

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

Plague: Information for Public Health Officials

Bacteria

Unique Epidemiological Characteristics

- ▶ No natural reservoir in West Virginia
- ▶ A newly reported case should be urgently investigated considering:
 - ▶ travel to endemic area
 - ▶ importation of and exposure to an ill animal
 - ▶ BT
- ▶ Incubation: 1-6 days by inhalation
- ▶ Person-to-person transmission via droplets
- ▶ Mortality: 100% without therapy - *Dire emergency*
- ▶ Environmental: bacteria is NOT long-lasting in the environment
- ▶ Prophylaxis: effective with ciprofloxacin, doxycycline
- ▶ Treatment: effective if begun early with streptomycin, gentamicin > cipro/doxy

Laboratory confirmation

- ▶ Screening tests can be done by a hospital lab; confirmation by OLS

Employee health considerations

- ▶ Exposed employees should be offered prophylaxis
- ▶ Droplet precautions; employees who will have face-to-face contact with plague victims should be supplied with surgical masks

Lifesaving interventions - in order:

- ▶ Recognition / reporting / case-finding (fever or cough in the setting of an known outbreak of plague) + early and appropriate therapy
- ▶ Droplet isolation of cases
- ▶ Contact tracing and prophylaxis
- ▶ Collect and analyze risk information to identify source AND identify the exposed population to be offered prophylaxis and placed under surveillance.
- ▶ Susceptibility testing; dissemination of susceptibility results

Training considerations

- ▶ Physicians: recognition / treatment / reporting
- ▶ ICPs: reporting, active surveillance procedures
- ▶ Local health departments, regional epidemiologists: investigation
- ▶ IDEP / DSDC / BPH: employee health / investigation / priorities for control