



UNKNOWN VIRUS SOAM1018
DRILL HEALTH ALERT
November 7th, 2018

SITUATION

On October 2nd, 2018, the Alameda County Public Health Department issued a Health Advisory regarding rising concerns of a novel viral illness emerging in South America with a potential to spread to the United States. Since the advisory was issued, affected areas in South America have continued to report rising number of illnesses and deaths attributed to SoAM1018.

Locally, concerns regarding SoAM1018 in conjunction with the start of a severe flu season have contributed to high numbers of clinic and emergency room visits. There have not been any confirmed cases of SoAM1018 in Alameda county, but clinicians are urged to consider SoAM1018 in the differential diagnosis in any individual presenting with symptoms that are clinically compatible with associated risk factors as outlined below. **Early recognition and prompt implementation of infection control precautions are critical to prevent and control the spread of SoAM1018 in our region.**

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF CLINICIANS: EXERCISE

1. **CONSIDER SoAM1018** in patients with:
 - a. **Fever >38.6°C (>101.5°F) and symptoms** such as cough, shortness of breath, body ache, fatigue, headache, or altered mental status; **AND**
 - b. **Risk factors within the 14 days before onset** of symptoms, such as:
 - i. Residence in or travel to South America, **OR**
 - ii. Close contact with travelers from South America or anyone with known risk factors exhibiting similar symptoms.
2. **ISOLATE** suspected cases and implement contact and droplet precautions immediately. Add airborne precautions for aerosol-generating procedures. If unable to isolate patient in a private room, ensure spacing of patients at least six (6) feet apart and separated by a curtain.
3. **ENSURE** adherence to hand hygiene, contact precautions, and environmental control measures of all staff and visitors.
4. **NOTIFY** your facility Infection Preventionist promptly of suspected cases, per facility protocols.
5. **REPORT** suspect or rule-out cases **IMMEDIATELY BY PHONE** to Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) at 510-268-7279. Request approval for SoAM1018 testing at CDC.
6. **TEST** suspected cases. Influenza testing should be done for all suspect cases. Influenza RT-PCR testing is preferred over rapid testing. If SoAM1018 testing at CDC is approved by ACPHD, collect the following additional specimens:
 - a) **Lower respiratory tract specimens** have the highest bronchoalveolar lavage fluid, tracheal aspirate, pleural fluid, or sputum.
 - b) **Upper respiratory tract specimens:** NP/OP swabs using synthetic fiber swabs. Send respiratory samples in viral transport media.
 - c) **Serum:** 1 full tube (5-10 ml blood for adults). Collect at least 4 mL of serum, plasma, or whole blood and refrigerate.
7. **Testing must be approved and coordinated through Alameda County Public Health Department.**
7. **COMMUNICATE** status of patients suspected to have SoAM1018 infection if/ when patient transfer is indicated. Complete an Infection Control inter-facility Transfer Form (<http://www.acphd.org/media/500766/acphd-infection-control-transfer-form.pdf>); fax to the receiving facility and ACD (510-268-7283).

Clinical Presentation

Illness begins with prodromal stage: mild upper respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, congestion progressing to fever, body aches, respiratory distress and pneumonia. In severe cases, patients present with severe headache, altered mental status, encephalitis with rapid decompensation and death. Individuals of all ages can be affected by the illness, but those who are under the age of 14, have multiple comorbidities, or are immunocompromised are at an increased risk of severe disease.

Transmission

Transmission occurs through respiratory secretions or droplets from the respiratory tracts and by direct contact with body fluids from an infected person. Considerations for exposure include:

- 1) Any unprotected face-to-face (<6 feet) with an infected person
- 2) Performing an aerosol generating procedure on an infected patient without the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) or being within 6 feet of an infected patient without the appropriate personal PPE while aerosol generating procedures are performed
- 3) Direct contact with bodily fluids, skin lesions/blisters without the use of gloves and gown.

Patients with SoAM1018 should be considered contagious for seven (7) days post resolution of fever.

Treatment

Intensive supportive care and symptom management is the only treatment option available. There are currently no vaccines available for this novel virus. Antiviral therapies are being actively investigated by the CDC for use in severely ill patients.

