

August 1, 2023

Good afternoon everyone,

Hope you are having a safe & wonderful summer so far! July's Community Update addresses several topics to include:

- The extremely high heat – the #1 weather related cause of death

- Animal bites – animal bites increase in the warmer months due to people being out more

- Malaria – CDC recently sent out a HAN alert of cases identified in Florida and Texas.

None reported in Kentucky.

- Pertussis – The Kentucky Dept for Public Health sent out a HAN alert for cases identified in Kentucky.

- Alpha-Gal Syndrome – Another tick borne illness that can be life threatening

Please see the attached document that addresses each of these issues.

Thank you to our own Regional Epidemiologist, Blake Johnson, for gathering the information and putting this together for us!

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July 2023 Update






July is Extreme Heat Awareness Month!



Heat Emergencies:

- **Stage 1:** Heat cramps
- **Stage 2:** Heat exhaustion
- **Stage 3:** Heatstroke

[Click here to learn about signs and symptoms of heat illness & injuries.](#)

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
<div>ACT FAST<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move to a cooler area• Loosen clothing• Sip cool water• Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve</div> <div>Dizziness Thirst Heavy Sweating Nausea Weakness</div>	<div>ACT FAST<div>CALL 911<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move person to a cooler area• Loosen clothing and remove extra layers• Cool with water or ice</div></div> <div>Confusion Dizziness Becomes Unconscious</div>
<small>Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.</small>	<small>Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.</small>
<div> Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!</div>	

[Click the image above to learn more about extreme heat safety.](#)

Extreme heat is the #1 weather-related cause of death.

Public Health Topics

Animal Bites

Animal bites increase in the warmer months due to people being outside more frequently. Any mammal that has not been vaccinated is at risk of contracting rabies. Rabies is a deadly virus that attacks the brain and spinal cord of an infected animal or person. If you are bitten by an animal, you should collect vaccine information from the owners, and follow-up with the Emergency Room if the skin is broken. If the animal is a wild animal, or there is no vaccine history, follow-up with the ER for rabies post-exposure and immunoglobulin infusions.

Rabies vaccination is a series of 4 doses and should be given as soon as possible. If you have questions about rabies vaccination, contact the Marshall County Health Department at 270-527-1496. While there has been no cases of rabies identified in Marshall County recently, Rabies is a disease that all precautions should be taken. For more information on Kentucky rabies testing visit: <https://www.vdl.uky.edu/>

Malaria

In June, CDC sent out a nationwide HAN alert to notify providers of locally acquired Malaria cases identified in Florida and Texas. As of July 24, 2023, 7 locally acquired cases have been identified in Sarasota Co., Florida and 1 locally acquired case in Cameron Co., Texas.

The risk of locally acquired malaria in the US is very low. But travelers to Florida and Texas should take precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Most cases diagnosed in the United States are imported from countries where the illness is endemic.

There have been no cases identified in Kentucky residents. Additional information can be found at CDC's website:

https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/new_info/2023/malaria_florida.html

Pertussis

On July 21, 2023, KDPH put out a state-wide HAN alert to providers of an increase in Pertussis (also known as whooping cough) cases within Kentucky, primarily in Central Kentucky. As of July 21st, there have been 18 cases identified since May 1, 2023. The majority of cases have been in unvaccinated children.

Due to the concern of community spread, KDPH issued the HAN alert with the following information:

- Consider pertussis in children with respiratory infections and adults with violent or persistent coughing.
- Report suspected or confirmed cases to the LHD within 1 business day.
- Ensure patients are up to date with routine vaccinations.

When testing for pertussis, serology for antibodies is widely available but is not generally recommended for primary diagnostic, due to variability and unknown clinical accuracy. Providers should collect a nasal pharyngeal swab or nasal wash to be tested using PCR methods for optimal results.

Bordetella parapertussis is similar to Pertussis but does not produce pertussis toxin, B. Pertussis is not reportable in Kentucky and post-exposure prophylaxis is not recommended.

For any questions regarding Pertussis, Rabies, Malaria or other reportable conditions, please call the Marshall County Health Department at 270-527-1496.

Marshall County Health Department

July 2023 Update

Alpha-Gal Syndrome

What is Alpha-gal Syndrome?

Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) is a serious, potentially life-threatening allergic condition. It is often called the red meat allergy or tick bite meat allergy since it occurs after a person has been bitten by a lone-star tick. While the lone-star tick is the suspected culprit, other ticks have not been ruled out to cause the allergic reaction.



How do I know if I have AGS?

AGS is diagnosed by an allergist or other healthcare provider through a detailed patient history, physical exam, and blood tests that check for specific antibodies to alpha-gal.

