people die each year in the European Union from antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections.

"It is a worldwide issue – there are no boundaries," he said. "We have very good policies on the use of antibiotics in man and in animals in the UK. But we are not alone. We have to think globally." Between 2005 and 2009 the incidence of E.coli "bacteraemias" [the presence of bacteria in the blood] rose by 30 per cent, from 18,000 to over 25,000 cases. Those resistant to antibiotics have risen from 1 per cent at the beginning of the century to 10 per cent.

"Only one in 20 of infections with [resistant] E.coli is a bacteraemia, so the above data are only the tip of an iceberg of infected individuals," says a report produced by Professor Hawkey's group, commissioned by the Department of Health and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Dame Sally Davies, the Government's chief medical officer, has pledged £500,000 to fund research into the threat. Drug companies have lost interest in developing new antibiotics because it is increasingly difficult to find new agents and it is not commercially viable – antibiotics are taken for a few days, compared with, say, a heart drug which may be taken for life.

"There are only so many antibiotics available and as we lose them it becomes more and more difficult to replace them," Professor Hawkey said.

The rapid rise in E.coli blood poisoning is thought to be linked with the ageing of the population. E.coli is a common cause of urinary-tract infections but may also cause wound infections following surgery or injury. These are regarded as minor conditions, but if they became untreatable they would be life-threatening.

E.coli infections pose a much bigger problem than MRSA because the bacterium is more common. Only one in 10 people is a carrier of MRSA, but E.coli is present in everyone. "Those who get ill [with E.coli] are rare – but because it is so common it is a big problem," Professor Hawkey said.

Using standard antibiotic regimens, there is a one in 10 chance that treatment of an E.coli infection will fail because the bug is resistant. But, as numbers of resistant infections rise, there will be increasing pressure to use more powerful antibiotics, called carbapenems, which are the last line available. And resistance to those is already emerging. "In the last two or three years we have seen [organisms] develop which destroy carbapenems. That is a great worry," Professor Hawkey said. The warnings follow increasing reports from Europe of patients with infections that are almost impossible to treat. In November, the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) said up to 50 per cent of cases of blood poisoning with the bacterium K.pneumoniae, a common cause of urinary and respiratory conditions, are resistant to carbapenems in some countries.

Across Europe, the percentage of carbapenem-resistant K.pneumoniae has doubled from 7 per cent to 15 per cent, the ECDC said. Marc Sprenger, the director, said: "The situation is critical. We need to declare a war against these bacteria."

Meanwhile, the UK Health Protection Agency warned doctors in October to abandon a drug usually used to treat a common sexually transmitted disease because it was no longer effective. The agency said that gonorrhoea – which caused 17,000 infections in 2009 – should be treated with two drugs instead of one.

### **Explained: how bugs adapt to beat antibiotics**

Bugs are like all other life forms: they must adapt to survive. Unlike human beings, however, for whom evolution is measured in millennia, reproduction is so rapid among bacteria that they can change in months or years.

With the introduction of a new antibiotic, natural selection goes to work. Most bacteria are killed by the new drug but the natural variation that occurs in any species means a few examples may, by chance, have some quirk in their genetic structure that allows them to survive.

These bacteria are then selected out by the antibiotic, which kills the rest. The mutant bacteria grow in numbers until they become the dominant species ([Independent, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Hepatitis C Surpasses AIDS As Killer, Hitting Baby-Boom Generations Hardest

**Date:** February 21, 2012

**Source:** [CBS](#)

**Abstract:** new study indicates that one in every 33 baby boomers has the Hepatitis C virus, and many don't even know they have this liver destroying disease.

Federal health officials say Hepatitis C is now killing more people than the AIDS virus, and most are over 45 years of age.

Dr. Robert Bettiker, associate professor of medicine in infectious diseases at Temple University School of Medicine, says that once symptoms appear, the liver is already damaged.

He says the major symptoms include "pain in the right upper quadrant (of your abdomen) that goes on for days or months. Your eyes might turn yellow, you might start bleeding a lot if you get a cut, and the veins in your esophagus can get really big and can rupture."

Dr. Bettiker says if you had a blood transfusion before 1990 (when routine screening for hepatitis C in donated blood began) or have ever used intravenous drugs, you should tell your doctor. A blood test can determine if you've been exposed to the deadly virus, and early treatment could be effective ([CBS, 2012](#)).

**Title:** MRSA Staph Strain Developed Drug Resistance In Your Burger

**Date:** February 21, 2012

**Source:** [U.S. News](#)

**Abstract:** A bacteria strain that causes a hard-to-treat staph infection probably developed its [antibiotic resistance](#) in food animals, a team of scientists announced Tuesday.

The strain of staph, known as methicillin-[resistant Staphylococcus aureus](#), or MRSA CC398, most often infects farm workers who come in contact with infected pigs, turkeys, or cows. The bacteria has been found in about half of meat samples taken throughout the country. The researchers say that the copious use of antibiotics in livestock used for food is to blame for the infection's drug resistance.

"We can't blame nature or the germs. It is our inappropriate use of antibiotics that is now coming back to haunt us," Paul Keim, one of the study's authors, said in a statement. The researchers believe the bacteria was originally a human strain that was easily treated with tetracycline and methicillin, antibiotics that are regularly pumped into farm animals. Once in the animals, it developed the resistance and was passed back to humans.

The CDC has long said antibiotic use in livestock could be problematic, saying that "the food supply may be a source of antibiotic-resistant genes," but admitting that "quantifying the extent to which this contributes to a food safety problem is difficult."

Now, the researchers seem to have confirmed that without a doubt.

"We are watching this emerge in real time, and it's emerging really quickly," says Lance Price, lead author of the report that will be published in *mBio*. The strain is also showing the potential to pass from human to human, increasing the chance of an outbreak.

Price says it's unlikely this is the only strain that has developed an antibiotic resistance in animals. "I imagine this has happened multiple times in the past and it'll happen multiple times in the future," he says.

Doctors are beginning to prescribe fewer antibiotics for fear of creating superbugs, but their use in [food animals](#) isn't any less important to drug-resistance development, Price says.

