

Subject: Health Alert: Investigation of an increase in Guillain-Barré Syndrome, Arizona

The Arizona Department of Health Services, in conjunction with local health departments and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is investigating a cluster of acute flaccid paralysis in Arizona. Eight cases have been identified. Five of these cases have been confirmed as Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) based on clinical, laboratory, and electrodiagnostic features. Onset of neurologic symptoms have ranged from May 28, 2011 to June 23, 2011 and have occurred 1-2 weeks after diarrheal illness. The majority of the cases are male. Ages range from 18-76 years.

GBS is a serious neurological disorder involving damage to the peripheral nerves. The condition is thought to be caused by an immune reaction, generally in response to an antecedent illness or infection, that leads to nerve damage. GBS is typically characterized by the acute or subacute onset of progressive, symmetrical weakness in the legs and arms, with loss of reflexes. Sensory abnormalities, cranial nerve abnormalities such as facial weakness or difficulty swallowing, and paralysis of respiratory muscles also can occur.

ADHS is requesting that clinicians notify their local health department of any cases of acute flaccid paralysis or Guillain-Barré Syndrome. In addition to routine diagnostic testing, we are requesting that healthcare providers submit stool, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and serum specimens from suspected cases to the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory. For each sample, a [microbiology submission](#) form should be completed.

Please mark the Outbreak box and list the Outbreak Name as AFP on the submission form. Samples should be shipped to Bureau of Laboratory Services: 250 N. 17th Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85007. For questions about packaging and submitting specimens, refer to the [Guide to Laboratory Services](#).

If you have any questions, please contact your [local health department](#) or the Arizona Department of Health Services at (602) 364-3676. Thank you!

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