



Facsimile Cover Sheet

Wharangi Nama Waea

Date/Te Ra: **26 September 2014**

To/Kia: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, After-hours Centers and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa region	From/Na: Regional Public Health
Name of Agency/Wahi Mahi:	Fax Number/Nama Waea:

Increase in yersiniosis

I would be grateful if you could distribute the following Public Health Alert to relevant staff in your organisation.

If you would also like to receive this by email for ease of distribution, storage and retrieval please advise RPH of your email on rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Nesdale'.

Dr Annette Nesdale

Medical Officer of Health

Regional Public Health

To: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Paediatricians, ID Physicians, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centers and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions

From: Dr Annette Nesdale

Increase in yersiniosis in greater Wellington and the Hutt Valley

In the last 2 weeks there have been 20 cases of yersiniosis infection identified. There are usually 0 to 3 cases per week. Regional Public Health's investigation into this is on going.

We are requesting your assistance to enable the public health interview of ill people to occur as soon as possible after yersiniosis is identified from laboratory testing. We would be grateful if you could **prioritise advising** ill people of their **positive yersiniosis result** and for the person to expect a telephone call from Public Health. RPH staff will do a telephone interview that day to identify where they have been, where and what they have eaten and other possible risk factors during their incubation period.

Epidemiology

There appear to be two clusters of yersiniosis in our region. Of the 20 cases notified 8 are due to yersinia enterocolitica, this is the most common type in NZ and 12 are due to yersinia pseudotuberculosis. Other regions have also had an increase in yersinia pseudotuberculosis. The following table outlines epidemiological features of the 2 clusters in the Wellington region.

	Y pseudotuberculosis	Y enterocolitica
Age range	2 to 69 years	9 to 82 years
Median age	30.5 years	25.5 years
Geographic distribution of ill people	Wgtn 6, Hutt Valley 4, Porirua 2	Wgtn 6, Hutt Valley 1, Kapiti 1
Male:female	6 male, 6 female	6 male, 2 female

Clinical features

The incubation period for yersiniosis is typically 3 to 7 days. The presentation of yersiniosis includes diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal pain and fever. The abdominal pain associated with Yersinia pseudo infection may present as suspected appendicitis, especially in children. Adults may develop a post infectious reactive arthritis several weeks after the acute illness.

Treatment

Most people with diarrhoea only do not need antibiotic treatment. Discuss the treatment of people with severe infection or fever/ and or abdominal pain with the Microbiologist / Infectious Disease Physician at either Aotea Pathology or Wellington Hospital. Antibiotics used are either cotrimoxazole or ciprofloxacin (adult only).

Returning to work, school and child care centres

Food handlers, staff of health care or early child care centres, children <5years who attend early childcare must not return until they have been free of symptoms for at least 48 hours. Anyone else can go back to work as long as they do not have symptoms

Additional information for adult blood donors following yersiniosis

Please remind people recovering from yersiniosis not to donate blood for 3 months after recovering due to the concern of asymptomatic bacteremia leading to infection in collected blood. Yersinia organisms can continue to multiply slowly at refrigerator temperatures. In addition contacts of people with yersiniosis shouldn't donate blood for 4 weeks from last contact.

Yersiniosis

What is it?

Yersiniosis is caused by bacteria which live in the intestines of people, birds and animals (especially pigs, cats and dogs). When a person, bird or animal is infected they pass out the bacteria in their faeces (poo).

How do you know if you have it?

It usually takes from 3 to 7 days (sometimes up to 10 days) for symptoms to show after being infected. The symptoms are diarrhoea, stomach cramps, vomiting and fever. Headache, sore throat and joint pains may also occur. Some people who are infected with yersinia do not have any symptoms but they are still passing out the bacteria. Laboratory tests on a faecal (poo) specimen will confirm if a person has a yersinia infection. The tests can be arranged by a doctor.

How serious is it?

The symptoms are unpleasant but yersiniosis does not usually cause a severe or long lasting illness. A person is normally fully recovered within 3 weeks.

How do you get Yersiniosis?

- From eating undercooked pork or pork products.
- From handling raw pork.
- From drinking unpasteurised (raw) milk.
- From drinking water from rivers, streams, shallow wells or roof rainwater that has been contaminated by infected animals and people.
- From not washing hands after touching animals and birds (especially pets and farm animals) that have had diarrhoea.

What about staying away from early childhood centres, school or work?

Food handlers, early childhood workers, and some healthcare workers must not return to work until they have been free of symptoms for 2 days.

Children must not return to early childhood centres (this includes kindergartens, playcentres, kohanga reo) or schools until they have been free of symptoms for 2 days.

Anyone else can go back to work as long as they do not have symptoms.

Is there any treatment?

People with yersiniosis usually get better without any specific treatment. Antibiotics may be prescribed for severe illness. It is always important to drink lots of fluids when you have diarrhoea. This is especially important for children who are more likely to get dehydrated than adults.

Remember

- **Always wash and dry hands thoroughly** after going to the toilet, changing a child's nappies, before and after preparing any food (especially raw pork) or touching any animals or animal faeces.
- Dispose of animal faeces in a sanitary manner
- Don't drink unpasteurised (raw) milk.
- Always thoroughly cook pork and pork products (until the juices run clear).
- Keep raw meat separate from cooked foods during storage and preparation.
- Wash chopping boards and any utensils thoroughly after preparing food, especially pork.
- Always treat or boil drinking water from rivers, streams, shallow wells or the roof. Contact Regional Public Health or the local council if you need more information.
- Don't go swimming in a pool if you have diarrhoea.
- Don't donate blood for 12 weeks after recovering from Yersinia infection.
- **Food handlers, child care workers, some health care workers and children who attend school or early childhood centres must not return until they have been free of symptoms for at least 2 days.**
- **Anyone else can go back to work as long as they do not have symptoms.**
- **Wash and dry hands frequently and thoroughly.**