

TN Health Alert Network Communication

Outbreak of Extensively Drug-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Associated with Artificial Tears

February 7, 2023

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory about infections with an extensively drug-resistant strain of Verona Integron-mediated Metallo- β -lactamase (VIM) and Guiana-Extended Spectrum- β -Lactamase (GES)-producing carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (VIM-GES-CRPA) in 12 states. Most patients reported using artificial tears, and the majority of patients reported using the over-the-counter product EzriCare Artificial Tears. No confirmed cases have yet been reported in Tennessee.

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers

- Immediately discontinue using EzriCare Artificial Tears pending additional guidance from CDC and FDA.
- Quarantine any unopened bottles of EzriCare Artificial in the event additional FDA testing is requested.
- Advise patients who used EzriCare Artificial Tears to monitor for signs and symptoms of infection. Perform culture and antimicrobial susceptibility testing when clinically indicated.
- Healthcare providers treating patients for keratitis or endophthalmitis should ask patients if they have used EzriCare Artificial Tears. Providers should consider performing culture and antimicrobial susceptibility testing to help guide therapy if patients report use of this product.
- Healthcare providers treating VIM-GES-CRPA infections should consult with a specialist knowledgeable in the treatment of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to determine the best treatment option.
- Place patients infected or colonized with VIM-GES-CRPA and admitted to acute care settings in isolation and use Contact Precautions. For residents of skilled nursing facilities who are infected or colonized with VIM-GES-CRPA, use Enhanced Barrier Precautions if the resident does not have an indication for Contact Precautions.
- At this time, CDC does not recommend testing patients who have used this product and who are not experiencing any signs or symptoms of infection.
- Please report suspected cases and direct questions to HAI.health@tn.gov. Please submit any CRPA positive isolates from ocular specimens or other CRPA positive isolates meeting the criteria outlined in the Detailed Laboratory Guidance to the TN State Public Health Lab. Detailed Laboratory Guidance can be found [here](#).

For more information, please see the CDC'S entire Health Advisory [here](#).