"We have tons of messages out there to tell physicians to stop over prescribing, to tell parents not to ask for antibiotics every time their child has a stuffy nose," Price says. "Meanwhile, we're using 29 million pounds of antibiotics for food production. Those examples couldn't be more polar opposites."

In 2006, the European Union banned the use of antibiotics in livestock for non-therapeutic uses. In the United States, antibiotics are routinely used on livestock to promote their growth and to preemptively treat potential diseases acquired from cramped living conditions. Scientists estimate that approximately 80 percent of all antibiotics are used on livestock.

In Congress, Rep. Louise Slaughter has been pushing legislation that would regulate antibiotic use in animals to be used for food. "I cannot stress the urgency of this problem enough," she said in a statement last year. "When we go to the grocery store to pick up dinner, we should be able to buy our food without worrying that eating it will expose our family to potentially deadly bacteria that will no longer respond to our medical treatments."

Last week, she reiterated the importance of using restraint, asking more than 60 fast-food companies to voluntarily disclose whether they raise their animals with antibiotics or not.

"Very simply, consumers have a right to know what's in their food," she wrote. "It's like that old commercial, 'where's the beef?' We just want to know, 'what's in the beef?'" ([U.S. News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Bird Flu Cases More Common Than Thought: Study

**Date:** February 23, 2012

**Source:** [AFP](#)

**Abstract:** Bird flu is believed to be a rare disease that kills more than half of the people it infects, but a US study out Thursday suggests it may be more common and less lethal than previously thought.

The research could help soothe concerns about the potential for a deadly pandemic that may kill many millions of people, sparked by the recent lab creation of a mutant bird flu that can pass between mammals.

Researchers at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York analyzed 20 previous international studies that tested the blood of nearly 13,000 participants worldwide, according to the study in the journal Science.

They found that between one and two percent of those tested showed evidence of a prior H5N1 avian flu infection, meaning millions of people may have been infected around the globe.

The World Health Organization's figures currently show just 573 cases in 15 countries since 2003, with 58.6 percent of those resulting in death.

The researchers said the WHO may be overlooking cases by focusing only on hospitalizations and severe illnesses, and recommended a new approach to calculating the true number of bird flu cases.

The findings could also mean that the death rate from bird flu is underestimated, largely because many of the people who get sick from it live in rural farming areas where medical care may be difficult to come by.

"We suggest that further investigation, on a large scale and by a standardized approach, is warranted to better estimate the total number of H5N1 infections that have occurred in humans," the authors wrote.

Researchers in the Netherlands and the United States have sparked international alarm with lab research that was successful in creating a mutant form of bird flu that was found to be transmissible among ferrets.

US health authorities have urged major science journals to publish only heavily edited forms of the studies in order to prevent the data from falling into terrorists' hands.

However, an international group of experts meeting at WHO headquarters in Geneva last week decided that the studies should eventually be published in full, but that a further risk assessment is needed before that can happen ([AFP, 2012](#)).

**Title:** More Than 80 Whooping Cough Cases In Alamance Co.

**Date:** February 23, 2012

**Source:** [My Fox 8](#)

**Abstract:** Twelve schools in the Alamance Burlington School System have confirmed or probable cases of whooping cough, or pertussis.

Alamance County health officials said they are looking at 82 cases in six elementary schools, six middle schools and two private child care centers.

The affected elementary schools are B. Everett Jordan, Audrey W. Garrett, Haw River, South Graham, Alexander Wilson and Eastlawn.

The affected middle schools are Western Alamance, Graham, Broadview, Turrentine, Hawfields and Woodlawn.

Health officials would not identify the two private child care centers.

The first confirmed case was reported Dec. 21 at B. Everett Jordan Elementary School. Health officials are still trying to figure out where the outbreak started.

The health department is now offering free Tdap vaccines, which normally cost \$35. The department is open from 8-11 a.m. and 1-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. They are allowing walk-ins.

Health department officials said they will probably offer the free vaccines for the next month.

A community-wide clinic will also take place at the Mebane Arts and Community Center on March 2 from 3-7 p.m.

Pertussis is a bacterial infection that often starts with typical cold symptoms before turning into prolonged bursts of coughing, which sounds like whooping, in one or two weeks. Some may simply have a cough that lasts for several weeks ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Mystery Virus Kills Thousands Of Lambs

**Date:** February 25, 2012

**Source:** [Telegraph](#)

**Abstract:** The Schmallenberg virus causes lambs to be born dead or with serious deformities such as fused limbs and twisted necks, which mean they cannot survive.

Scientists are urgently trying to find out how the disease, which also affects cattle, spreads and how to fight it, as the number of farms affected increases by the day.

So far, 74 farms across southern and eastern England have been hit by the virus, which arrived in this country in January.

A thousand farms in Europe have reported cases since the first signs of the virus were seen in the German town of Schmallenberg last summer.

The National Farmers Union has called it a potential "catastrophe" and warned farmers to be vigilant. "This is a ticking time bomb," said Alastair Mackintosh, of the NFU. "We don't yet know the extent of the disease. We only find out the damage when sheep and cows give birth, and by then it's too late."

It is unclear exactly how the disease arrived in Britain, but the leading theory is that midges carried the virus across the Channel or North Sea in the autumn. However, scientists cannot yet rule out transmission of the disease from animal to animal.

Infected ewes do not show any symptoms of the virus until they give birth, with horrific results. Farmers have described delivering the deformed and stillborn animals as heartbreaking.

The lambing season has only just begun, which means that the full impact of the disease will not be felt until the weather warms up and millions more animals are born.

On the Continent, some farms have lost half of their lambs. So far the worst hit in Britain have lost 20 per cent, according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Approximately 16 million lambs are born in Britain every year and sell at market for about £100 each. The effect of the disease on farms that are already struggling in the downturn could be severe.

“For any business to lose 20 per cent of your stock would be a huge blow,” said Mr Mackintosh. “For a farmer to lose 20 per cent of your flock is catastrophic. If it was 50 per cent you would be put out of action.

