

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

05 December 2003

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT TOPICS

AIDS Epidemic Advances Unchecked

26 November – Reuters reported more people than ever are becoming infected with HIV and dying from AIDS, according to a joint report from the United Nations Program on [HIV/AIDS](#) and the World Health Organization. Authors of the report estimate that 40 million people worldwide are now infected. In 2003, 5 million people were newly infected and 3 million died of AIDS. And even though international responses to the epidemic are greater than ever, they remain inadequate for the scope of the problem, which in many countries disproportionately affects young people, especially women. Today, the WHO will describe its implementation plans for its "3 by 5 initiative," which promotes antiretroviral treatment (ART) for 3 million people by 2005. Plans include the provision of emergency response teams to guide the purchase and financing of ART for high-burden countries where treatment is most sparse. Simplified treatment guidelines and surveillance measures are being planned as well. [View Article](#)

Blood Pressure Lowering May Boost Life Expectancy

28 November – Reuters reported blood pressure lowering may lead to gains of more than two years in life expectancy in some patients, according to researchers. Researchers used a cardiovascular disease event Markov model to estimate life expectancy benefits of antihypertensive treatment, based on systolic and diastolic blood pressure reduction. Baseline assumptions included hypothetical pretreatment blood pressures of 160/95 or 150/90 mm Hg; strategies that lowered blood pressure by 20/13 mm Hg (strategy A) or by 13/8 mm Hg (strategy B); and age of 35 years. Among subjects with an initial blood pressure of 160/95 mm Hg, strategy A produced gains in life expectancy of 2.43 years for hypertension alone and of 2.80 years for hypertension plus diabetes. A gain of 2.43 years was seen for smokers with hypertension and diabetes. Similar gains were observed in individuals with an initial blood pressure of 150/90 mm Hg. Overall, the findings suggest that lowering blood pressure in hypertensive patients, especially those with other cardiovascular disease risk factors such as diabetes or smoking, "has the potential to provide substantial gains in life expectancy." [View Article](#)

Cord Blood Heals Persistent Cornea Defects

28 November – Reuters reported the serum component of umbilical cord blood promotes healing of defects in the cornea of the eye that are not cured by routine medical treatment, results of a new trial indicate. The study involved a total of 60 eyes (59 patients) with unresponsive defects measuring at least 2 millimeters in length. Thirty-one eyes were treated with umbilical cord serum drops and 29 with autologous serum drops. The team reports in the British Journal of Ophthalmology that the average decrease in the size of the defect was significantly greater in the cord serum group than the autologous group after 1, 2 and 3 weeks. Both treatments were equally well tolerated with no side effects or discomfort reported by patients in either group. [View Article](#)

Echinacea Has no Effect on Children's Colds, Study Says

02 December - The Globe and Mail reported the popular herbal medication [Echinacea](#) has been found no more effective than a placebo in treating children with a cold, a new study shows. Children given a placebo at the onset of cold symptoms were no slower to recover and no more likely to have harsher symptoms than the children treated with Echinacea, says lead author James Taylor, a

professor of pediatrics at Seattle's University of Washington. As well, the children given Echinacea were more than twice as likely to develop mild rashes as the children given the placebo. The results are to be published in Wednesday's issue of The Journal of the American Medical Association. [View Article](#)

Flu Claims Multiple Lives in N.M., CO.

03 December – Yahoo News reported the [flu](#) has plagued classrooms and offices around New Mexico, and now state health officials are trying to determine if the virus played any role in the death of an adult and three children. One child died at home and two others died at Albuquerque hospitals. They ranged in age from 3 months to 3 years, state epidemiologist C. Mack Sewell said. Sewell said influenza, while problematic during a normal year, seems to be worse this year. More than 200 cases of the flu have been reported in New Mexico so far this year. Meanwhile, in Colorado, health officials announced Tuesday that two more children died from the flu, bringing the statewide total to at least five. Hospitals and county coroners have reported six flu-related deaths. This number exceeds the norm, and the season is not over. Health experts warn parents to be extra cautious especially if a child is running a high fever that does not respond to over-the-counter medications, has difficulty breathing, or exhibits fast, hard breathing or cannot drink or keep down fluids. Influenza researchers say this year they expect the death toll nationwide from flu-related complications to surpass the average of 36,000. [View Article](#)

Indoor Smoke 'Kills Millions'

