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Division of Disease Control

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Health Alert

Investigation of Febrile Illnesses Following Invasive Procedures May 11, 2007

The Division of Disease Control, Philadelphia Department of Public Health (DDC) requests that health care facilities observe for and promptly report any unexplained increase in non-specific febrile illnesses following endoscopic or other invasive procedures.

During a two-week period beginning April 24th, routine follow-up phone calls by two unrelated Pennsylvania medical facilities to recently discharged patients identified a non-specific febrile illness characterized by fever, chills, and aches. The illness began 1.5-19 hours after endoscopy and lasted 1-3 days. The two medical facilities observed that the first patient reactions were noted one day after each location started using a newly received lot of propofol.

Similar illnesses, also associated with propofol use, have been reported from one Philadelphia health care facility and one New Jersey health care facility. However, no etiology has been confirmed at this time and causes other than propofol contamination are possible. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been informed of the possible association and investigation is in progress.

Health care professionals are asked to report similar illness in persons who have undergone invasive procedures such as endoscopy to DDC. DDC will communicate this information to the PA DOH and to FDA. To report a case, please call (215) 685-6742 during business hours; after hours please call (215) 686-1776 and ask to speak with the person on-call for Disease Control.