“I was talking to one who has 10,000 sheep. If he loses even five per cent of the animals born this year, that’s a hell of a lot of lambs. I know another who says 10 per cent of his ewes have become barren. He has 6,000 ewes, so that is 600 animals producing nothing.”

The Food Standards Agency has sought to allay any fears about eating lamb, although little is known about the virus so far.

The Agency said: “Any risk to consumers through the food chain is likely to be low. No illness has been reported to date in humans exposed to animals infected with Schmallenberg virus.”

The worst affected counties are Norfolk, Suffolk, East Sussex and Kent, but the virus has spread all along the south coast to Cornwall.

Farmers fear the disease may spread to larger flocks in the north of England, Wales and Scotland. In Europe, Germany, Holland and France have suffered worst, while recent cases have been reported in Italy and Luxembourg.

John, a farmer from East Sussex who wanted to remain anonymous, said he had lost 40 out of 400 lambs so far, at a cost to his business of more than £4,000.

“I’ve had to put more lambs down in the past month than I have done in the past 20 years. Every one is a serious blow to our finances. But it’s an emotional thing too,” he said.

There are also fears that the virus may be seen later this year among cows, which have a longer gestation period.

Five of the British farms have seen cattle affected, with calves aborted at six months of pregnancy.

Cows are thought to be more robust than sheep and therefore more resistant, but Schmallenberg virus could still reduce milk yields and put pressure on a dairy industry that is already suffering, says Mr Mackintosh. “From what I hear, we are likely to see weak calves that take a lot of expense and nursing to get going again. Having to do that will hit a business hard.”

The last confirmed midge-borne virus to hit the British farming industry was bluetongue in 2007, but a series of trade restrictions and a vaccine averted disaster.

This time there is no vaccine, and Defra says a ban on imports would not work, because the disease “is already here”. A spokesman said: “Defra is taking this seriously. We track emerging diseases. There is work going on across Europe and the amount we know is improving rapidly. We are keeping everything under review.”

Its website says “farmers and vets should remain vigilant and report any suspicious cases to AHVLA [the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency] for testing as part of our enhanced surveillance”. However, farmers are not yet legally required to notify authorities of an outbreak, leading some in the industry to fear it may already be much more widespread than figures suggest.

Nigel Miller, the president of the NFU in Scotland said: “The escalation and range of cases is deeply concerning and some experts are now suggesting that the volume of cases being seen is an indication that this is, in fact, the second year of infection.

“If that is the case then it raises the worrying prospect that the virus may have an effective overwintering mechanism.”

The AHVLA identifies Schmallenberg as one of a group of viruses “typically primarily spread by biting insect vectors, such as midges and mosquitoes, although the routes of Schmallenberg virus transmission have not yet been confirmed. The potential for direct transmission (ie direct from one animal to another) is therefore, as yet, unknown.”

It said: “There is unlikely to be a risk to human health from Schmallenberg virus; but this is not yet certain” ([Telegraph, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Cold And Flu May Be Responsible For Peak Mortality

**Date:** February 26, 2012

**Source:** [RTP](#)

Abstract: For the third consecutive week Portugal recorded a mortality peak between 13 and 19 February there were over three thousand deaths, the majority of cases in people over 65 years. The flu epidemic and low temperatures are likely causes, but the health minister revealed that the authorities are already investigating the cause of this mortality peak.

"They are data revealed by the Instituto Ricardo Jorge, who plays tight monitorização these cases mortality. There is an increase year on year and the institute is falling deeper into monitorização to know the causes, it is cold or other abnormal situations, "said Paulo Macedo.

According to him, "the important thing is that the situation was detected, is being monitored and will be subject to a review, in order to discover the reasons that led to an abnormal peak of mortality in recent weeks."

According to the Daily News, citing data provided by Instituto Nacional Ricardo Jorge, in the last three weeks of February the death toll was much higher than normal for this time of year.

More than three thousand people died in the week between 13 and 19 February, 90 percent of them aged 65 years or more. A scenario that was similar in previous weeks, and a peak of mortality that is not watched since the flu epidemic in 2008. In Portugal, the average number of deaths associated with influenza is around two thousand, but at the time there was almost double.

The health authorities are examining the situation in the country, but throughout Europe related mortality



exceed the flu this year, the average of 40 000 deaths from the flu.

Cases of pneumonia, hypothermia and cardiac complications have caused the rupture in many pre-hospital services, with runners served as shelter for many patients while health units have reorganized services for lack of beds for admission. Most had to open in other services and assistance to reorganize.

The World Health Organisation points out the social and economic inequality as a factor that exacerbates the situation, and points out the lack of heating their homes as a risk factor.

WHO data show that in Portugal 44 per cent of families with elderly people can not afford to keep homes heated properly ([RTP, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Frio E Gripe Podem Ser Responsáveis Por Pico De Mortalidade

**Date:** February 26, 2012

**Source:** RTP

**Abstract:** Pela terceira semana consecutiva Portugal registou um pico de mortalidade, entre 13 e 19 de fevereiro registaram-se mais de três mil mortes, a maioria dos casos em idosos com mais de 65 anos. A epidemia de gripe e as baixas temperaturas são causas prováveis, mas o ministro da Saúde revelou que as autoridades já estão a investigar a causa deste pico de mortalidade.

“São dados revelados pelo Instituto Ricardo Jorge, que faz a monitorização apertada destes casos de mortalidade. Há um aumento em termos homólogos e o instituto está a descer mais a fundo na monitorização para sabermos as causas, se é do frio anormal ou de outro tipo de situações”, afirmou Paulo Macedo.

Segundo o governante, “o importante é que a situação foi detetada, está a ser acompanhada e vai ser alvo de uma análise, para que se descubram os motivos que originaram um pico anormal de mortalidade nas últimas semanas”.

Segundo o Diário de Notícias, que cita dados disponibilizados pelo Instituto Nacional Ricardo Jorge, nas últimas três semanas de fevereiro o número de mortes ficou muito acima dos valores normais para esta época do ano.

