



## ***Mycoplasma pneumoniae* Infections Increasing in New Jersey**

Date: October 30, 2024

**Public Health Message Type:**    Alert    Advisory    Update    Information

**Intended Audience:**    All public health partners    Healthcare providers    Infection preventionists  
                                   Local health departments    Schools/child care centers    ACOs  
                                   Animal health professionals    Other:

### **Key Points or Updates:**

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) are observing an increase in reports of pneumonia. The proportion of patients discharged from emergency departments with a diagnosis of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*-associated pneumonia has been increasing across the United States and New Jersey. *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infections are typically mild, but can result in severe illness among vulnerable populations, including young children, older adults, and individuals with underlying health conditions.
2. Health care providers should consider *M. pneumoniae* as a possible cause of infection and test using nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) when indicated. Providers should ensure appropriate antibiotic therapy is administered. Macrolides are the first line of treatment for *M. pneumoniae* infections. Consider using tetracyclines or fluoroquinolones if a macrolide does not appear to be effective.
3. Early childcare, schools, long-term care facilities, and other congregate care settings should report suspected clusters or outbreaks to their [local health department](#). Individual cases of *M. pneumoniae* are not reportable in New Jersey.
4. Local health departments, schools, long-term care facilities, and other congregate care settings should promote [CDC core prevention strategies](#) to prevent respiratory illness, including practicing proper hand hygiene and covering coughs and sneezes.

### **Action Items:**

1. Healthcare providers should:
  - Consider *M. pneumoniae* as a possible cause of infection among those hospitalized with community-acquired pneumonia, especially children, older adults and patients with underlying health conditions. Providers should have increased suspicion of *M. pneumoniae* among patients who aren't clinically improving on antibiotics that are known to be ineffective against *M. pneumoniae*, such as beta-lactams.
  - Perform laboratory testing when *M. pneumoniae* infection is suspected, especially among those hospitalized with community-acquired pneumonia, especially children, older adults and patients with underlying health conditions, to ensure appropriate antibiotic therapy is administered. Consider swabbing both the throat and the nasopharynx to improve the

likelihood of detection in respiratory swab specimens. Nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) are the diagnostic method of choice for *M. pneumoniae* pneumonia.

- Consider using a second-line antibiotic regimen, such as fluoroquinolones or tetracyclines, to treat patients with suspected or confirmed *M. pneumoniae* infection who aren't improving on macrolides.
- Minimize the risk of antibiotic resistance by not prescribing antibiotics unless indicated by clinical and/or laboratory evidence.
- Use transmission-based precautions to reduce spread in healthcare settings. While *M. pneumoniae* is an atypical bacterium, core prevention strategies outlined in [CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidance](#) are effective.

2. K-12 Schools, and Early Care and Education Programs should:

- Monitor illness reports in students and staff. Notify their local health department if the school is experiencing an increase in cases that could signify an outbreak is occurring.
- Follow exclusion recommendations for acute respiratory illness as outlined in the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#).
- Follow recommendations in the NJDOH Communicable Disease Service's [Respiratory Virus Guidance for K-12 Schools, Youth Camps, and Early Care and Education Programs](#).

3. Local health departments should:

- Promote core prevention strategies outlined in [CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidance](#).
- Notify your Regional Epidemiologist about reported clusters or outbreaks.
- Work with your Regional Epidemiologist to coordinate specimen submission to the NJDOH Public Health Environmental Laboratories for testing, if needed.

**Contact Information:**

- Call the Communicable Disease Service at (609) 826-5964 during business hours.
- Email [CDS.COVSIC@doh.nj.gov](mailto:CDS.COVSIC@doh.nj.gov).

**References and Resources:**

- [CDC Mycoplasma Pneumoniae Infections Have Been Increasing](#)
- [CDC Clinical Care of Mycoplasma pneumoniae Infection](#)
- [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#)
- [NJDOH Respiratory Virus Guidance for K-12 Schools, Youth Camps, and Early Care and Education Programs](#)