01 December – BBC News reported smoke from indoor cooking fires kills one person every 20 seconds in the developing world, UK campaigners say. The Intermediate Technology Development Group says smoke in the home kills more people than malaria does, and almost as many as unsafe water and sanitation. The problem affects more than two billion people who burn wood, charcoal, vegetation and dung for heating food. The United Nations says inefficient stoves can be as bad for health as smoking two packs of cigarettes a day. It's a technology that has changed little since the Stone Age and turns homes into death traps for women and children. ITDG says 2.4 billion people burn biomass (organic matter) for cooking and heating, and when coal is included 3 billion people - half the world's population - rely on solid fuel. It says smoke in the home is the fourth greatest cause of death and disease in the world's poorest countries, killing 1.6m people annually. Nearly a million of them are children. [View Article](#)

Women Want to Learn About Cervical Cancer Virus

01 December – Reuters reported many women lack important information about a [cervical cancer](#) causing-virus, and want to know more, researchers reported. In a study that included 48 ethnically diverse women, participants were asked about the [human papillomavirus \(HPV\)](#), which is linked with about 95 percent of cervical cancer cases and is one of the most common causes worldwide of sexually transmitted disease. The investigators found that women tended to overestimate the likelihood they would get cancer if diagnosed with HPV, had trouble understanding that most cases of HPV regress without treatment, and confused the results of HPV tests and Pap smears, which do not specifically look for HPV. The authors also recommend that women receive information about transmission, prevention and treatment of HPV from a variety of sources, including the media, schools and healthcare providers. [View Report](#)

USEUCOM

Cholera Kills 12 in Zimbabwe Tourist District

2 December – Reuters reported a [cholera](#) outbreak in one of Zimbabwe's prime tourist districts has killed 12 people but the government said the disease was under control, state media reported. The official Herald newspaper quoted Health Minister David Parirenyatwa as saying the government had set up temporary health centers following a cholera outbreak that had affected hundreds of people in the northern Kariba district. "The 12 deaths that were recorded are those people who did not receive treatment but the 413 cholera cases have been contained as they are receiving treatment," Parirenyatwa was quoted as saying. He was not available for further comment. Officials said the victims were all Zimbabweans. The Kariba district is a top tourist destination with a huge lake and a number of wildlife parks. [View Report](#)

Cote d'Ivoire: Fears of Meningitis and Typhoid in Rebel-Held North

27 November – AllAfrica.com reported relief agencies which now provide the backbone of healthcare in the rebel-held north of Cote d'Ivoire, have warned that the region could face major outbreaks of [meningitis](#) and [typhoid](#) as the dry season sets in and the Harmattan wind blows dust south from the Sahara desert. According to Kouakou Mathurin, an Abidjan-based health worker of the non-governmental organization Sante pour Tous (Health for All) who travels extensively in rebel-controlled areas of the country, the months of November, December and January are critical periods for outbreaks of these killer diseases. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said the the situation was particularly dangerous since health services in the rebel area were only functioning at only 30 percent of their normal capacity as a result of the civil war which broke out in September last year. [View Article](#)

Cote D Ivoire: Nurses Strike to Demand Protection from Contagious Disease

25 November – IRIN reported nurses in Cote d'Ivoire's government-run hospitals and health centers have begun an indefinite strike to demand better protection from contagious diseases following the death of six nurses from infections contracted from their patients. Francois Tiemele, spokesman for the National Union of Nurses of Cote d'Ivoire (SYNICI), told IRIN that 90 percent of the organization's 7,000 members walked out when the strike began. SYNICI Secretary General Kuoao Boko said the union wanted the government to supply nurses with disposable rubber gloves and face masks and pay them a risk premium of about 10 percent on top of their basic monthly salary of 140,000 CFA francs (US \$230) per month. The union spokesman said nurses were not asking the government to provide the extra money and safety equipment immediately, but to do so by January 1 2005. [View Article](#)

Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever in the Republic of the Congo - Update 4

03 December – WHO reported as of 2 December 2003, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of the Congo has reported a total of 47 cases, including 28 deaths, of [Ebola hemorrhagic fever](#) (EHF) in Mbomo District, Cuvette Ouest Department. Ninety-seven contacts are being followed-up. A team of experts from WHO Geneva, and the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network have joined the team already in the field, and will contribute to epidemiological surveillance, social mobilization and public health education, and support for diagnostics. [View Report](#)

