



## Reporting an Outbreak or Disease Cluster

### What is an Outbreak?

An "outbreak" is occurring when the baseline or expected rate of an illness has been surpassed within a specific time, place or group of people. Outbreaks can be caused by a variety of pathogens and can be transmitted person-to-person or via a common source, resulting in mild or serious illness. There is no minimum number of cases that constitutes an outbreak; it depends on the pathogen and its baseline occurrence in the population.

### When Should I Report?

Outbreaks should be reported when an increase in illness leads local public health personnel to:

- a) identify cases,
- b) seek causes, and/or
- c) institute control measures

Laboratory confirmation is not required for reporting. Knowing when to report requires professional judgment. When you're in doubt, report the outbreak but know that Navy public health authorities are most interested in disease clusters exhibiting the following:

- Severe illnesses
- Rapid rise in cases
- Cases limited to a specific group
- Highly infectious organism requiring rapid implementation of control measures
- Potential to affect mission readiness
- Control measures that are invasive, involve mass prophylaxis, or are resource intensive
- Potential to attract media attention or generate public concern
- Illnesses indicative of a public health emergency
- Vaccine-preventable illnesses in a highly vaccinated population

### How do I Report?

Report outbreaks to the nearest NEPMU as soon as possible by the most expedient means possible (phone, satellite phone, naval message, etc.). Shore-based Navy Medical Departments and others with reliable internet connectivity should also report outbreaks into DRSi.

- ✓ For information on DRSi including how to get an account, go to <http://go.usa.gov/xx2Bx>
- ✓ For Navy regulations and technical manuals on reporting, go to: <http://go.usa.gov/cSSQ3>
- ✓ For training on outbreak reporting, visit our archived disease surveillance trainings at <http://go.usa.gov/xx2XV>

