

Listeriosis

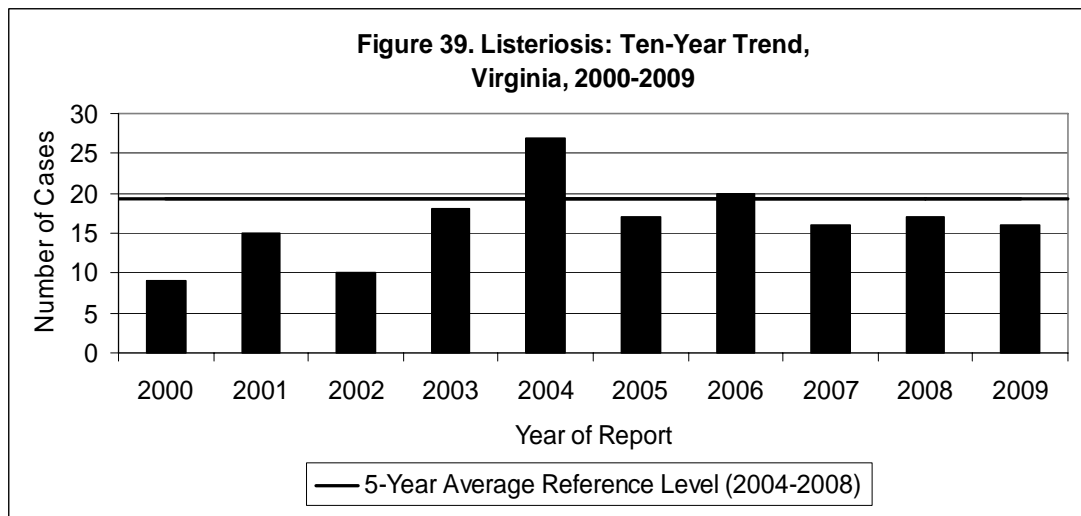
Agent: *Listeria monocytogenes* (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Ingestion of contaminated foods or beverages.

Signs/Symptoms: Typically, fever, headache, muscle aches, and sometimes gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. Infection can lead to serious disease, including shock and inflammation of the brain and the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord (i.e., meningitis). Among infected pregnant women, miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or neonatal infection may occur.

Prevention: Preventive measures include safe food preparation (e.g., thoroughly cooking raw food from animals and washing vegetables). High risk foods (e.g., unpasteurized dairy products) should be avoided.

Other Important Information: Persons at higher risk include pregnant women and their unborn babies and newborns, and persons with weakened immune systems.



The 16 cases of listeriosis reported in Virginia during 2009 represent an 18% decrease from the five-year average of 19.4 cases per year (Figure 39). The 60 year and older age group had the highest number of cases (7 cases, 0.5 per 100,000), but the highest rate occurred among infants (2 cases, 1.9 per 100,000). Other age groups had consistently lower incidence, with rates between 0.1 and 0.3 per 100,000. No cases occurred in the 1-9 year or 10-19 year age groups. Race information was missing for 25% of reported cases. Among cases with race reported, incidence rates were the same in the black and white populations (0.2 per 100,000). The rate was slightly higher for females than for males (0.3 and 0.1 per 100,000, respectively). Incidence rates among the regions ranged from 0.1 to 0.4 per 100,000, with the highest rate in the southwest and central regions (0.4 per 100,000). Cases occurred throughout the year, with peak activity (38% of cases) occurring in the second quarter. Five (31%) of the reported cases were associated with pregnancy, including three pregnant females and two neonates aged less than one month. Among cases reported in 2009, two deaths were attributed to listeriosis. Both deaths occurred in adults from the central region.