

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

June 4, 2018

Dear Colleague:

As Florida approaches the warm summer months when swimming activities are more common and when the majority of the primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) cases are diagnosed, the Florida Department of Health (the Department) would like to remind physicians about the availability of the investigational drug, miltefosine, for the treatment of infections caused by free living amebae. The infections include those caused by *Naegleria fowleri*, *Balamuthia mandrillaris* and *Acanthamoeba* species. Physicians who suspect they have a patient who has an infection due to free living amebae are directed to contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **immediately** at **770-488-7100**. Confirmatory testing or laboratory evidence of a free living amebae infection is not a prerequisite for contacting CDC. CDC physicians will offer direct consultation services and will coordinate the release of miltefosine for treatment. The drug can be delivered within hours of the initial consultation in most cases. Additional guidance regarding specimen collection, shipping instructions, and treatment recommendations are also available from CDC.

There have been 143 reported cases of PAM from 1962-2017, with four known survivors. The treatment regimen for three of the survivors included miltefosine.

Amebic encephalitis is a reportable disease in Florida and any suspected case needs to be reported to the county health department or state health department (850-245-4401) within one day. These types of infections should be considered for persons presenting with meningitis-like symptoms and a recent history of fresh water exposure. Early diagnosis and reporting are likely critical factors for the effectiveness of any medical treatment regimen. Thank you for your help in keeping our communities safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Carina Blackmore, DVM, PhD, Dipl ACVPM
Division of Disease Control & Health Protection
Director
State Epidemiologist