

## Listeriosis

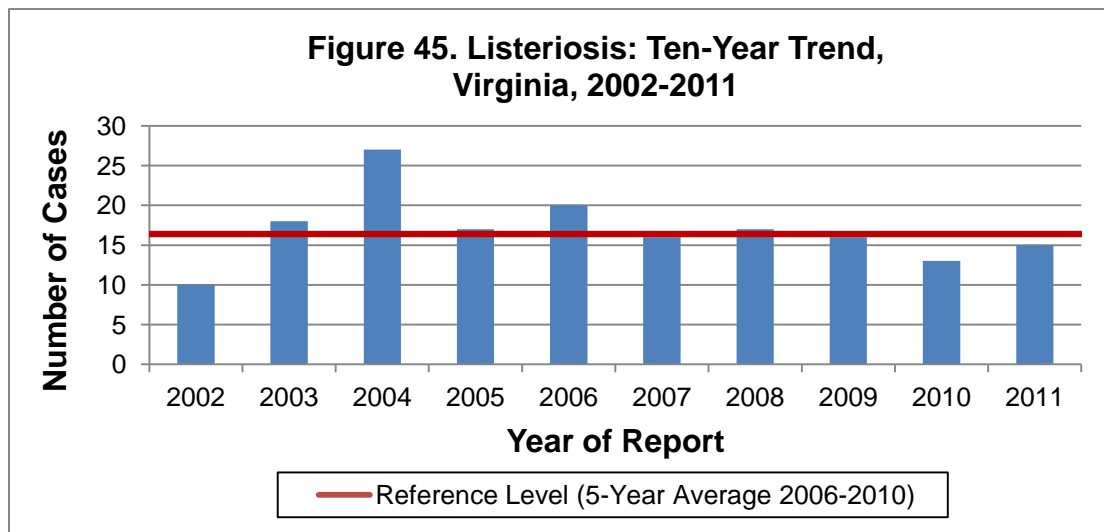
Agent: *Listeria monocytogenes* (bacteria)

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 or reheating food from animal sources and washing raw 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.



Fifteen cases of listeriosis were reported in Virginia during 2011. This is slightly higher than the 13 cases reported in 2010, and similar to the five-year average of 16.4 cases per year (Figure 45). The 60 year and older age group had the most cases, with 10, and an incidence rate of 0.7 per 100,000. However, the highest rate occurred among infants (1 case, 1.0 per 100,000). Other age groups had significantly lower incidence, with no cases in the 1-9, 10-19, and 20-29 year age groups. Rates were similar in the black and white populations (0.3 and 0.2 per 100,000, respectively) and among females and males (0.3 and 0.1 per 100,000 respectively). Incidence rates among the regions ranged from a low in the southwest region, where no cases occurred, to a high of 0.3 per 100,000 in the northern and eastern regions. Although cases occurred throughout the year, 60% were reported during the third quarter, with a peak in July. One reported case was associated with pregnancy, and occurred in a neonate aged less than one month.