



## Public Health Notice

April 14, 2021

### Acute non-viral hepatitis of unknown etiology linked with an alkaline water product in Clark County, NV

#### **Situation**

The Southern Nevada Health District is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to investigate a potential link between severe acute non-viral hepatitis and the consumption of an alkaline water product called “Real Water” and other possible etiologies. Five cases were reported in children who presented to a hospital between November 10, 2020, and December 3, 2020. The children ranged in age from 7 months to 5 years. Initial signs and symptoms included vomiting, poor intake, and fatigue. Laboratory testing showed elevated hepatic transaminases, hyperbilirubinemia, coagulopathy, and a negative viral hepatitis serology panel. All patients required transfers to a pediatric tertiary-care specialty liver unit because of concerns for acute liver failure. All children recovered and were discharged home. Additional reports of similar illnesses in adults and children are under investigation.

Epidemiologic information to date supports that there is a strong link between these cases of acute non-viral hepatitis and Real Water alkaline water. Real Water, Inc. owns this brand of alkaline water and has headquarters in Mesa, Arizona. This product is available in 5 gallon, 3 gallon, 1 gallon, 1.5 liters, 1 liter, and 500 ml bottles, and Real Water concentrate. The 5 gallon product is sold via home delivery subscription in Clark County and regionally, while other products are available for purchase online and in stores nationwide. Real Water has issued a recall on their products. The FDA advises consumers, restaurants, and retailers not to drink, cook with, sell, or serve Real Water alkaline water until more information is known about the cause of the illnesses. Further, FDA advises that Real Water not be given to pets.

#### **Call for cases**

The Southern Nevada Health District requests that clinicians report patients with acute non-viral hepatitis of unknown etiology to the Southern Nevada Health District’s Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance. Please report current and historical cases.

- Phone: 702-759-1300
- Fax: 702-759-1414
- Report Online: <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/reportable-diseases/reportable-diseases-form/>

#### **Recommendations**

- Per FDA recommendations, counsel your patients (or their caregivers and guardians) to stop drinking, cooking with, or using Real Water until more is known about the cause of the illnesses.
- Maintain a high index of suspicion for non-viral hepatitis in your differential diagnosis of acute hepatitis in adults and children presenting with compatible clinical findings.
- Obtain a more detailed exposure history in patients when you suspect acute non-viral hepatitis, including Real Water use. Other possible etiologies associated with acute non-viral hepatitis include exposure to medications, contaminated water or food, dietary and herbal supplements, traditional or home remedies, wild-growing mushrooms and plants, and chemicals such as

- metals, solvents, paint thinners, or pesticides.
- Obtain early consultation with and/or referral to a gastroenterologist or infectious disease specialist for medical workup and management of patients with signs and symptoms of acute hepatitis.
  - Contact your local poison center (1-800-222-1222) for information on chemical or drug-induced liver toxicity and report any cases.
  - Educate your patients on the signs and symptoms of acute hepatitis due to any cause, which may include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, light-colored stools, joint pain, and yellow skin or eyes; and the importance of seeking medical care.

**For More Information**

- [FDA Investigation](#)
- FDA Case Reporting:
  - [MedWatch](#)
    - [Online](#)
  - [FDA Consumer Complaints](#)
- [Southern Nevada Health District FAQ](#)
- [American Association of Poison Control Centers](#)



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**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

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