



This is an official
CDC Health Advisory

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10485-CAD-04-05-2021-HEPATITIS

**Acute Non-Viral Hepatitis of Unknown Etiology Potentially
Associated with an Alkaline Water Product**

Summary

Five cases of acute non-viral hepatitis of unknown etiology in children were reported to the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) between November and December 2020. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is assisting the SNHD in investigating a potential link between these illnesses and the consumption of an alkaline water product called "Real Water" and other possible etiologies. The purpose of this Health Alert Network (HAN) Advisory is to advise clinicians and health departments to have a high index of suspicion for cases of acute non-viral hepatitis and to report any cases to their local health authority.

Background

CDC and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) were notified of five cases of acute non-viral hepatitis of unknown etiology in children by the SNHD in Nevada on March 13, 2021. The cases occurred in children ranging in ages from seven months to five years who presented to a hospital between November 10, 2020, and December 3, 2020, with signs and symptoms of vomiting, poor intake, and fatigue. Laboratory testing on the patients showed elevated hepatic transaminases, hyperbilirubinemia, coagulopathy, and a negative viral hepatitis serology panel. All patients required transfers to a pediatric tertiary-care specialty liver unit because of concerns for acute liver failure and the possible need for liver transplantations. All children recovered and were discharged home. In addition to these cases, several adults and other children living in the cases' households reported similar but mostly less severe symptoms including nausea, vomiting, anorexia, and fatigue. Information to date from the preliminary epidemiologic investigation supports that there is a strong link between these cases of acute non-viral hepatitis and Real Water alkaline water. Real Water, Inc. owns this brand of alkaline water and has headquarters in Mesa, Arizona. This product is available in 5-gallon, 3-gallon, 1 gallon, 1.5 liters, 1 liter, and 500 ml bottles, and

“Real Water” concentrate. Bottles and concentrate products are available for purchase online and in stores nationwide. Real Water has issued a recall on their products. The FDA advises consumers, restaurants, and retailers not to drink, cook with, sell, or serve Real Water alkaline water until more information is known about the cause of the illnesses. Further, FDA advises that Real Water not be given to pets.

Recommendations for Clinicians

1. Counsel your patients (or their caregivers and guardians) to stop drinking, cooking with, or using Real Water until more is known about the cause of the illnesses per FDA recommendations.
2. Educate your patients on the signs and symptoms of acute hepatitis due to any cause, which may include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, light-colored stools, joint pain, and yellow skin or eyes; and the importance of seeking medical care.
3. Maintain a high index of suspicion for non-viral hepatitis in your differential diagnosis of acute hepatitis in adults and children presenting with compatible clinical findings.
4. Obtain a more detailed exposure history in patients when you suspect acute non-viral hepatitis. Possible etiologies associated with acute non-viral hepatitis include exposure to medications, contaminated water or food, dietary and herbal supplements, traditional or home remedies, wild-growing mushrooms and plants, and chemicals such as metals, solvents, paint thinners, or pesticides.
5. Obtain early consultation with and/or referral to a gastroenterologist or infectious disease specialist for medical workup and management of patients with signs and symptoms of acute hepatitis.
6. Contact your local health authority to report cases of acute non-viral hepatitis of unknown etiology.
7. Contact your local poison center (1-800-222-1222) for information on chemical or drug-induced liver toxicity and report any cases.

Resources for Additional Information

[FDA Investigation](#)

FDA Case Reporting:

- [MedWatch](#)
 - [Online](#)
 - [Paper](#)
- [FDA Consumer Complaints](#)

[Southern Nevada Health District FAQ](#)

[American Association of Poison Control Centers](#)

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of an outbreak of a condition that might pose a substantial risk or human morbidity or morality is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2021 List of Reportable Conditions available at:

<https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2021			
Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region			
MAIL TO:			
Lowcountry 4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600 N. Charleston, SC 29405 Fax: (843) 953-0051	Midlands 2000 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29204 Fax: (803) 576-2993	Pee Dee 1931 Industrial Park Road Conway, SC 29526 Fax: (843) 915-6506	Upstate 200 University Ridge Greenville, SC 29602 Fax: (864) 282-4373
CALL TO:			
Lowcountry Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg Office: (843) 441-1091 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091	Midlands Aiken, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, York Office: (888) 801-1046 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046	Pee Dee Clarendon, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg Office: (843) 915-8886 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845	Upstate Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union Office: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (864) 423-6648
For information on reportable conditions, see https://www.scdhec.gov/ReportableConditions		DHEC Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention & Control Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology 2100 Bull St • Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (803) 898-0861 • Fax: (803) 898-0897 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902	

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.