Mais de três mil pessoas morreram na semana entre 13 e 19 de fevereiro, 90 por cento dos quais idosos com 65 anos ou mais. Um cenário que foi semelhante nas semanas anteriores, e um pico de mortalidade a que não se assistia desde a epidemia de gripe em 2008. Em Portugal a média de mortes associadas à gripe ronda as duas mil, no entanto na altura registou-se quase o dobro.

As autoridades de saúde estão a analisar a situação em todo o país, mas por toda a Europa a mortalidade ligada à gripe deve ultrapassar, este ano, a média dos 40 mil óbitos associados à gripe.

Os casos de pneumonias, hipotermias e complicações cardíacas já provocaram a pré ruptura em muitos serviços hospitalares, com os corredores a servirem de abrigo a muitos doentes enquanto as unidades de saúde reorganizaram os serviços por falta de camas para internamento. A maior parte teve de abrir vagas em outros serviços e reorganizar a assistência.

A Organização Mundial de Saúde aponta as desigualdades sociais e económicas como em fator que agudiza a situação, e aponta a falta de aquecimento das casas como um fator de risco.

Dados da OMS revelam que em Portugal 44 por cento das famílias com idosos não tem dinheiro para manter as habitações aquecidas adequadamente ([RTP, 2012](#)).

**Title:** CDC: Fatal Brain-Eating Amoebas In Nasal Washes

**Date:** March 1, 2012

**Source:** [24 Medica](#)

**Abstract:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Jewish Health in Colorado both have issued a warning about nasal washes after two people have died from using tap water to do their sinus rinse.

Health experts say it's safe to use nasal washes. It's not about the rinse, it's about the water. They warn that a mixture from a faucet could be fatal.

Reading, writing — and sinus rinses. They're part of the curriculum for some students at Kunsberg School at National Jewish Health. Saltwater nasal washes can help asthma and allergy sufferers.

The saline rinses are highly recommended at National Jewish for children and adults.

"I do them at home if I have a bad cold," said Marie Fornof, Certified Infection Preventionist.

But Fornof says not to use tap water. It's because of a brain-eating amoeba called *Naegleria fowleri*. It's common in warm rivers and lakes, but if it travels up the nose to the brain it's usually deadly.

But somehow the US population is DrInKiNg this water?

"To give you perspective, over the past decade where the CDC has looked at it, the 32 cases they had 31 patients died," Fornof said.

The brain infections caused by the amoeba are rare, but the two most recent deaths in Louisiana were tied to the use of tap water in "neti pot"s to flush sinuses ([24 Medica, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Cuddling Dying Pets Gives Owners Scary Infections

**Date:** March 2, 2012

**Source:** [MSNBC](#)

**Abstract:** Comforting dying pets through their last days turned out to be dangerous for animal owners who wound up with life-threatening infections from the close contact, a new report finds.

A dog owner who licked honey from the dropper she used to feed her pooch, and two cat owners who cuddled and kissed their kitties for days were hospitalized with respiratory illnesses linked to common bacteria the pets harbor in their mouths.

The case studies, reported in the latest issue of the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, highlight the rare hazards of animal intimacy in a country where nine in 10 owners regard pets as members of the family, says the study's lead author.

"I suspect this happens more often than we know," said Dr. Joseph Myers, chairman of the department of medicine at Summa Akron City Hospital in Akron, Ohio. "It'll put it on the radar so that doctors will ask about it."

Myers believes he's the first to report cases of *Pasteurella multocida* infections associated with palliative care by owners of dying pets. It's rare, of course, but it was striking to encounter three such incidents all within a year, he said.

Typically, *P. multocida* bacteria live in the mouths of 80 percent of cats and about 60 percent of dogs, Myers said. The bacteria lurk in the oral cavities of many wild and domesticated animals. They're usually passed along through bites, scratches or other unfriendly behavior, and are the most common cause of skin infections from such animal-related injuries.

It's not clear exactly how many infections occur each year, though health experts at the University of California at Los Angeles note that only about 5 percent of dog bites and 30 percent of cat bites become infected.

The infections can occur through normal affectionate interaction with animals, the routine licking or kissing that some pets and owners can't resist, Myers said. Babies, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems are most at risk because their immune systems can't fight infections as well.

In the cases of the three pet owners in the study, all women in their 50s or 60s, they were previously healthy, but Myers suspects that the sustained close contact simply increased their chances of infection.

The bacteria targeted their respiratory tracts, attacking one woman's epiglottis, another's uvula and the lungs of the third.

They showed up at hospital emergency rooms reporting fever, chills, sore and swollen throats and difficulty swallowing and breathing. Quick administration of antibiotics helped, and all three got better within days.

The tricky part was figuring out what caused the unusual bacterial infections. It took careful questioning on the part of doctors to determine that the transmission had come through such close pet care. The pet owners weren't available for interviews, but Myers' study offered details of how they likely became sick.

In the case of the dog, "the patient had co-consumed honey with the dog by licking the same dropper used to comfort-feed the dog," the report said.

Another patient "continuously held, caressed, hugged and kissed her cat during the last seven days of its life." The third "had provided palliative care to her dying cat by holding, hugging and kissing the head of the cat and allowing the cat to lick her hands and arms."

That doesn't surprise Anthony J. Smith, a veterinarian who runs Rainbow Bridge Vet Services, a pet hospice and palliative services business in Hercules, Calif.

In a country where two-thirds of households have pets and nine in 10 owners say they regard them as family members, according to a 2011 Harris poll, it makes sense to care for the animals at the end of life.

More pet owners -- Smith calls them "pet parents" -- are seeking to make their pets' deaths more comfortable and meaningful, even when they can't prevent them.

"There's a general increase in the closeness between people and their pets," said Smith, who treated 1,000 pet clients in the past two years. "They're wanting the same kind of services that they want for their human family members."

Smith, who helped co-found the [International Association of Animal Hospice and Palliative Care](#), understands the urge to closely care for pets and he doesn't want people to avoid physical contact with their animals. Still, he advises common sense.

