

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

May 11, 2022

Dear Colleague:

As the warm summer months approach when swimming activities are more common and when the majority of the primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) cases are diagnosed, the Florida Department of Health would like to remind physicians to consider the diagnosis of PAM in any patient presenting with symptoms of meningitis and a history of exposure to fresh water. The infections include those caused by *Naegleria fowleri*, *Balamuthia mandrillaris* and *Acanthamoeba* species. Physicians who suspect they have a patient with an infection due to free-living amebae are directed to contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **immediately** at 770-488-7100. Confirmatory testing or laboratory evidence of a free-living ameba infection is not a prerequisite for contacting CDC. CDC physicians will offer direct consultation services, including guidance regarding specimen collection, shipping instructions and treatment recommendations.

There have been 151 reported cases of PAM from 1962–2020 nationally with four known survivors. The aggressive treatment regimens for three of the survivors included miltefosine, which is available commercially (www.impavido.com).

Amebic encephalitis is a reportable disease in Florida per Florida Administrative Code Rule 64D-3.029, and any suspected case needs to be reported to the county health department or the Department's Bureau of Epidemiology at 850-245-4401 immediately. Early diagnosis, reporting and consultation are critical factors for the effectiveness of any medical treatment regimen. Thank you for your help in keeping our communities safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Carina Blackmore, DVM, PhD, Dipl ACVPM
Director
Division of Disease Control & Health Protection
State Epidemiologist