Laboratory Testing

Clinicians should perform pathogen specific testing for suspected causes on the differential as per their usual testing algorithm at the hospital or clinic reference laboratories. Influenza testing should be done for all suspect cases. Influenza RT-PCR testing is preferred over rapid testing.

Diagnostic testing for SoAM1018 is not yet available at local or state laboratories. CDC has developed PCR testing based on additional characterization of strains isolated from patients in South America. In addition to differential testing, clinicians are requested to:

1. Contact by phone the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) at 510-268-7279 for testing approval.
2. If approved, collect the following additional specimens:
 - a. **Lower respiratory tract specimens** have the highest bronchoalveolar lavage fluid, tracheal aspirate, pleural fluid, or sputum.
 - b. **Upper respiratory tract specimens:** NP/OP swabs using synthetic fiber swabs. Send respiratory samples in viral transport media.
 - c. **Serum:** 1 full tube (5-10 ml blood for adults). Collect at least 4 mL of serum, plasma, or whole blood and refrigerate.
3. Send samples for testing per instructions provided at the time of approval.

Testing must be approved and coordinated through Alameda County Public Health Department.

Infection Control

Place patients suspected to be infected with SoAM1018 in private rooms with contact and droplet precautions. If unable to isolate patient in a private room, ensure spacing of patients at least six (6) feet apart and separated by a curtain. Ensure the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) outside of the patient's room. **PPE required includes:** gloves, gown, mask, face shield/goggles if spray/splash is anticipated.

Ensure adherence to precautions and hand hygiene. Thorough, frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces in the room (e.g., bed, bed rails, handles, tables, faucets) and both daily and terminal room cleaning should be performed using an EPA-approved disinfectant. Notify staff, and pertinent clinician groups regarding the presence of a suspected case of SoAM1018 and provide education and training on control measures including hand hygiene and appropriate use of PPE. Evaluate staff adherence to hand hygiene, contact precautions, and environmental

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control measures. Limit visitors and restrict visitation while symptomatic with a respiratory illness. Individuals who are allowed to visit should be provided with education about SOAM1018 and appropriate use of PPE.

- 2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/isolation-guidelines.pdf>
- Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/environmental-guidelines.pdf>
- Guideline for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities, 2008 (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/disinfection-guidelines.pdf>
- Selected EPA-Registered Disinfectants (EPA) <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants>

Inter-facility Communication

An Alameda County Public Health Department inter-facility infection control transfer form should be completed and sent in advance to a facility that will be receiving a patient who are suspected to be infected with SoAM1018. The form is available at <http://www.acphd.org/media/500766/acphd-infection-control-transfer-form.pdf>. Completed forms should be sent to the receiving facility as well as faxed to ACD at 510-268-7283.

Healthcare Worker Safety and Monitoring

Healthcare Facility Infection control officer (ICO) or designee is required to identify if Emergency Medical Personnel rendered care to patients with suspected communicable diseases. The ICO or designee should notify the designated officer (DO) of the Emergency Services Provider upon determining that a person to whom emergency medical services were provided is suspected of having a communicable disease as follows:

- Notification must be immediate
- ICO reports name, tel. # of affected EMS worker to county health office
- The DO notifies the affected personnel
- The county health officer also notifies the affected personnel

Upon notification, the Alameda County Public Health Department will work with the designated occupation health provider or DO of the EMS provider to implement necessary control measures.

- California Department of Public Health- All Facilities Letter (AFL) Summary, January 8, 2018 <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-18-06.aspx>

Education for Patients and Families

Educate Patients and families regarding symptoms, transmission and prevention of spread of SoAM1018 as well as influenza. Advise and offer flu vaccine for unvaccinated individuals. Advise symptomatic individuals regarding social distancing especially from high risk contacts (children under 14 years of age, pregnant women, those with multiple co-morbidities and immune compromising conditions). Individuals should be advised to stay home and only seek medical attention if symptoms progressively get worse or if they are experiencing severe illness. Advise close contacts of patients suspected to be infected with SoAM1018, to maintain social distancing as indicated above, monitor for symptoms, and contact their healthcare provider for advice/consultation prior to visiting a doctor's office or emergency room. For additional questions and concerns, individuals can be referred to contact the Alameda County Public Health Department's Communicable Disease Section at 510-268-7279 or email pheposc@acgov.org.