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Waterborne Disease Outbreak  
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NOTE:  
A surveillance case definition is a set of uniform criteria used to define a disease for public health surveillance. Surveillance case definitions enable public health officials to classify and count cases consistently across reporting jurisdictions. Surveillance case definitions are not intended to be used by healthcare providers for making a clinical diagnosis or determining how to meet an individual patient’s health needs.  
CSTE Position Statement(s)  
09-ID-02  
Background  
A waterborne disease outbreak is an incident in which two or more epidemiologically-linked persons experience a similar illness after exposure to the same water source and epidemiologic evidence implicates the water as the likely source of the illness.  
Clinical Description  
Symptoms of illness depend upon etiologic agent.  
Laboratory Criteria For Diagnosis  
Depends upon etiologic agent.  
Case Classification  
Confirmed  
Any outbreak of an infectious disease, chemical poisoning or toxin-mediated illness where water is indicated as the source by an epidemiological investigation  
Comments  
The implicated water in these waterborne disease outbreaks may be drinking water, recreational water, water not intended for drinking (e.g., water used for agricultural purposes or in a cooling tower) or water of unknown intent. The route of exposure may be ingestion, inhalation, intranasal, or contact. The agent associated with the waterborne disease outbreak may be a microbe, chemical, or toxin. Water testing to demonstrate contamination or identify the etiologic agent is preferred, but not required for inclusion. Chemicals (including disinfection byproducts) in drinking water or in recreational water that cause health effects either through water exposure or by volatilization leading to poor air quality are included. Reports of waterborne disease outbreaks received through the National Outbreak Reporting System (NORS) are captured in the Waterborne Disease and Outbreak Surveillance System (WBDOSS).  
Although not reported through NORS, the WBDOSS also accepts single cases of chemical exposure, wound infection and other illnesses, (e.g.,  
Naegleria  
infections) that are epidemiologically linked to water exposure as well as aquatic facility-related health events (e.g., chemical mixing accidents or air quality problems). However, these single cases or aquatic facility-related health events are not reported or analyzed as waterborne disease outbreaks.  
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National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)  
NNDSS receives and shares case data from state, local, and territorial health departments to help public health monitor, control, and prevent serious diseases.  
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