Appendix B: Provincial Case Definitions for Reportable Diseases

Disease: Tetanus

Revised January 2014
Tetanus

1.0 Provincial Reporting

Confirmed cases of disease

2.0 Type of Surveillance

Case-by-case

3.0 Case Classification

3.1 Confirmed Case

Clinical evidence of illness (see section 5.0) without other apparent medical cause with or without isolation of Clostridium tetani (C. tetani) and with or without history of injury.

4.0 Laboratory Evidence

4.1 Laboratory Confirmation

There are no laboratory findings characteristic of tetanus.

4.2 Approved/Validated Tests

There is no diagnostic laboratory test for tetanus. Diagnosis is determined by clinical findings.

Note: Reactive Anti-Tetanus Toxoid Immunoglobulin G (IgG) by the enzyme immunoassay (EIA) method does not provide proof of protection against tetanus.

Consult with the laboratory about appropriate specimens and testing methodology.

4.3 Indications and Limitations

- Detection of C. tetani toxin should not be considered among the list of laboratory methods for confirmation of tetanus since this assay is not available or in use.
- Attempts to culture C. tetani are associated with poor yield, and a negative culture does not rule out disease. C. tetani is recovered from the wound in only 30% of tetanus cases.
- A positive culture does not confirm disease; C. tetani can be isolated from cases who do not have tetanus.
- A protective serum antitoxin concentration should not be used to exclude the diagnosis of tetanus. Tetanus can occur in the presence or absence of ‘protective’ levels of antitoxin.

5.0 Clinical Evidence

Clinical illness is characterized by acute onset of hypertonia and/or painful muscular contractions (usually of the muscles of the jaw and neck), and generalized muscle spasms without other apparent medical cause.
6.0 ICD Code(s)

6.1 ICD-10 Code(s)
A35 Tetanus

6.2 ICD-9/ICD-9CM Code(s)
037 Tetanus

7.0 Comments
N/A

8.0 Sources


9.0 Additional Resources

For further information about human diagnostic testing, contact the Public Health Ontario Laboratories or refer to the Public Health Ontario Laboratory Services webpage: http://www.publichealthonline.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/default.aspx.
### 10.0 Document History

#### Table 1: History of Revisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Date</th>
<th>Document Section</th>
<th>Description of Revisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>New template.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sections 9.0 Additional Resources and 10.0 Document History Added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Confirmed Case</td>
<td></td>
<td>Changed from “Clinically compatible signs and symptoms with or without evidence of injury: Without laboratory evidence and without other apparent medical cause OR With isolation of Clostridium tetani from wound site” to “Clinical evidence of illness (see section 5.0) without other apparent medical cause with or without isolation of Clostridium tetani (C. tetani) and with or without history of injury”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Laboratory Confirmation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Changed from “The following will constitute a confirmed case Tetanus: Positive C. tetani Culture” to “There are no laboratory findings characteristic of tetanus”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Approved/ Validated Tests</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Standard culture for C. tetani” deleted. “There is no diagnostic laboratory test for tetanus. Diagnosis is determined by clinical findings. Note: Reactive Anti-Tetanus Toxoid Immunoglobulin G (IgG) by the enzyme immunoassay (EIA) method does not provide proof of protection against tetanus” added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Indications and Limitations</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Confirmation of causative agent is infrequently made by culture” deleted. Second to fourth bullet points added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td>“A negative test does not exclude a diagnosis of tetanus” deleted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0 Sources</td>
<td></td>
<td>Updated.</td>
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</tbody>
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