Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM) was made reportable in Alabama on August 4, 2018. Prior to that, potential cases were reported on a voluntary basis. Case counts will only be made available for those reported on or after August 4. AFM is a rare but serious condition. It affects the nervous system, specifically the area of spinal cord called gray matter, which causes the muscles and reflexes in the body to become weak. It has been linked to several viruses, environmental toxins, and genetic disorders.

Key Fact 1
CDC estimates that less than one in a million people in the United States will get AFM every year.

Key Fact 2
As of October 30, 2018, there are five Alabama residents under investigation for AFM. None have been confirmed by CDC’s subject matter experts.

Key Fact 3
It is not known what is causing the current national uptick in cases. However when specimens are available, they will be forwarded to the CDC for additional testing.

Key Fact 4
There is no specific treatment for AFM, but a doctor who specializes in treating brain and spinal cord illnesses (neurologist) may recommend certain interventions on a case-by-case basis.

Although we still do not know much about AFM, there are a few steps that individuals can take:

- Keep you and your child’s vaccinations up-to-date
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Use mosquito repellent and stay indoors at dusk and dawn, which is the prime period that mosquitos bite.