Contagion - Could it Really Happen Here?

Protecting the Health of Santa Barbara County

The recent release of Warner Brothers Contagion movie shines the light on the role public health plays in emerging infectious disease outbreaks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, investigates new contagious diseases - averaging one new contagion per year. These new contagious diseases can emerge right here or only a plane-ride away from here.

It’s not just new diseases that threaten Santa Barbara County and the rest of the country. Some diseases long thought controlled in the United States, like tuberculosis, can reemerge and be more deadly than ever.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department plays an important role in controlling disease outbreaks. We help with identifying potential outbreaks, tracking of contacts, and infection control - including isolation and quarantine. When investigating diseases, we also work to determine the cause of the illness and the source of the infection/virus/toxin. Once we know how something is transmitted and how readily it is spread, we can work on how to break the cycle of transmission to prevent further cases and determine how patients can best be treated.

Our partnerships with local hospitals, physicians, and the California Department of Public Health mean we have a network of professionals working 24/7 to save lives and protect the people of Santa Barbara County from health threats. Although we’re on the job, we need providers and residents to be prepared to deal with a public health emergency as well. Together, we can protect Santa Barbara County from the next contagion.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department’s Disease Control and Prevention Program can be reached at (805) 681-5280

Credit: Allen County Health Department, Ohio
Reportable Communicable Diseases and Conditions List - Updated

Per recent changes made by the California Department of Public Health, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department has updated its list of Reportable Diseases and Conditions. The list of Reportable Diseases and Conditions is marked with symbols to assist providers in making accurate and timely reports.

Who Needs to Report?
Health care providers are mandated under California law (CCR, title 17, Section 2500) to report to the local health officer confirmed or suspected diseases and conditions on the reportable diseases and conditions list within specified timeframes. Additionally, under Title 17, CCR 2508 states “it shall be the duty of anyone in charge of a public or private school, kindergarten, boarding school, or day nursery to also report suspected or confirmed communicable diseases.”

Where to Report?
Communicable disease reports can be submitted 24/7 on the designated Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) form via FAX to (805) 681-4069. Reminder, as of last year, there are now three different CMRs required, one specifically for reporting Tuberculosis, another for Department of Motor Vehicles to report conditions impairing driving capacity pursuant to H&S 103900, and a third, Communicable Diseases for reporting all other communicable diseases. CalREDIE providers are not required to use these forms and may continue to submit electronically.

Summary of Key Additions/Changes:
- Anthrax, human or animal
- Brucellosis, animal (except infections due to Brucella canis)
- Brucellosis (Human)
- Cyclosporiasis
- Hepatitis A, acute infection
- Hepatitis D (Delta)-Specify acute case or chronic
- Hepatitis E, acute infection
- Influenza (ICU or Death) Lab confirmed for ages 0-64
- Influenza (Human) Novel strain
- Rickettsial Disease (non-Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever), including Typhus and Typhus-like Illnesses
- Tularemia (Human or Animal)
- Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (Human or Animal) e.g., Crimean-Congo, Ebola, Lassa & Marburg viruses

Summary of Key Deletions:
- Avian Influenza (See Influenza Novel Strain)
- Colorado Tick Fever
- Hepatitis, other/acute
- Kawasaki Syndrome
- Rheumatic Fever, Acute
- Typhus Fever
- Water Associated Diseases

Title 17, Section 2505, which requires laboratories to report test results to the Public Health Department, has also undergone significant changes. To view the updated lists of communicable disease reporting by providers and laboratories and access Confidential Morbidity Report forms, please visit our website at www.sbcphd.org/dcp

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department appreciates your partnership in keeping our community safe by reporting communicable diseases. Your prompt notification enables Disease Control Program staff to initiate immediate disease control strategies to interrupt disease transmission.