Influenza Update for Europe as Reported by the EISS

	Geographic Spread	Intensity	Sentinel swabs	Percentage positive	Dominant type	ILI per 100,000	ARI per 100,000
Belgium	Local	Low	57	35.1%	Type A	225.9	1611.3
Czech Rep.	Sporadic		15	6.7%	Type A, Subtype H3N2		1156.0
Denmark	Sporadic	Low	12	25.0%	Type A	135.0	
England	Widespread	Medium	53	39.6%	Type A	54.5	774.7
France	Regional	Medium	310	31.3%	Type A, Subtype H3N2		2550.2
Germany	None	Low	38	2.6%	None		1365.0
Ireland	Widespread	Medium	34	52.9%	Type A	62.9	
Italy	None	Low	82	1.2%	None	67.5	
Latvia	Sporadic	Low	0	0%	None	0.5	798.7
Lithuania	None	Low	0	0%	None	1.3	378.7
Netherlands	None	Low	2	0%	Type A, Subtype H3N2		
N. Ireland	Local	Medium	0	0%	Type A, Subtype H3N2	125.4	
Norway	Widespread	Medium	46	21.7%	Type A, Subtype H3N2		
Poland	None	Low	0	0%	None	16.2	
Portugal	Widespread	High	38	81.6%	Type A, Subtype H3N2	104.7	
Romania	Sporadic	Low	31	22.6%	Type A, Subtype H3N2		110.2
Scotland	Widespread	Medium				116.2	
Slovakia	None	Low	12	0%	None	605.0	
Slovenia	None	Low	2	0%	None		1054.8
Spain	Widespread	Medium	88	48.9%	Type A, Subtype H3N2	193.2	
Sweden	Sporadic	Low					
Switzerland	Sporadic	Low	0	0%	Type A	40.2	
Europe			820	30.9%			

Intensity: Low = no influenza activity or influenza activity at baseline level; Medium= usual levels of influenza activity; High = higher than usual levels of influenza activity; Very high = particularly severe levels of influenza activity.

Percentage positive: percentage of sentinel swabs that tested positive for influenza A or B

Dominant type: this assessment is based on data from sentinel and non-sentinel sources

ARI: acute respiratory infection **ILI:** influenza-like illness **Population:** per 100,000 population [View Original Report](#)

Leprosy Cases Rise in DRC

26 November – The Washington Times reported increasing numbers of [leprosy](#) cases have been recorded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as health agents reach areas previously inaccessible due to a five-year war, a senior government official said. The annual report for 2002, just published by the National Anti-leprosy Program, shows that 5,055 new cases of leprosy had been detected, compared to 4,624 in 2001. Figures for the number of people contracting the disease could climb dramatically as health authorities gain access to areas previously inaccessible. The office recently sent a mission to sensitize residents of Katanga, Maniema and Kasai provinces to the resurgence of the disease. Katanga, with 1,500 cases, recorded the highest number of leprosy cases in the 2002 report and is consequently among the major targets of the sensitization effort. This province is followed by Maniema, Orientale, Equateur, West and East Kasai - with 1,400, 1,200, 1,100 and 1,050 new cases registered respectively. War, poor hygienic conditions, and people spending long periods in the forests have accounted for the high figures. These provinces were among the worst affect by fighting in which some 3.3 million people have died, mostly from illnesses and natural calamities. [View Article](#)

Meningococcal Disease: Situation in Moscow, November 2003

27 November – Eurosurveillance Weekly reported a summary of the current situation regarding [meningococcal infection](#) in Moscow. The incidence of meningococcal disease in Moscow between 1997 and 2003 has varied between 2.1 and 2.9/100 000 inhabitants. The highest level of 2.93/100 000 was seen in 2000. From 1999 onwards the predominant serogroup was serogroup B, about 40%

of all isolates. The proportion due to serogroup A varied from 23% to 38%, and the proportion due to serogroup C from 21% to 37%. A significant increase was noted in 2003. During the first ten months of this year, 273 cases were registered (an incidence of 3.17/100 000), and an increase of 44% compared to the 189 cases during the corresponding period in 2002 (2.19/100 000). The incidence in children has risen by 60%, with 140 child cases (incidence 11.15 /100 000), and was six times higher than in the adult population (1.81/100 000). Seventy percent of all the child cases are in children aged 8 years or younger. In the adult population there has been a 30% increase (1.38 and 1.8 per 100 000, respectively, for the first ten months in 2002 and 2003). [View Article](#)

