



DIRECTORATE
OF HEALTH

Chief Epidemiologist for Iceland

EPI-ICE

Volume 4. Issue 7-9. July – September 2008.

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SALMONELLOSIS FOLLOWING A HOTEL STAY ON THE GREEK ISLAND OF RHODES

From January to August 2008, 97 persons were diagnosed with salmonellosis according to information from the Department of Microbiology at Landspítali University Hospital. The estimated number of domestic infections was 21; 66 persons acquired the infection abroad, while the country of infection is unknown for 10 cases.

In late August, ten Icelandic travellers, who all had stayed at the same hotel on the Greek island of Rhodes in late July and early August, were diagnosed with *Salmonella Enteritidis* infection. Interviews with those infected revealed that others staying in the same hotel had also fallen ill with similar symptoms. Among the cases are college students who still have symptoms.

On 27 August, the Swedish health authorities reported an increased number of patients with salmonellosis. The patients

had just returned from Rhodes and most of them had stayed in the same hotel as the Icelandic salmonellosis cases. This increased number of infections, traced to the same hotel, has been reported to the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) and to the Greek health authorities for implementation of measures to stop the infection.

Those who travelled to Rhodes in August 2008 and have had symptoms compatible with gastrointestinal infections are encouraged to contact their physician, who will evaluate the need for sampling.

The main symptoms of salmonellosis are diarrhea, vomiting, fever and malaise. The majority recovers without medical treatment, but the infection can cause dehydration and can invade the blood. Patients with suspected salmonellosis are therefore advised to increase liquid intake and seek medical care in case of severe symptoms.

INFLUENZA IN THE WINTER 2008–2009. ONE CASE OF INFLUENZA B DIAGNOSED

Towards the end of August this year, a one-year old girl in the capital area was diagnosed with influenza B. Still, it is too early to assume that this means an early onset of the annual influenza because an outbreak usually does not start until several weeks after the first case has been diagnosed. Influenza vaccination is recommended as soon as the vaccine will be available.

The vaccines are expected to be available in Iceland by the end of September and health care institutions and other authorised bodies can place their orders for vaccines with

the distributor, Parlogis hf.

The Chief Epidemiologist recommends that the following groups at risk should be prioritised for influenza vaccinations:



Ten Icelandic travellers were diagnosed with Salmonella Enteritidis infection in late August. All stayed at the same hotel on the Greek island of Rhodes a few weeks earlier.

Towards the end of August, a one-year old girl in the capital area was diagnosed with influenza B.

- All individuals 60 years and older.
- All children and adults with chronic heart, lung, kidney and liver diseases, diabetes, malignant diseases and other immunocompromised patients. .
- Health care workers taking care of individuals belonging to the above risk groups .

The Chief Epidemiologist also emphasizes earlier recommendations for pneumococcal vaccination for the following groups:

- Individuals 60 years and older, every ten years.
- Individuals with asplenia and other immunocompromised patients, every five years.

NORDIC CONFERENCE ON HEALTH PREPAREDNESS TO BE HELD IN ICELAND 25 – 27 SEPTEMBER 2008

Each year a Nordic conference on health preparedness is held in one of the Nordic countries on behalf of ministries and institutions dealing with health security. Iceland has participated in the Nordic cooperation on health preparedness for disasters and crises since the autumn of 2001. At that time it was considered important to strengthen health security measures due to events following the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York. Other international incidents have lent support to the Nordic cooperation such as the SARS epidemic in 2003, the imminent influenza pandemic and the Tsunami in South-East Asia after Christmas in 2004.

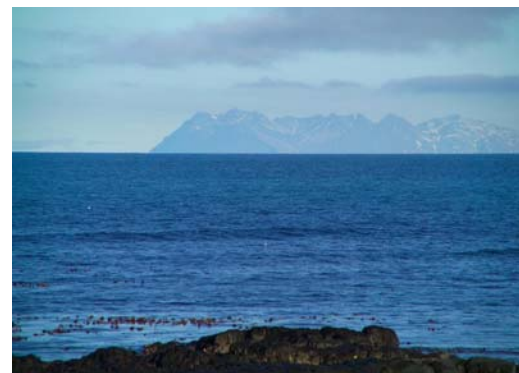
Health Security and Preparedness in the North Atlantic and Barents Sea

This time the conference will be held in Reykjavik in the end of September 2008. The theme of the conference will be health security and preparedness in the North Atlantic and the Barents Sea. The effect of climate change on the North and security-political aspects will be discussed as well as the health security of Nordic citizens stationed in foreign countries in times of catastrophes and

crisis. The Foreign Service will also introduce its Nordic cooperation on preparedness in this area. Another topic will be the impact of psychological stress on health.

As usual, the Nordic countries will present special incidents that have occurred in each country in the last 12 months, e.g. the earthquakes in the South of Iceland last spring.

In Iceland, the Chief Epidemiologist is responsible for organising this conference on behalf of the Icelandic Ministry of Health.



The theme of the conference will be health security and preparedness in the North Atlantic and the Barents Sea. Photo: FreeFoto.com