

Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM)

{ Symptoms of AFM }



Difficulty moving the eyes or drooping eyelids



Facial droop or weakness



Difficulty swallowing or slurred speech



Acute onset of limb weakness

{ Causes of AFM }

AFM or similar neurologic conditions are likely caused by viruses, including enteroviruses. Most patients with AFM have a mild respiratory illness or fever consistent with a viral infection before they develop AFM. Possible causes for why some people develop AFM after viral infection while most recover include:

- Direct viral infection of the nerves that make the muscles move (motor neurons)
- Indirect viral infection that leads to an inflammatory response directed toward motor neurons
- Genetic factors that make certain children more susceptible than others

{ Diagnosing AFM }

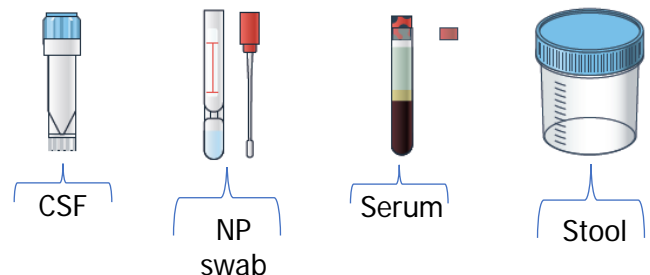
AFM is difficult to diagnose due to its similarity to other neurologic diseases, like transverse myelitis and Guillain-Barre syndrome.

Although clinical presentation is important, AFM is diagnosed by MRI, which may detect the presence of spinal cord lesions. Testing of clinical specimens may identify the causative agent.

{ Testing for AFM }

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) perform various tests on specimens collected from suspected AFM case-patients to search for potential causes of illness.

The following specimens are recommended to be collected as soon as possible in the course of illness:



{ Reporting AFM }

AFM is a reportable condition in Kansas. Once notified, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) will coordinate specimen submission to CDC and relay valuable case information to subject matter experts to assist with confirmation of AFM diagnosis.

Report all suspected AFM case-patients to the KDHE Epidemiology Hotline: