

Unexplained Respiratory Disease Outbreaks Work Group

CDC Can Provide Technical Expertise

Did you know CDC can provide support if you have a respiratory disease outbreak of unknown etiology? If you need help investigating your outbreak, you can work with CDC's Unexplained Respiratory Disease Outbreaks (URDO) work group.



When assistance is requested, the URDO work group will convene to discuss the outbreak.

How Can the URDO Work Group Help?

Because respiratory disease outbreaks can be caused by a variety of pathogens or toxins, determining the cause is often challenging yet critical to putting control measures in place. The URDO work group aims to help quickly figure out the cause so that outbreaks can be stopped.

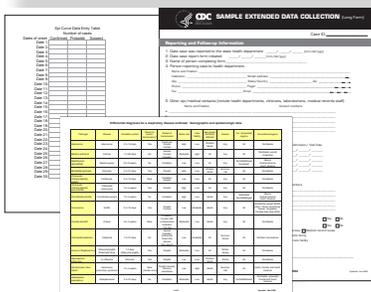
When a request for assistance is received from local, state, or international public health officials, the URDO work group convenes with them to discuss the possible causes for the outbreak, to provide technical expertise, and, as needed, to provide extensive, specialized resources available at CDC. The URDO work group can provide:

- Support for outbreak investigations (e.g., epidemiologic and pathogen-specific support)
- Testing of specimens for multiple viral, bacterial, and other pathogens where local capacity is limited or not available
- Recommendations for outbreak control measures

When Can the URDO Work Group Help?

The URDO work group primarily helps when there are outbreaks or clusters of respiratory illness of **unknown etiology**. Deciding when an outbreak warrants an investigation can be difficult. In general, an investigation should be considered for those outbreaks that are:

- Rapidly progressing
- Associated with severe or unusual disease manifestations/outcomes
- Occurring among a vulnerable population
- Associated with institutional settings
- Potentially caused by a bioterrorism agent
- Generating excessive public anxiety
- Of unknown etiology
- Potentially caused by a pathogen for which an intervention is available (e.g., vaccine)



Multiple tools for investigating unexplained respiratory disease outbreaks are available on the URDO website.

The group can also provide support for other outbreaks, such as those that are potentially due to more than a single pathogen but requiring further epidemiology and laboratory assistance. For outbreaks of known cause, the CDC emergency hotline (770-488-7100) can direct you to the appropriate group for assistance.

More information about when the URDO work group can help and additional resources for investigating outbreaks of unknown etiology are available at www.cdc.gov/urdo.

To contact the URDO work group, you can email URDOOutbreaks@cdc.gov (mailbox monitored M-F; 8 am–4 pm EST) or call the CDC emergency after-hours hotline at 770-488-7100.