"When you start licking your cat or dog or you start sharing utensils with your dog, you put yourself at risk for those things," he said. "Those probably weren't the best ideas from a human health perspective."

Myers, the doctor who wrote the study, agreed. "I would not recommend that."

But even Myers admitted the cases haven't altered how he cares for his three dogs.

Would it have changed the behavior of the women who got sick?

"I don't think so," Myers said. "These pets are so ingrained into the family" ([MSNBC, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Thirteen People Contract Anthrax In Peru

**Date:** March 12, 2012

**Source:** [Bio Prep Watch](#)

**Abstract:** Thirteen people in Peru have contracted anthrax after people in the area handled a diseased animal.

The infection occurred in the Otuzco province of the La Libertad region of Peru. The confirmation of cutaneous anthrax infection, which occurs when anthrax comes into contact with the skin, happened on Tuesday at a clinic in the town of Sinsicap, the [Examiner](#) reports.

There is currently no known anthrax vaccination program for cattle or other animals in the town.

Anthrax can be found worldwide and is particularly problematic in countries without effective programs for public health. The areas that are high risk for anthrax are the Middle East, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Eastern and Southern Europe, and Central and South America.

Anthrax is caused by the *Bacillus anthracis* spore-forming bacterium, which affects wild animals and livestock such as cattle, deer, camels, horses, goats and sheep. Humans are infected primarily through incidental or occupational exposure with infected animals or their skins.

Anthrax infection can also occur when people consume undercooked meat of infected animals and when spores of the bacterium are intentionally released in an act of bioterrorism.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are one to two cases of cutaneous anthrax annually in the United States ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Greece On The Breadline: HIV And Malaria Make A Comeback

**Date:** March 15, 2012

**Source:** [Guardian](#)

**Abstract:** The incidence of HIV/Aids among intravenous drug users in central Athens soared by 1,250% in the first 10 months of 2011 compared with the same period the previous year, according to the head of Médecins sans Frontières [Greece](#), while [malaria](#) is becoming endemic in the south for the first time since the rule of the colonels.

Reveka Papadopoulos said that following savage cuts to the national health service budget, including heavy job losses and a 40% reduction in funding for hospitals, Greek social services were "[under very severe strain, if not in a state of breakdown](#)". What we are seeing are very clear indicators of a system that cannot cope."

The heavy, horizontal and "blind" budget cuts coincided last year with a 24% increase in demand for hospital services, she said, "largely because people could simply no longer afford private healthcare. The entire system is deteriorating."

The extraordinary increase in HIV/Aids among drug users, due largely to the suspension or cancellation of free needle exchange programmes, has been accompanied by a 52% increase in the general population.

"We are also seeing transmission between mother and child for the first time in Greece," she said. "This is something we are used to seeing in sub-Saharan Africa, not [Europe](#). There has also been a sharp increase in cases of tuberculosis in the immigrant population, cases of Nile fever – leading to 35 deaths in 2010 – and the reappearance of endemic malaria in several parts of Greece, notably the south."

According to Papadopoulos, such sharp increases in communicable diseases are indicative of a system nearing breakdown. "The simple fact of the reappearance of malaria, with 100-odd cases in southern Greece last year and 20 to 30 more elsewhere, shows barriers to healthcare access have risen," she said. "Malaria is treatable, it shouldn't spread if the system is working."

MSF has been active in Greece for more than 20 years, but until now has largely confined its activities to emergency interventions after natural disasters such as earthquakes, and providing care to the most vulnerable groups in the community, including immigrants.

It is now focusing on supporting the public health sector, providing emergency care in shelters for the homeless and improving the overall response to communicable diseases. Papadopoulos, who spent 17 years abroad with MSF and returned to her native Greece three years ago, sees hope among the rubble. "What keeps me going is an increasingly strong sense of solidarity among the Greek people," she said. "Donations to MSF, for example, have of course gone down with the crisis, but donors keep giving, they remain active."

She sees a refreshing new phenomenon of self-organisation and social action. "In the past year of this crisis I have seen really encouraging, really exciting things happening – people are seeing the power of organising themselves. We have to support them" ([Guardian, 2012](#)).

**Title:** CDC: US Illness Outbreaks From Imported Food Have Risen

**Date:** March 15, 2012

**Source:** [Fox News](#)

**Abstract:** Outbreaks of illness linked to imported food have risen since the late 1990s, casting a spotlight on federal inspection standards for fish, produce and other foods brought in from abroad.

The 39 outbreaks from imported food reported between 2005 and 2010 represent a small fraction of total cases of food-borne illnesses such as [salmonella](#) or E. coli, according to the data from the Centers for [Disease Control](#) and Prevention (CDC) presented Wednesday.

But the rise in imported-food outbreaks -- mostly from fish and spices -- highlights gaps in the food safety system that a sweeping new law is intended to address.

CDC researchers found 6.5 outbreaks from foreign foods a year, on average, between 2005 and 2010 -- more than double the average of 2.7 outbreaks annually between 1998 and 2004.

Of the 39 outbreaks between 2005 and 2010, nearly half -- 17 -- occurred in 2009 and 2010.

The foods, including fish, oysters, cheese, sprouts and seven other types of products, were shipped from 15 countries. Nearly 45 percent of those foods originated from Asia. Most people were sickened with salmonella or histamine fish poisoning, a bacterial disease contracted from eating spoiled dark-flesh fish that causes rashes, [diarrhea](#), sweating, headaches and vomiting. The outbreaks led to 2,348 cases of illness, the CDC said.

Among the largest of those outbreaks was one in 2008 linked to jalapeno and serrano peppers from [Mexico](#) contaminated with salmonella. More than 1,400 people were sickened and more than 280 were hospitalized with salmonella in 43 states.

Other major outbreaks reviewed in the study were a 2007 recall of Veggie Booty, a puffed rice snack that was found to contain contaminated raw materials from [China](#) that led to 52 cases of salmonella in 17 states, and a 2010 outbreak of typhoid fever tied to frozen fruit pulp that originated in [Guatemala](#).