Russia: Outbreak of Hepatitis A in Asbest

02 December – ProMed reported an outbreak of [hepatitis A](#) has been reported in the city of Asbest. 22 people have already been diagnosed, 19 of whom are in the hospital. According to the Asbest Municipal Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance Center, the source of infection is a resident of the city of Ekaterinburg on a visit to Asbest. The first victims of the infection were members of a family with whom the hepatitis-infected visitor stayed. Later, relatives of the family and visitors to the family became infected. The investigation of the outbreak is under way. Asbest Health officials are considering mass vaccination of population of the city. [View Report](#)

UK: Tetanus Outbreak among Injecting Drug Users

29 November – ProMed reported a [tetanus](#) outbreak among injecting drug users is suspected of killing 1 woman and causing illness in 5 others. Public health officials said more cases were expected. Most of the women are in their 20s. 5 of the cases have occurred in the last 2 weeks, in northwest England, the West Midlands, and the southwest. The 6th case dates from Jul 2003 and it is not known whether it is linked. Tetanus normally affects just a handful of Britons each year -- mainly older women infected by contaminated soil while gardening. Of 175 tetanus cases identified between 1984 and 2000, only 2 have previously been known to have been injecting drug users. Urgent warnings are being sent to drug action teams and hospitals, as quick treatment can be life-saving. [View Report](#)
[View Report 2](#)

Young Children are Main Victims in UK Flu Outbreak

2 December – Reuters reported Britain's Chief Medical Officer has urged increased [flu](#) vaccination of high-risk children as figures show that this year's outbreak is hitting infants hardest. At least two children under four years old have died of suspected Fujian flu so far this year and the figures also show that the rate of illness in this age group is three times higher than among middle-aged and elderly people. A spokesman at the Department of Health said that in the week ending November 23, the rate of GP consultations for flu and flu-like illnesses in children up to four years old was 127.5 per 100,000 compared with an average of 55 per 100,000 for the whole population. The rate per 100,000 was 55.7 among 5-14 year-olds, 60.9 among 15-44 year-olds, 35.7 among 45-64-year-olds, and 40.3 among people over-65. The spokesman said the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, was reiterating the message that children with chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes and congenital heart disease, or whose immune system is compromised, should be offered vaccination. It is estimated that more than one million children qualify for vaccination because of these underlying medical conditions and but that fewer than half have been immunized. [View Article](#)

USCENTCOM

600 Die of AIDS in Saudi Arabia

03 December – Dawn reported some 600 Saudis have reportedly died of AIDS in the country, a top Saudi official was quoted here as saying. The country has 6,787 cases of [HIV/AIDS](#) of which about 22 per cent are Saudis, the daily newspaper Al Riyadh said quoting the director of the kingdom's HIV/Aids prevention program Dr Nasser Al-Hozaim. Given the five fold increase in the registered AIDS cases over the last 16 months, an AIDS clinic has been established in Riyadh, as part of a program that has seen similar treatment centers established in Jeddah and Dammam. The current figure of AIDS victims is nearly five-times more than the 1,285 HIV/Aids cases among Saudis and non-Saudis reported by a top health ministry official in early August 2002. [View Article](#)

Brucellosis Reported in Kazakhstan

25 November – The Washington Times reported more than 500 people have been infected with [brucellosis](#) in southern Kazakhstan, reportedly from insufficient veterinary and sanitary measures. The Ekspress-K newspaper said some veterinarians in the Kyzyl-Orda region do not have motor vehicles, sprayers and sanitizing units. As a result, the number of brucellosis cases there has reached 523. According to the World Health Organization, brucellosis is transmitted from animals to humans through contaminated and untreated milk and milk products or by direct contact with infected animals and animal carcasses. Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and camels can transmit the disease. WHO officials said brucellosis is accompanied by fever and has a marked effect on the musculoskeletal system evidenced by generalized aches and pains and associated with fatigue, prostration and mental depression. The Kyzyl-Orda region adjoins the Aral Sea. The uninhabited Vozrozhdeniye island, shared now between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, was the Soviet Union's biological weapons test site, where brucellosis and other agents were reportedly tested. [View Article](#)

