

Hepatitis C, Acute

Agent: Hepatitis C virus (HCV), a member of the Flavivirus family

Mode of Transmission: Hepatitis C is primarily spread when blood from someone infected with HCV enters the body of someone not infected, usually by passing through the skin. The most common means of HCV infection in the U.S. is injection drug use, including the sharing of needles, syringes, or other equipment used to inject drugs. Infection can also occur from needlestick injuries in health care settings, or by being born to an HCV-infected mother. Infrequently, the virus can be spread by sharing personal items contaminated with infectious blood (razors or toothbrushes), or by having sexual contact with someone infected with HCV. Before 1992, when blood screening for HCV became available, receipt of donated blood, blood products, and organs was a common means of transmission. This is now a rare occurrence.

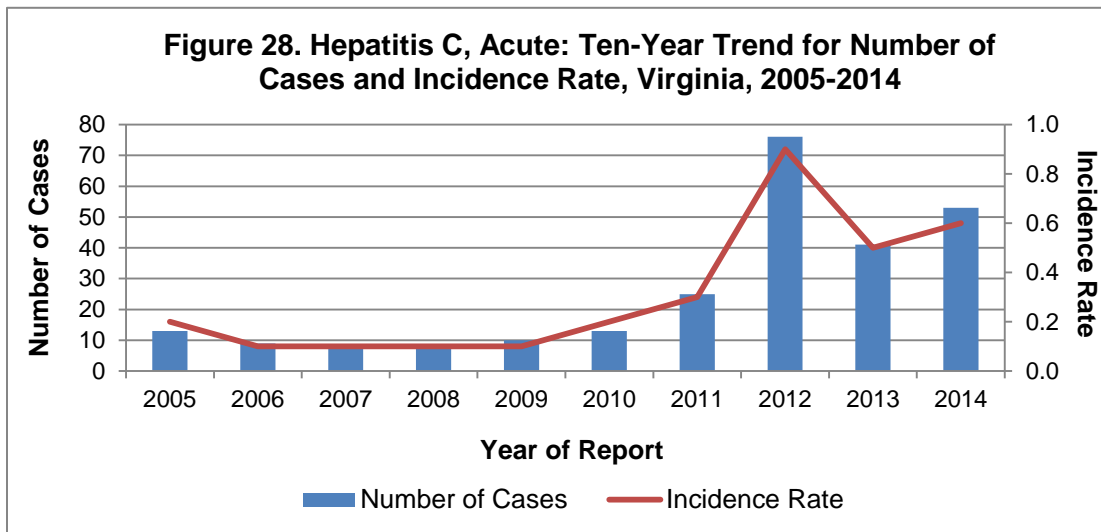
Signs/Symptoms: Often (70-80%) of the time, no symptoms occur. Fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, and jaundice are common symptoms when they do occur.

Prevention: Preventive measures include avoiding behaviors that can spread the disease, including sharing needles or other equipment used to inject drugs. Standard precautions and infection control practices should be followed during all medical and dental procedures. Any body piercing or tattooing should take place in a licensed facility. Sharing of personal items potentially contaminated with blood, such as razors and toothbrushes, should be avoided. Safe sexual practices and not donating blood if infected with HCV are also recommended.

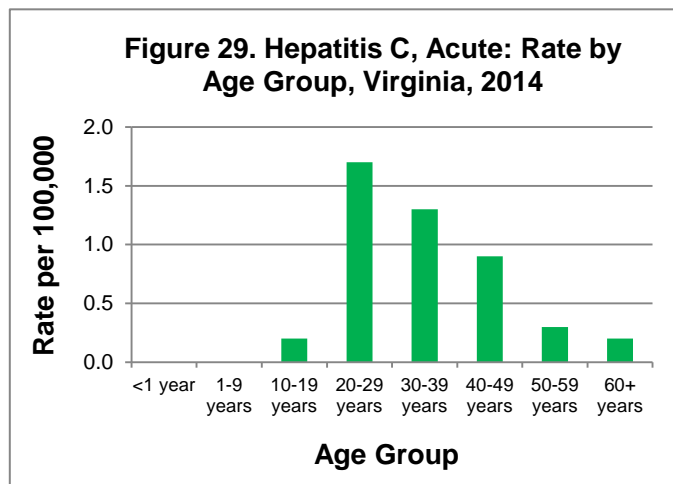
Other Important Information: HCV infections become chronic in 75-85% of cases. As people with chronic HCV infection age, they are at higher risk for developing chronic liver disease, such as cirrhosis and liver cancer. No vaccine is available to prevent HCV.

Hepatitis C, Acute: 2014 Data Summary	
Number of Cases:	53
5-Year Average Number of Cases:	33.0
% Change from 5-Year Average:	+61%
Incidence Rate per 100,000:	0.6

In 2014, 53 cases of acute hepatitis C infection were reported in Virginia, which represents a 29% increase from the 41 cases reported in 2013, and a 61% increase when compared to the 5-year average of 33.0 cases per year (Figure 28). The true incidence of this condition is likely to be increasing. However, incidence is difficult to assess because the data are also affected by changes that have been made in surveillance definitions, allowing cases to be counted based on laboratory criteria alone, leading to increased case counts while also acknowledging that cases are undercounted due to the large percentage of infections that go undetected because of the absence of symptoms.



The highest incidence rate (1.7 per 100,000) occurred in the 20-29 age group, followed by the 30-39 year age group (1.3 per 100,000). No cases of acute hepatitis C infection were reported in persons less than 10 years of age (Figure 29). Race was available for 64% of cases. Among those with a known race, all were white (0.6 per 100,000). Incidence of acute hepatitis C infection among males was 0.8 per 100,000, while the incidence among females was 0.5 per 100,000.



Acute hepatitis C incidence rates were highest in the southwest region (1.9 per 100,000), followed by the northwest region (1.5 per 100,000), central region (0.4 per 100,000), and northern region (0.1 per 100,000). No cases of acute hepatitis C were reported in the eastern region. Incidence rates by locality can be seen in the map below. Disease onset occurred throughout the year with the majority of cases (66%) having onset in the first and second quarters of the year. No acute hepatitis C outbreaks were reported in Virginia in 2014.

Risk factor data were available for 49% of the cases, with some individuals reporting more than one risk factor. Among persons providing risk factor information, 62% reported intravenous drug abuse. No deaths reported in 2014 were attributable to acute hepatitis C infection.

Hepatitis C, Acute, Incidence Rate by Locality Virginia, 2014