The number of outbreaks reported is likely underestimated because of inconsistent country-of-origin labeling, Hannah Gould, a [CDC epidemiologist](#) and lead author of the study, said in a phone interview. "We don't always know where food comes from," Gould said.

The full study will be published later this year ([Fox News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Foot-And-Mouth Disease Spreads In Egypt; Thousands Of Cattle Dead

**Date:** March 16, 2012

**Source:** [Washington Post](#)

**Abstract:** Egypt's veterinary authorities say foot-and-mouth disease has left more than 2,000 young cattle dead.

Egypt's local press on Friday quoted veterinary official Essam Abdel-Shakour as saying that 24,500 livestock have been infected with the disease over the past two weeks. Most of the infections have come in the Nile Delta provinces in northern Egypt.

Agriculture Minister Mohammed Ismail told parliament this week that the ministry has ordered the isolation of infected animals, the closure of cattle markets across the country and is working on providing a new vaccine for the highly contagious disease.

Egyptian farmers have accused the government of incompetence, and have thrown dead cows in front of the governors' offices during protests.

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**Title:** Three Farm Workers Die Of Anthrax In Namibia

**Date:** March 28, 2012

**Source:** [Bio Prep Watch](#)

**Abstract:** Three farm workers from Farm Kroonster 448 in Namibia's Omaheke Region died from an anthrax-related illness in the Gobabis State Hospital last week.

It is believed that five workers from the farm contracted anthrax after eating meat of a cow that passed away on the farm. Two of the five workers are still being treated at the hospital for an anthrax-related disease, Nampa reports.

The two farm workers are still in critical condition and all movements from the ward have been restricted.

“You can confirm this with the hospital matron,” a registered nurse from the hospital speaking on the condition of anonymity, said, according to Nampa. “Even the remains of the deceased three farm workers are still being kept here in our mortuary for further laboratory investigations.”

George Ruhumba, the region’s chief animal health technician, said that the business at Farm Kroonster is under restriction for 21 days after a request from the Ministry of Health and Social Services to enact a ban. He said there is a suspected anthrax case at the commercial farm, which is located 100 kilometers east of Gobabis. While veterinary services has tested all 19 livestock at the farm and all tests came back negative, the restriction orders are still active.

The workers were said to have complained of stomach pains after eating the meat of a cow that had died in early March ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

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**Title:** Anthrax Toll Rises To Five In Namibia

**Date:** March 29, 2012

**Source:** [Bio Prep Watch](#)

**Abstract:** Five people have now died in the Omaheke region of Namibia from an illness that is believed to be either anthrax or Congo fever.

Initial test results proved to be inconclusive and new samples have since been sent to South Africa for more extensive analysis, according to [Namibian.com.na](#).

Dr. Jack Vries, the chairperson of the Namibian National Health Emergency Management Committee, said that he expects the results of the second round of testing within a week.

“We don’t know whether it is anthrax or not,” Vries said, [Namibian.com.na](#) reports.



Vries said that the victims had intestinal symptoms that included diarrhea and vomiting, which is atypical of anthrax.

Two of the victims worked together at a dairy farm and died after eating beef from the same cow. The owner of the farm, Japie Engelbrecht, said that his farm is doing poorly in the wake of reports about the outbreak. The dairy is currently under quarantine and Engelbrecht is denying reports that he might not have vaccinated his animals against anthrax.

Dr. John Shoopala, the acting chief veterinary officer in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, said that an investigation showed Engelbrecht had not properly vaccinated his livestock.

"They are lying," Engelbrecht said, [Namibia.com.na](http://Namibia.com.na) reports ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Tuna Linked To Salmonella Outbreak In 20 States

**Date:** April 13, 2012

**Source:** [NPR](#)

**Abstract:** A yellowfin tuna product used to make dishes like sushi and sashimi sold at restaurants and grocery stores has been linked with an outbreak of salmonella that has sickened more than 100 people in 20 states and the District of Columbia, federal health authorities said Friday.

The Food and Drug Administration said 116 illnesses have been reported, including 12 people who have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.

Moon Marine USA Corp. of Cupertino, Calif., also known as MMI, is voluntarily recalling 58,828 pounds of frozen raw yellowfin tuna. It was labeled as Nakauchi Scrape AA or AAA when it was sold to grocery stores and restaurants and is scraped off the fish bones and looks like a ground product.

The product is not available for sale to individual consumers but may have been used to make sushi, sashimi, ceviche and similar dishes available in restaurants and grocery stores. Many of the people who became ill reported eating raw tuna in sushi as "spicy tuna," the FDA said.

Reports of the foodborne illness caused by *Salmonella bareilly* have mainly come from the Eastern Seaboard and South, though cases have been reported as far west as Missouri and Texas.

As of Friday, illness had been reported these states and the District of Columbia: Alabama (2), Arkansas (1), Connecticut (5), District of Columbia (2), Florida (1), As Georgia (5), Illinois (10), Louisiana (2), Maryland (11), Massachusetts (8), Mississippi (1), Missouri (2), New Jersey (7), New York (24), North Carolina (2), Pennsylvania (5), Rhode Island (5), South Carolina (3), Texas (3), Virginia (5), and Wisconsin (12).

The memo notes there is likely a 30-day lag time between when people become sick and when cases are reported to health officials.

The raw yellowfin tuna product may have passed through several distributors before reaching the restaurant and grocery market and may not be clearly labeled.

Previous outbreaks of salmonella bareilly have been linked to bean sprouts, which are grown in warm, damp conditions.

The most common symptoms of salmonella are diarrhea, abdominal cramps and fever within eight to 72 hours of eating the contaminated food. The illness can be severe or even life-threatening for infants, older people, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems.



The FDA recommended that people be cautious about eating raw seafood, inquire about the source and "when in doubt, don't eat it" ([NPR, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Measles Cases Reached 15-year High In 2011: CDC

**Date:** April 20, 2012

**Source:** [Reuters](#)

**Abstract:** Measles cases in the United States hit a 15-year high in 2011, with 90 percent of the cases traced to other countries with lower immunization rates, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

There were 222 cases of measles in the United States last year, more than triple the usual number, the CDC said. There had been only about 60 cases per year between 2001 and 2010.

