



Every Record. In Real Time. Automatically.

Outbreak of Acute Flaccid Myelitis

The CDC is investigating a surge in cases of Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM) for 2018 and reported 38 confirmed cases in 16 states through September. Since that release, state health departments from Illinois, Washington, Texas, New Jersey, New York have each reported cases. Previously, Minnesota, Colorado, Pennsylvania and Illinois had reported cases from the beginning of 2018 through the present time. This appears to be an uptick in cases compared to last year (2017) which reported a total of 33 cases in 16 states.

AFM is a rare but serious condition that affects a person's spinal cord, causing weakness in the arms or legs. The majority of cases are in children and adolescents, most of them in younger children.

It is believed to be a complication associated with certain viruses such as enteroviruses (both polio and non-polio), adenoviruses, and West Nile virus. These viruses are contagious and spread, with the exception of West Nile, like colds and flus; West Nile is spread by mosquitos with rare transmission via blood transfusions, donated organs, and from mother to baby through pregnancy, delivery or breast feeding.

What EMS should know:

If a patient, particularly a child/adolescent presents with weak or paralyzed limbs, they should be transported to the hospital for further evaluation. Careful attention should be paid to washing hands, decontaminating objects & surfaces. Wearing appropriate PPE will also decrease the risk of transmission.

More complete info on AFM can be found in the **Outbreaks/Emerging Diseases** section of the HIP

For more information see: <https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/about-afm.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/>

This document is provided by FirstWatch as a service to prehospital and public health providers. The information has been compiled from a variety of sources such as the CDC, Health Canada and WHO. It is copyrighted, but may be freely copied and distributed as long as it remains intact. For up-to-date, EMS specific information on emerging diseases, please visit www.firstwatch.net/hi