

Listeriosis

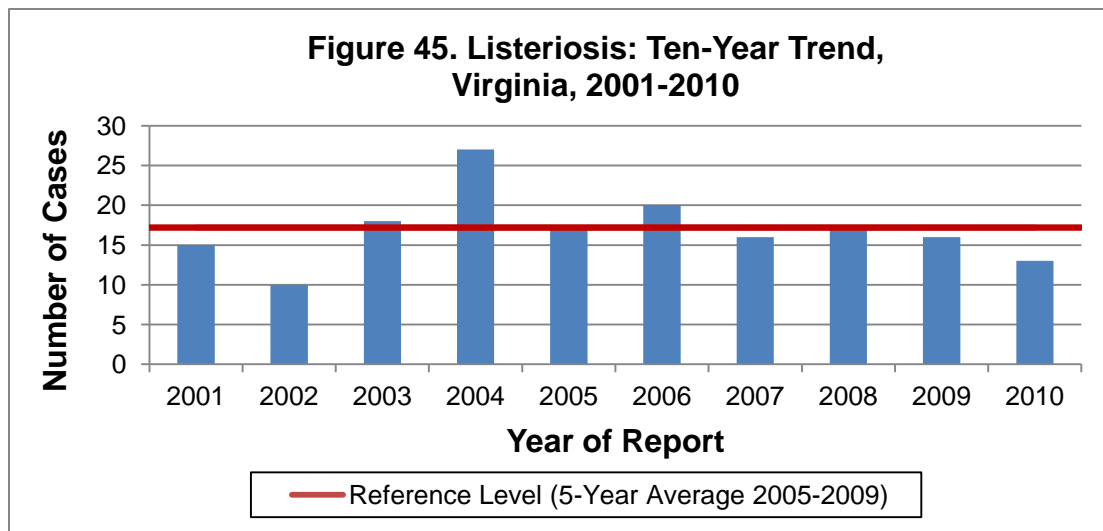
Agent: *Listeria monocytogenes* (bacteria)

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 13 cases of listeriosis reported in Virginia during 2010 represent a 24% decrease from the five-year average of 17.2 cases per year (Figure 45). 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 (1 case, 0.9 per 100,000). Other age groups had consistently lower incidence, with no cases in the 1-9, 10-19 and 40-49 year age groups and rates between 0.1 and 0.3 per 100,000 in the remaining age groups. Rates were similar in the black and white populations (0.1 and 0.2 per 100,000, respectively) and among females and males (0.1 and 0.2 per 100,000 respectively). Incidence rates among the regions ranged from a low in the northern region, where no cases occurred, to a high of 0.4 per 100,000 in the southwest region. This region has experienced the highest rate of listeriosis cases in four of the last 5 years. Cases occurred throughout the year, with more cases occurring in the last two quarters of the year (69%) than in the first two quarters (31%). Three of the reported cases (23%) were associated with pregnancy, including two pregnant females and one neonate aged less than one month.