

Health Alerts

Health Advisory #190 - New Reporting Requirements for Neonatal Herpes Simplex Virus Infections - 12/20/2006

SUMMARY

- Herpes simplex virus (HSV) infection in infants aged 60 days or younger is reportable in New York State as of April 28, 2006. HSV infection in infants aged 60 days or younger has been reportable in New York City since March 16, 2006.
- Medical providers are required to report suspected or confirmed cases of HSV infection in infants 60 days or younger to the local health department where the patient resides.
- Laboratories are required to report any positive HSV test in infants aged 60 days and younger. If a laboratory does not know the age of a patient who has tested positive for HSV, the result should still be reported. Positive HSV results in patients known to be older than 60 days should not be reported.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this notification is to communicate new requirements for the reporting of cases of neonatal HSV infection. Effective April 28, 2006, HSV virus infection in infants 60 days or younger has been added to the reportable disease list in New York State (Section 2.1 of the New York State Sanitary Code). Although the neonatal period is usually considered to be days 0-30 of age, the definition of neonatal HSV infection for reporting has been extended to 60 days of age for both the State and New York City's regulations.

INTRODUCTION

HSV infection in infants is a serious disease and carries the risk of permanent brain damage or death if left untreated. Disease can result from infection with either HSV type 1 or HSV type 2, and can be localized to the skin, eyes and mouth, involve the central nervous system, or manifest as disseminated infection. Neonatal herpes is one of the most common congenital and perinatal infections in the United States. Estimates of the incidence of neonatal herpes range from approximately 1/1,500 to 1/3,200 live births each year; these estimates correspond to approximately 1,300 to 2,800 cases per year nationwide.

Reporting herpes simplex virus infection in infants aged 60 days or younger will aid in the accurate measurement of the incidence of disease by transmission category, increase provider and public awareness of the disease, identify outbreaks in a timely fashion, and facilitate appropriate healthcare and other control measures.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Medical providers are required to report and submit a confidential case report (DOH-389) to the local health department for any suspected or confirmed case of HSV infection in a patient aged 60 days or younger.

Laboratories are required to report any positive HSV test in infants aged 60 days and younger to the local health department in which the patient resides. Positive HSV results in patients known to be older than 60 days do not need to be reported. If a laboratory does not know the age of a patient who has tested positive for HSV, the result should still be reported. All laboratories are required to report regardless of whether they report via the Electronic Clinical Laboratory Reporting System (ECLRS). All HSV isolates from patients aged 60 days or younger should be saved by the laboratory for 3 months.

The Erie County Department of Health will collect the reported clinical and laboratory testing information and obtain additional epidemiologic information using the New York State Department of Health Neonatal HSV Case Investigation Form. Case report data will be submitted via the New York State Department of Health Communicable Disease Electronic Reporting System (CDESS).

Questions related to the above reporting requirements should be directed to the Erie County Department of Health at (716) 858-6897 Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance with this new reporting requirement