



Health, Housing & Community Services Department
Public Health Officer Unit
Communicable Disease Prevention & Control Program

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Health Alert

Outbreak of *Aeromonas* Skin Infections

August 25, 2023

Outbreak of *Aeromonas* Skin Infections Associated with a Mud-Based Adventure Race, Sonoma County - August 2023

Background:

Sonoma Department of Health Services (SDHS), in coordination with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), is investigating an outbreak of skin and soft tissue infections (SSTIs) associated with Tough Mudder ([Tough Mudder USA | Mud Run & Obstacle Race](#)), an adventure race involving extensive exposure to mud, held at the Sonoma Raceway on August 19 and 20, 2023.

As of August 23, 2023, SDHS has received complaints from race participants experiencing SSTIs (most frequently described as a pustular rash), along with other symptoms such as fever and headache. Multiple wound cultures have yielded *Aeromonas*. Antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) to date has indicated that the *Aeromonas* isolated from patients are pan-susceptible, including to ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole.

Aeromonas are gram-negative bacteria that grow in freshwater and marine environments and can cause wound infections ranging from mild cellulitis to necrotizing fasciitis. *Aeromonas* strains may be resistant to antibiotics commonly used to treat SSTIs caused by other bacteria. In addition, *Aeromonas* infections have been associated with gastroenteritis, sepsis, and involvement of multiple extraintestinal sites.

Aeromonas is not transmitted from person to person, and there is no ongoing risk to the public. SDHS is conducting an environmental review of the race site to determine potential sources of contamination. The immediate priority is to ensure that any ill persons associated with this event receive proper treatment. Tough Mudder event organizers, in coordination with SDHS, have sent a Health Advisory directly to event participants. Participants are known to reside in multiple jurisdictions and are not only Sonoma County residents.

Action Requested:

Healthcare providers caring for patients linked to this outbreak should strongly consider obtaining wound cultures and performing antimicrobial susceptibility testing to guide antibiotic therapy. If treatment is warranted, initial empiric treatment should cover *Aeromonas*, as well as other bacteria that commonly cause SSTIs.

Complete and submit a [Confidential Morbidity Report \(CMR\)](#) reporting as "Unusual/Other" with a note the patient participated in the Tough Mudder event to City of Berkeley Communicable Disease via fax (510-981-5345) or secure email (COBCD@berkeleyca.gov).

Please distribute to all providers and staff in your practice