

NEWS RELEASE

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CDC Confirms North Dakota Case of Acute Flaccid Myelitis

BISMARCK, ND – A person with a previous diagnosis of possible acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) by the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has been confirmed as a case of AFM by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The child was hospitalized in October and has been released. This is the first case of AFM confirmed in North Dakota.

AFM is a rare but serious condition that affects the nervous system, causing muscles in the arms and legs to weaken. It can be a complication following a viral infection, but environmental and genetic factors may also contribute to its development. Other symptoms include:

- Neck weakness or stiffness
- Drooping eyelids or a facial droop
- Difficulty swallowing or slurred speech

Many infected individuals have reported respiratory illness in the week prior to the onset of AFM symptoms. It is important to note that although colds are common this time of year, developing AFM is extremely rare. If people notice potential symptoms of AFM, (for example, if someone is not using an arm) they should contact their health care provider as soon as possible.

Because AFM can develop because of a viral infection, the NDDoH recommends everyone take basic steps to avoid infections and stay healthy:

- Wash your hands frequently to limit your exposure to germs.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Stay up-to-date on vaccinations.

For more information on AFM, visit www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/afm-surveillance.html or contact the NDDoH at 701.328.2378.

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