



Health Alerts: Pertussis Awareness, Shigellosis, Botulinum Toxin Injections

April 29, 2024

Please review important updates from Skagit County Public Health.

NOTE: Our 24 hour Communicable Disease phone number is 360-770-8852.

Pertussis Awareness for Healthcare Providers

Skagit County Public Health observed an increase in pertussis infections diagnosed in children during March and April 2024. While the overall case numbers remain low and were not linked to an outbreak, the increase indicates community transmission. In addition to recent cases in Skagit County, Chelan Douglas Health District reported an outbreak of pertussis in February 2024.

Recommendations for Clinicians

- Recommend Tdap to all pregnant women with each pregnancy, preferably as early as possible between 27 and 36 weeks of gestation. Vaccination during each pregnancy reduces the risk of a mom with pertussis infecting the baby, and it can also provide passive protection for the baby in the first few months of life when they're most vulnerable and too young to be vaccinated.
- Fully immunize all children against pertussis. Ensure that infants and children receive the primary DTaP series on schedule; administration without delays is essential for reducing severe disease in young infants.
- Consider the diagnosis of pertussis in the following situations, even if the patient has been immunized:
 - Persistent or worsening cough with no fever or a low-grade fever in an infant ≤ 3 months, or in an older infant without other explanation.
 - Persistent or paroxysmal cough with no or low-grade fever in an infant 7 days that is paroxysmal, accompanied by gagging, post-tussive emesis, or inspiratory whoop in patients of any age.
 - Cough illness of any duration and no alternative diagnosis in:
 - anyone with close contact with infants or pregnant women;
 - pregnant women in the third trimester; and

- patients who have had contact with someone known to have pertussis or with prolonged cough illness.
 - Any cough illness >2 weeks duration with no alternative diagnosis in patients of any age.
- To confirm pertussis, send a nasopharyngeal specimen for pertussis polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and/or culture. PCR is more sensitive and rapid than culture but is more expensive and less specific. Testing is not necessary if the patient is a close contact of a lab-confirmed pertussis case. Report pertussis cases within 24 hours to Skagit County Public Health.

Suspected Local Transmission of Extensively Drug-Resistant (XDR) Shigellosis in King County

Public Health Seattle King County issued an [advisory](#) to providers regarding evidence of potential local (King County) transmission of XDR shigellosis. In addition, Spokane Regional Health District [reported](#) a significant outbreak of shigellosis primarily impacting people experiencing homelessness starting in late 2023. Skagit County has not received reports of XDR shigellosis cases or higher than normal incidence of shigellosis at this time, but we ask that providers remain aware.

Recommendations for Clinicians

- Be aware that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been monitoring an [increase in extensively drug-resistant \(XDR\) *Shigella* infections \(shigellosis\)](#) reported through [national surveillance systems](#).
- Consider *Shigella* infection in patients with acute diarrhea, especially among people with higher risk for *Shigella* infection, including:
 - People experiencing homelessness or unstable housing;
 - International travelers;
 - Immunocompromised persons;
 - People living with HIV;
 - Men who have sex with men (MSM);
 - Young children
- Although antibiotic therapy is not routinely recommended for mild infections, it should be prescribed for patients with more severe illnesses, patients who are immunocompromised, patients in settings where there is elevated concern about transmission to others (e.g., in congregate living situations) and in outbreak settings (consult with Public Health).
- Healthcare providers should consult with a specialist knowledgeable in the treatment of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to determine the best treatment option if there are concerns for XDR *Shigella* infections or in cases of treatment failure without AST results.
- Order stool culture and antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) for patients suspected of having *Shigella*. Culture-independent diagnostic testing on its own (e.g., PCR) cannot be used to assess susceptibility.
- Consider adding azithromycin to AST for *Shigella* specimens using [recently established clinical breakpoints](#) for azithromycin for *Shigella*.

- Notify Public Health of patients with suspected or confirmed XDR shigellosis at (360) 770-8852.
- [March 9, 2023 XDR shigellosis Health Advisory](#) provides more information on XDR shigellosis laboratory testing, risk factors, and clinical management.

CDC Alert: Harmful Reactions Linked to Counterfeit “Botox” or Mishandled Botulinum Toxin Injections

The [FDA is investigating counterfeit](#) versions of Botox in multiple states. As of April 18, 2024, 22 people with adverse effects have been reported in California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York City, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. Symptom onset dates ranged from November 4, 2023, to March 31, 2024. All symptomatic people were females aged 25 to 59 years. All reported receiving botulinum toxin injections by unlicensed or untrained individuals or in non-healthcare settings, including homes or spas. Most (20, 91%) reported receiving botulinum toxin injections for cosmetic purposes.

Recommendations for Clinicians

- Consider the possibility of adverse effects from botulinum toxin injection, including for cosmetic reasons, when patients present with [signs and symptoms consistent with botulism](#) near the injection site.
- If systemic botulism is suspected, **report to Skagit County Public Health immediately at 360-770-8852** for consultation and antitoxin release. If no one answers, contact the CDC clinical botulism service 24/7 at 770-488-7100.
- Counsel patients who report using or being interested in using botulinum toxin about the risks of botulism and potential adverse events.
- Encourage patients to receive injections only from licensed providers who are trained in proper administration of FDA-approved botulinum toxin, preferably in a licensed or accredited healthcare setting.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping Skagit County healthy!



Skagit County Public Health Communicable Disease Division

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