



Date: March 25, 2024

BCD 2024-01

To: Wisconsin Local Health Departments, Tribal Health Agencies, Health Care Providers, and Infection Preventionists

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Invasive *Cronobacter* Infection Among Infants is Now a Reportable Condition in Wisconsin

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Summary

- Starting May 1, 2024, all cases of invasive *Cronobacter* infections among Wisconsin infants (less than 12 months old) are reportable to DHS.
- This change will bring *Cronobacter* reportability in alignment with its status as a nationally notifiable disease.

Background

Invasive *Cronobacter* infections among infants is rare but can lead to severe illness, including necrotizing enterocolitis, sepsis, and meningitis, when it occurs. [The case fatality rate](#) in infants with sepsis or meningitis may be as high as 40% worldwide. [Laboratory-based surveillance](#) suggests that the incidence of invasive *Cronobacter* infection among infants in the U.S. is estimated to be 0.49 cases per 100,000 infants, or approximately 19–20 cases annually although cases are likely underreported. While the disease has received national attention due to its association with consumption of powdered infant formula (PIF), *Cronobacter* lives in the environment and has also been detected in water, presenting the possibility for other avenues of transmission as well.

Invasive *Cronobacter* infections among infants became a nationally notifiable disease condition effective January 1, 2024. Until that time, invasive *Cronobacter* infection among infants was not a nationally notifiable condition and was reportable in very few health jurisdictions nationwide. Therefore, standardized epidemiologic information has not been available to ascertain true disease burden or inform prevention efforts.

The purpose of this memo is to notify all clinical, laboratory and public health partners of new requirements for reporting invasive *Cronobacter* infection among Wisconsin infants.

The goals of invasive *Cronobacter* infection surveillance among infants include:

- Identifying risk factors for pathogen transmission.
- Prompt outbreak detection to interrupt transmission and inform control measures.
- Accurately estimating disease incidence and burden.
- Ascertaining effective prevention and control measures.

Reporting

Appendix A of [Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 145](#) states “any illness caused by an agent that is foreign, exotic or unusual to Wisconsin, and that has public health implications” is a reportable condition. Therefore, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services will include invasive *Cronobacter* infections among infants as a new category II reportable condition for which general powers under [Wis. Stat. ch. 252](#) and [Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 145](#) apply.

For specific information about the invasive *Cronobacter* infection among infants case definition and Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) reporting requirements, see the [Cronobacter Case Reporting and Investigation Protocol \(P-03586\)](#).

Outbreaks of any communicable disease, including *Cronobacter*, are [category I](#) reportable conditions.

References

- A. Kimberlin DW, ed. *Serious Neonatal Bacterial Infections Caused by Enterobacteriaceae (Including Septicemia and Meningitis)*. In: *Red Book: 2021-2024 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 32nd ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021: 311–315.
- B. Kimberlin DW, ed. *Transmission of Infectious Agents via Human Milk*. In: *Red Book: 2021-2024 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 32nd ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021: 109–115.
- C. Kimberlin DW, ed. *Appendix V: Prevention of Infectious Disease From Contaminated Food Products*. In: *Red Book: 2021-2024 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 32nd ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021: 1037–1040.
- D. Kimberlin DW, ed. *Appendix VI: Clinical Syndromes Associated With Foodborne Diseases*. In: *Red Book: 2021-2024 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 32nd ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021: 1041–1047.
- E. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#)
- F. [Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists \(CSTE\) position statement \(full text\)](#)
- G. [Summary of U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Strategy to Help Prevent *Cronobacter sakazakii* Illnesses Associated with Consumption of Powdered Infant Formula](#)