No one has died of the disease in the United States since 2008. But approximately 20 million people contract the measles virus each year worldwide, and about 164,000 die from it, said Dr. Anne Schuchat, director of the health agency's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

The agency said in 2000 that home-grown measles had been eliminated, but cases continued to arrive in the United States from abroad.

There have been more than 25 measles cases reported so far in 2012, most of them imported, the CDC said. The virus can easily enter the country through foreign visitors or Americans traveling abroad who bring the disease back with them.

Measles is highly contagious and is transmitted when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes, Schuchat said. The disease can be spread even before an infected person has developed the rash from the virus.

"You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been even after that person has left the room," Schuchat said on Thursday.

Measles cases were found in 31 states in 2011. Last year's count marked the highest number of cases since 1996, when there were 508 cases in the United States.

All but 22 of the 222 cases last year involved patients who had been infected overseas or caught the virus from someone who had been abroad, the CDC said. The source of the other 22 cases could not be determined.

Many of the cases were traced to Europe, where in some countries immunization rates are lower than in the United States. Europe suffered an outbreak of the disease in 2011, reporting more than 37,000 measles cases.

[France](#), Italy and Spain, popular destinations for U.S. tourists, were among the hardest hit, said Schuchat.

"It's very important for travelers heading off to Europe to make sure they are up to date on their immunizations and that their children are too," she said.

Those who have already had measles or have been inoculated are not considered at risk of contracting the virus, the CDC said. The CDC recommends children receive two doses of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine starting at 12-15 months of age.

More than 90 percent of U.S. children have been vaccinated against measles, the CDC said.

"We don't have to have this much measles," Schuchat said. "Measles is preventable. Unvaccinated people put themselves and other people at risk for measles and its complications" ([Reuters, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Anthrax Outbreak Kills Two In Ghana

**Date:** April 24, 2012

**Source:** [Bio Prep Watch](#)

**Abstract:** An anthrax outbreak in the Upper East region of Ghana has led to two deaths after the victims consumed a dead animal that may have been infected with the deadly disease.

The incident occurred in the community of Googo. Thomas Anyarikeya, the regional veterinary officer, said that anthrax particularly affects ruminants and can be transmitted to humans from them. Ruminants are a type of mammal and include goats, sheep and cattle, [GBC Ghana](#) reports.

Anthrax is a lethal disease caused by the *Bacillus anthracis* bacterium. The bacterium forms dormant spores that can come to life when surrounded by the proper conditions. The three types of anthrax are cutaneous, inhalation and gastrointestinal, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports.

Humans can be infected by anthrax from handling products made from infected animals, by breathing in anthrax spores from animal products and by eating undercooked meat that comes from infected animals.

In 2001, anthrax was deliberately used as a weapon when it was spread through the United States postal service shortly after the September 11, 2001, terror attacks. The letters were laced with anthrax-containing powder and infected 22 people. Five people died as a result of the attacks, which targeted government and media offices ([Bio Prep Watch, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Illinois Swine Match 2011 Human H3N2v

**Date:** April 26, 2012

**Source:** [Recombinomics](#)

**Abstract:** The USDA has released another series of swine sequences from collections in late 2011 / early 2012. Included were five isolates (A/[swine/Illinois/A00857138a](#)/2011, A/[swine/Illinois/A00857138b](#)/2011, A/[swine/Illinois/A00857300](#)/2011, A/[swine/Illinois/A00857304a](#)/2012, A/[swine/Illinois/A00857304b](#)/2012) which were collected on October 20, 2011, November 28, 2011, and January 5, 2012, respectively, from lung tissues.

Like the two earlier matches from New York and Iowa (A/[swine/NY/A01104005](#)/2011 and A/[swine/Iowa/A01202640](#)/2011), the collections were after the spread of H3N2v in humans in 2011 and all matches are with the first 10 human isolates in 2011. Thus, there still have been no swine matches with the three most recent H3N2v human isolates (A/[West Virginia/06](#)/2011, A/[West Virginia/07](#)/2011, A/[Utah/10/2012](#)) which have an N2 from swine H3N2v.

The recent swine matches indicate this constellation is spreading in swine in Illinois, and increase concerns that these sequences have adapted to humans, and like H1N1pdm09, have jumped back to swine and are becoming increasingly common ([Recombinomics, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Mad Cow Disease Found In California Dairy Cow

**Date:** April 24, 2012

**Source:** [LA Times](#)

**Abstract:** Federal officials say a case of mad cow disease has been found in a dairy cow in the Central Valley.

The animal was found at a rendering facility, John Clifford, the USDA's chief veterinarian, told reporters Tuesday in a briefing in Washington. Its meat did not enter the food chain and the carcass will be destroyed, Clifford said.

This is the fourth confirmed case of the brain-wasting disease in the U.S. cattle herd since the first case was discovered in December 2003 in an animal that came from Canada.

**[Updated at 1 p.m.:** The carcass “was never presented for slaughter for human consumption, so at no time presented a risk to the food supply or human health,” Clifford [said in a](#) statement.]

[Mad cow disease](#), which humans can get by eating beef from infected cattle, has killed 171 people and been responsible for the deaths of more than 4 million cattle, slaughtered in attempts to eradicate the disease.

Officially known as variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the infection is caused by prion proteins that cause the brain to start breaking down ([LA Times, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Mad Cow Reemergence May Hamper California's Beef, Dairy Industries

**Date:** April 24, 2012

**Source:** [LA Times](#)

**Abstract:** The reemergence of mad cow disease, discovered in a California dairy cow, could have major implications for the state's meat industry, even though officials have said that the human food supply is unaffected.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy hasn't been found in U.S. since 2006 and was discovered in only three instances before then. But [the disease](#) has dealt a crippling blow to the industry in the past, especially when foreign countries refused to import American beef when mad cow was first uncovered in 2003.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture tests about 40,000 cows a year in its effort to catch the disease.