How do I prevent AGS?

The best way to prevent AGS is to prevent tick bites!

Before you go outdoors:

- Avoid grassy, brushy, and wooded areas, where ticks are commonly found.
- Walk in the center of the trails
- Treat clothing and gear with permethrin.

After you come indoors:

- Check your clothing for ticks
- Examine gear and pets for ticks
- Shower and check yourself thoroughly for ticks

If you find an attached tick:

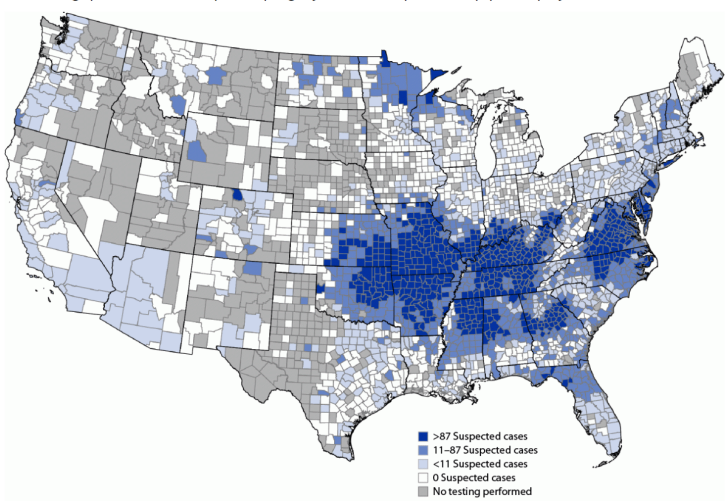
- Remove it immediately using appropriate removal techniques.

Why is AGS in the news lately?

CDC released an MMWR article on July 28th that highlighted a study conducted on Alpha-gal syndrome and where suspected cases are geographically. For further information on this study, please visit:

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7230a2.htm#F1_down

FIGURE. Geographic distribution of suspected alpha-gal syndrome cases* per 1 million population per year — United States, 2017–2021

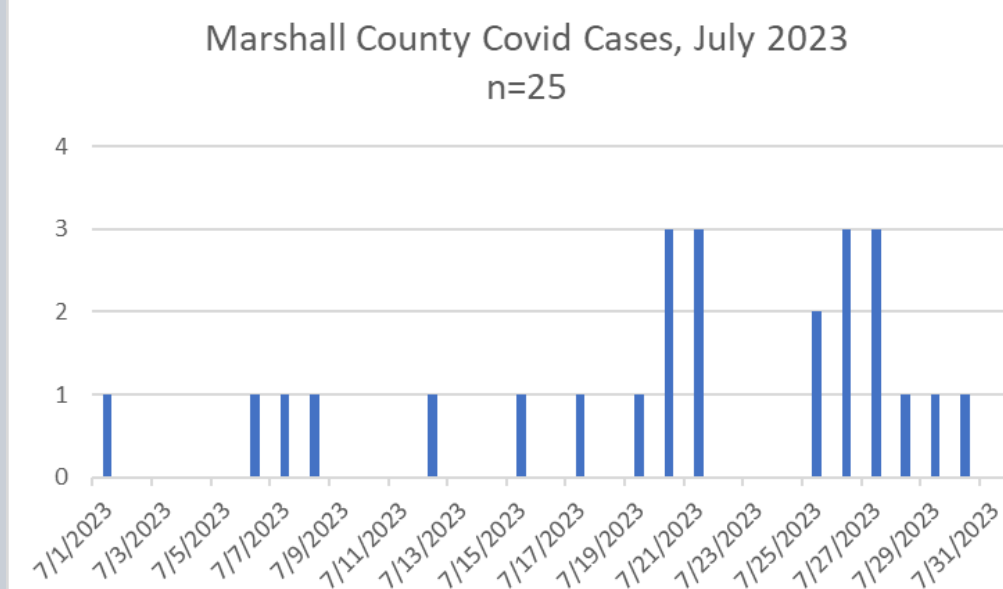


AGS & Public Health

AGS is not currently a nationally notifiable condition, nor is it included in the KY reporting statute. Because of this it is difficult to define the extent of the problem but the study has shown Kentucky to have a high amount of positive laboratory cases.

The study published in CDC'S MMWR highlighted that most diagnosis of AGS is mostly within non-Hispanic white populations, with higher education and higher incomes. This highlights a health equity gap that will need further examination.

Covid News



For any questions regarding Covid-19 or other reportable conditions, please call the Marshall County Health Department at 270-527-1496.