Intravenous Drugs Can Plunge Afghanistan into AIDS: UN

01 December – The International News reported increasing intravenous drug use could see war-ravaged Afghanistan risking an [HIV/AIDS](#) epidemic, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned. "Increasing drug use is a serious factor that could push Afghanistan towards the risk of an HIV/AIDS epidemic if we don't start raising public awareness of the issue, and focus on prevention," UNICEF's Afghanistan head of health Peter Salama said in a statement ahead of World AIDS day. "One of the major difficulties in Afghanistan is that there is no functional surveillance and data gathering system on HIV/AIDS," the doctor said. "The reported number of cases is low, but that probably does not paint the full picture," he said. UNICEF spokesman Edward Carwardine said the Central Asian country had so far escaped relatively unscathed with fewer than 20 reported cases of the disease. "Less than 20 cases of HIV/AIDS have officially been reported in Afghanistan but with evidence of increasing intravenous drug use in the country, the threat from HIV and AIDS is a growing concern amongst health sector officials," he told reporters. [View Article](#)

Kyrgyzstan: World Bank to Reduce Uranium Waste Danger in Ferghana Valley

26 November – IRIN News reported the World Bank pledged to reduce the danger [uranium](#) waste sites posed to residents of the densely populated Ferghana Valley, which is shared by three of the former Soviet Central Asian countries - Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Joop Stoutjesdijk, the World Bank's environment expert, told IRIN that there would be two grants to help address the issue

of uranium waste dumps in the southern Kyrgyz town of Mayлуу-Suu. "The first one, US \$478,000, is provided by the Japanese government via the World Bank for the implementation of the natural disasters prevention project, with the main goal of preparing detailed documentation of the issue," he said, adding that the local and international staff from scientific institutions would work on it for six months. After documentation, practical work on rehabilitating uranium waste dumps was expected to be launched in 2004, for which the World Bank aimed to provide some \$5 million. But Kyrgyz emergency experts have estimated the total necessary for the full rehabilitation of the radioactive dumps to be \$17 million. According to the Kyrgyz emergency ministry, 2 million cubic meters of uranium waste remains buried in 23 sites and dumped in 13 locations around Mayлуу-Suu. Huge masses of thorium-230 with a decay period of 80,000 years, radium-226 with a half-decay period of 1,600 years, uranium waste and its long-lasting isotopes with a half-decay period of hundreds of thousands of years were buried there. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

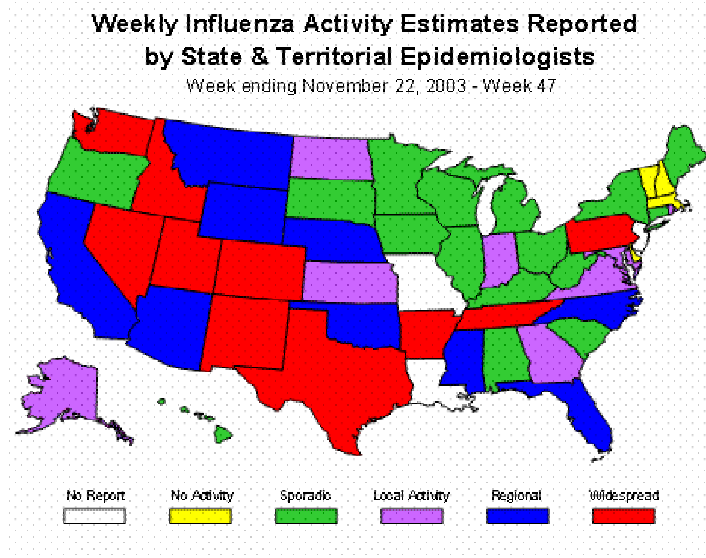
Al-Qaida Terrorists to Gas U.S. Subways?

25 November – World Net Daily reported Al-Qaida terrorists have developed a crude device designed to spread deadly [cyanide](#) gas through the ventilation systems of crowded indoor facilities such as subways, according to a closely held security directive issued to law enforcement by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and obtained exclusively by WorldNetDaily. Marked "For Official Use Only," the five-page memo says the device produces cyanogen chloride gas and hydrogen cyanide gas, and can be placed near air intakes or ventilation systems in crowded open spaces or enclosed spaces. [View Article](#)