In California, private and public ranching takes up about 38 million acres, according to the California Cattlemen's Assn. There are about 620,000 beef cows on 11,800 California ranches. The state also hosts 1.84 million dairy cows, according to information compiled by the California Beef Council.

The sale of cattle and calves was a \$1.82-billion industry in California 2008 and fifth among the state's top 20 commodities. Beef cattle are raised in nearly every California county.

Nationally, California ranks behind Texas, Kansas and Nebraska in total cattle numbers.

Karen Ross, secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, quickly issued a statement stressing that mad cow “is not transmitted through milk.” She also pointed out that “milk and beef remain safe to consume.”

But food-related scares, such as the recent uproar over [pink slime](#) and various fruit and vegetable recalls, can be a publicity nightmare.

Americans are exceedingly sensitive about what they eat, and the perception of risk often exceeds the real danger, [experts have suggested](#) ([LA Times, 2012](#)).

**Title:** US Soldier Dies O Rabies After Dog Bite In Afghanistan

**Date:** May 3, 2012

**Source:** [Fox News](#)

**Abstract:** A 24-year-old American soldier died of rabies after being bitten by a dog last year in Afghanistan, US health officials said Thursday following an investigation into the rare case.

The otherwise healthy soldier started experiencing symptoms of shoulder and neck pain and tingling sensations in his hands soon after arriving at Fort Drum, N.Y., in mid-August 2011.

His condition escalated to include nausea, vomiting, anxiety and trouble swallowing. By the time he was admitted to an emergency room, he was dehydrated and hydrophobic, meaning he developed an intense fear of drinking liquids because of the painful muscle spasms he experienced while swallowing.

"He was lucid and described having received a dog bite on the right hand during January 2011 while deployed to Afghanistan," said the report by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The soldier tested positive for a strain of rabies associated with dogs in Afghanistan and doctors attempted an experimental treatment to save him from certain death.

But within days, the patient was suffering from severe brain hemorrhaging and his family decided to take him off life support. He was the first US service member to die of rabies since 1974.

At the time of the bite, the soldier told family members and close friends that he had been bitten by a feral dog in Afghanistan and had sought medical treatment, "which he described as wound cleansing and injections," the report said.

But an investigation by the US Army turned up no documentation of a reported bite wound or treatment, nor any record of a dog tested for rabies, according to the report.

The soldier's case prompted a scare that he may have spread the disease other people and a CDC investigation tracked down about 190 individuals he interacted with while potentially infectious.

At least 22 of them received treatment as a preventive measure.

Rabies can spread through saliva, tears, spinal fluid or brain tissue that enters the body through a bite a broken skin. With the exception of transplantation, the CDC said "human-to-human rabies transmission has not been laboratory-documented" ([Fox News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Salmonella In Dog Food Sickens 14 People In US

**Date:** May 4, 2012

**Source:** [CBS News](#)

**Abstract:** Fourteen people in at least nine states have been sickened by salmonella after handling tainted dog food from a South Carolina plant that a few years ago produced food contaminated by toxic mold that killed dozens of dogs, federal officials said Friday.

At least five people were hospitalized because of the dog food, which was made by Diamond Pet Foods at its plant in Gaston, S.C., the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. No pets were sickened, according to the Meta, Mo.-based company.

"People who became ill, the thing that was common among them was that they had fed their pets Diamond Pet Foods," said CDC spokeswoman Lola Russell.

Three people each were infected in Missouri and North Carolina; two people in Ohio; and one person each in Alabama, Connecticut, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the CDC said.

"Our folks are really wanting people to be aware of it. They want to be aware that this is causing people to get sick because they may have the product in their homes. For every one that is reported, there may be 29 others," Russell said.

People can get salmonella by handling infected dog food, then not washing their hands before eating or handling their own food, health officials said.

The South Carolina plant temporarily was shut down April 8. Diamond Pet Foods has issued four rounds of recalls for food made at the plant, located outside of Columbia, S.C., between Dec. 9 and April 7. The latest recalls were announced Friday.

"We took corrective actions at the plant, and today the plant is up and running. Our mission is to produce safe pet foods for our customers and their pets in all Diamond facilities," the company said in a written statement Friday.

In 2005, a toxic mold called aflatoxin ended up in food made at the same Diamond Pet Foods plant in South Carolina and dozens of dogs died. The company offered a \$3.1 million settlement. The Food and Drug Administration determined the deadly fungus likely got into the plant when it failed to test 12 shipments of corn.

FDA officials were not immediately available for comment Friday on the most recent problems with the plant.

Agriculture officials in Michigan found the strain of salmonella during routine testing of dog food on April 2 and health investigators noticed there was a possible link to the food made by Diamond Pet Foods. An ill person still had some of the food, and authorities were able to link the cases to the food, the CDC said.

The recall covers a number of pet food brands made at the Gaston plant, including Canidae, Natural Balance, Apex, Kirkland, Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover's Soul, Country Value, Diamond, Diamond Naturals, Premium Edge, Professional, 4Health and Taste of the Wild ([CBS News, 2012](#)).

**Title:** Squirrel Tests Positive For Plague At California Campsite

**Date:** May 4, 2012

**Source:** [Fox News](#)

**Abstract:** A ground squirrel trapped at a popular campground in southern California has tested positive for plague. According to health officials, the rodent was tested during routine monitoring at the Cedar Grove Campground on Palomar Mountain, 75 miles (120km) northeast of San Diego.

The bacterial disease is sometimes carried by rodents, which can be transmitted to humans through infected flea bites, according to the Department of Environmental Health (DEH). DEH officials downplayed any serious threat to campers, however, saying there had never been any known human cases of plague contracted anywhere near the site.

"It is not unusual to find plague in our local mountains in the summer months, so campers should always avoid contact with squirrels and their fleas," DEH Director Jack Miller told KGTV Friday. "Set up tents away from squirrel burrows, do not feed the squirrels and warn your children not to play with squirrels" ([Fox News, 2012](#)).