

Health Advisory: Health Advisory: NTM Infections Following hCG Injections

Minnesota Department of Health Dec 27, 2016 11:00 CST

Action Steps:

Local and tribal health departments: Please forward to hospitals and clinics in your jurisdiction.

Hospital and clinics: Please forward to internists, family physicians, dermatologists, infectious disease specialists, laboratorians, emergency departments, urgent care clinics, and infection preventionists.

Health care providers:

- Watch for patients with signs and symptoms of skin and soft tissue infection that develop following injection of hCG (human chorionic gonadotropin) or injection of other substances to aid in weight loss.
- Test for nontuberculous mycobacterium (NTM) skin infection in identified patients by collecting a punch biopsy for mycobacterial tissue culture, or refer the patient to another provider for this testing.
- Consult your laboratory for specimen collection instructions and notify the laboratory that testing for NTM skin infection is requested.
- Report suspect cases to MDH at 1-877-676-5414 (toll-free) or 651-201-5414.

Summary

Minnesota Department of Health is working with the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy, CDC, and FDA to investigate a multi-state outbreak of skin and soft tissue infections associated with hCG injections.

MDH has notified CDC of a cluster of skin and soft tissue infections in 4 patients who had self-administered injections of hCG obtained from weight loss clinics. CDC had also received notification from another state health department of a patient with a similar infection who also self-administered hCG injections for weight loss. NTM infections were confirmed in 3 of the 5 patients. All of these hCG products likely originated from a single compounding pharmacy. At this time, it is not known where the contamination occurred.

Recommendations

1. The possibility of NTM infection should be considered for patients with skin and soft tissue infections related to hCG injections or other weight loss injections.
2. Have a low threshold for testing for NTM skin infection by performing a skin punch biopsy or referring the patient for such testing.
3. It is important to request culture of the skin tissue for NTM and to notify the laboratory to look for NTM skin infection so that appropriate culture conditions are used for skin specimens.
4. A second punch biopsy specimen could be sent for histological examination; if performed notify laboratory that NTM skin infection is suspected.
5. Swabs of skin lesions or drainage are not adequate samples to for NTM testing.
6. If you suspect that exposure to a hCG injection may have led to a patient infection please notify MDH at 651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414.

A copy of this HAN is available in PDF and Word format at www.health.state.mn.us/han/.

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