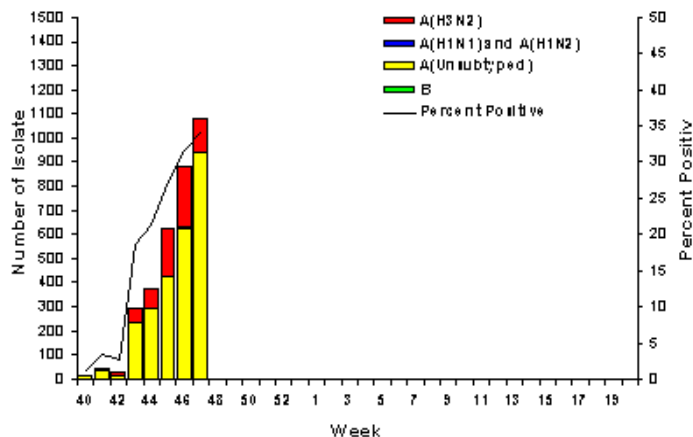
E. coli O157, Aerosol Route suspected - USA (OH) 2001

28 November – ProMed reported at least 19 people who had gone to a county fair in Ohio in 2001 fell ill with *E. coli* after the bacteria apparently spread through sawdust in the air at an exhibition hall, the first time researchers have connected an outbreak to a contaminated building. Testing at the building in Lorain County found [E. coli O157](#) in the rafters, the walls, and the sawdust in some cases 10 months after the fair. Not only is this a very long time for *E. coli* to live, this is also the first time this mode of transmission has ever been detected. Altogether, 23 people who had attended the fair became sick with *E. coli*. 19 of them had gone to a dance at the hall or had otherwise visited the building, which contained exhibits involving cattle, sheep, horses, and dogs. The building had a clay floor covered with sawdust, and some of those at the dance complained the air was dusty. Researchers said the few precautions available for reducing the risk of outbreaks at fairs include not using sawdust, providing soap and water, and disallowing eating at places where animals are on display. The study was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and published in Wed, 26 Nov 2003 Journal of the American Medical Association. Since the study, the CDC has learned of 2 other outbreaks that might have been caused by building contamination. One happened at the University of Wisconsin, the other at the Lane County Fair in Oregon. [View Report](#)

Influenza Update for the United States – [CDC](#)



WHO/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories National Summary, 2003-04



Mexico: New Inspections Planned Following Contaminated Green Onions Incident

28 November – ProMed reported Mexico will follow its closure of 4 green onion growers linked to a [hepatitis A](#) outbreak in the United States with more intensive inspections aimed at boosting consumer confidence in the country's produce, a top agricultural official said. The move will also aid growers by improving the image of their crops at home and abroad, Javier Trujillo, director of the Agriculture Department's division of health, safety and quality, said. Trujillo said the situation has prompted the government to move up a plan to inspect growers on a regular basis by region instead of conducting spot inspections of individual companies and products only after reports of trouble. At a meeting in Washington earlier this month, agricultural officials from the United States and Mexico discussed the new inspections. [View Report](#)

Michigan Children's Hospital Isolates Patients with *Burkholderia dolosa*

03 December – ABC News reported Children's Hospital has begun isolating patients carrying a rare strain of bacteria, which has been found in the lungs of at least 20 patients with cystic fibrosis and possibly contributed to the death of one woman. "We're alarmed because we had only seen (*Burkholderia dolosa*) one time in the past 10 years," said Dr. Craig Gerard, chief of the respiratory disease division at the hospital. *Burkholderia dolosa* is harmless to most people, and state health officials said other patients at Children's face no risk. However people with cystic fibrosis are highly susceptible to infection. Also, *Burkholderia dolosa* is resistant to many antibiotics, making it more difficult to kill. The hospital launched aggressive infection control efforts about six weeks ago when the Michigan lab that analyzes samples from cystic fibrosis patients concluded that five Children's patients had newly tested positive for the bacteria. That brought the number of patients who carry *Burkholderia dolosa* to at least 20. [View Article](#)

Reducing the Risk of *Listeria monocytogenes*

30 November – The CDC announced an update in the *Listeria* Action Plan. [Listeria monocytogenes](#) (*L. monocytogenes*) is a harmful bacterium that can be found in a variety of foods. In pregnant

women, *L. monocytogenes* caused illness can result in miscarriage, fetal death, or severe illness in or death of a newborn infant. The elderly and those with weakened immune systems are also at risk for severe illness or death from *L. monocytogenes* contaminated food. For more than 15 years, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), FDA, CDC, along with other Federal, State, and local agencies, has been working toward preventing *L. monocytogenes* illness and controlling this pathogen. This Action Plan complements the work of the Risk Assessment, focusing on certain ready-to-eat foods that can potentially become contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*. This revised plan updates the FDA and CDC components of the Action Plan (Joint Response to the President: Reducing the Risk of *L. monocytogenes*) that was previously released in January 2001. [View Update](#)

Sprouts Recalled After *Salmonella* Outbreak

29 November – ProMed reported Harmony Farms of Auburn, WA recalled its brand of alfalfa sprouts from stores in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska after it was linked to a [Salmonella](#) outbreak. The sprouts sickened 6 Oregonians and possibly a Washington resident, said Dr. William Keene, epidemiologist with the Oregon Department of Health Services. "Consumers who have them in their refrigerators should discard them immediately," he said. The recalled sprouts were distributed through several wholesalers to grocery stores, restaurants, and other retail outlets. Retail sprouts were sold in 5-oz. plastic "clamshell" packages labeled as "Fresh Alfalfa Sprouts," "Gourmet Salad Sprouts," and "Fresh Alfalfa and Oregon Onion Sprouts," and in 1-pound, 2-pound, and 3-pound commercial packs. State and federal agencies are working with the company to remove potentially contaminated sprouts from distribution. It is the 2nd salmonella outbreak for the grower this year. In March 2003, 13 people in Oregon and Southwest Washington were sickened after they ate its sprouts. [View Report](#)

United State's Calories Are Coming from Soft Drinks

29 November – The Detroit News reported people in the United States are consuming a lot more calories from soft drinks and fruit drinks than they did 20 years ago, says a study in November's Obesity Research. Nutrition professor Barry Popkin and colleagues at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill reviewed food consumption data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other sources for more than 100 countries and found intake of calories from sweeteners such as sugar and high-fructose corn syrup (used in soft drinks) has increased significantly over the years. Between 1977 and 1998, people in the United States consumed 83 more calories a day in sweeteners, and 66 of those extra calories came from sweetened beverages (soft drinks, fruit drinks). Caloric intake from sweeteners increased 74 calories a day in other countries from 1962 to 2000. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Australia: Fresh Vegetables Linked to Food Poisoning

29 November – The Sydney Morning Herald reported Australia's love affair with fresh food may be having an unexpected negative impact on our health, with uncooked fruit and vegetables emerging as culprits in food poisonings. Food monitors were cited as saying that reports of garden-produce poisoning are increasing and lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers have been implicated in recent cases. Martyn Kirk, the coordinating epidemiologist for OzFoodNet, which monitors food poisoning outbreaks for the Federal Government stated that the use of animal manure as fertilizer is contributing to the problem. Gardens are also vulnerable to human contamination. Mr. Kirk was further cited as saying that recent Australian food poisonings included illnesses produced by sliced lettuce and a tomato and cucumber salad and fresh produce could carry salmonella, cryptosporidium and cyclospora. Mr. Kirk

added that exported Australian seed sprouts had also been implicated in overseas food poisoning outbreaks. [View Article](#)

Dengue Fever Update for Bangladesh and India

27 November – ProMed reported in Bangladesh, as of 24 November 2003, 7 more patients died of [dengue fever](#) out of a total of 337 people affected since April [2003] across the country. A DCC source said that 136 people died of dengue in 2000, some 39 in 2001, and at least 26 last year [2002]. In India the dreaded dengue disease has been detected in Raichur district. While Lingsugur taluk reported 5 cases; Raichur and Sindhanur reported one each. Malathion fogging was carried out in dengue-suspected villages of Lingsugur and Sindhanur taluks and preventive measures introduced. The number of cases of Dengue Fever admitted to hospitals in New Delhi from January [2003] to the present is more than 6000. [View Report](#)

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Brazil: Dengue Fever Update

27 November – ProMed reported data from the State Secretary for Health, Ceara, Brazil, show that the state has recorded its 3rd highest rate for [dengue fever](#) in the last 18 years, with 23,231 cases reported, 279 cases of DHF, and 17 deaths. To date, 350 000 cases of dengue have been reported in Brazil, including 42 deaths, 17 of them in Ceara: 9 in Fortaleza [the state capital], followed by Juazeiro do Norte (2), Crateus (2), Crato (1), Redencao (1), Caucaia (1) and Assare (1). The 279 cases of DHF were notified from Fortaleza (164), Juazeiro do Norte (19), Caucaia (12), & 31 other municipalities. The highest previous total for DHF in the state was 78 cases in 2001. [View Report](#)

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