

Yersiniosis

Agent: *Yersinia* species (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Ingestion of contaminated foods, particularly raw or incompletely cooked pork products and unpasteurized milk, or contaminated surface or well water, or by direct or indirect contact with infected people or animals.

Signs/Symptoms: Vary depending on age, but may include fever, abdominal pain, and bloody diarrhea.

Prevention: Preventive measures include safe food preparation and pasteurization of dairy products. People handling pork intestines should wash their hands and environmental surfaces thoroughly after contact with raw meat and should not handle their young infant, the infant's toys, bottles or pacifiers until hands are washed thoroughly.

Other Important Information: Infection most often occurs from eating contaminated food, especially raw or undercooked pork products including pork intestines (chitterlings). Children are infected more often than adults. While most infections occur during the winter months, this predominance is believed to be related to the preparation of chitterlings for the holidays, and not to outdoor temperatures.

Eleven cases of yersiniosis were reported in Virginia during 2009. This is 21% fewer cases than the 14 reported in 2008, and slightly less than the five-year average of 12.4 cases per year. The highest incidence among age groups was reported in infants (2.9 per 100,000), followed by the 30-39 year age group (0.3 per 100,000). Race was not reported for 36% of the cases. Among those with a reported race, rates were slightly higher in the black population than the white population (0.3 and 0.1 per 100,000, respectively). Incidence among males and females was comparable (0.1 and 0.2 per 100,000, respectively). Cases occurred in all regions, and incidence rates by region ranged from 0.1 to 0.2 per 100,000. Although cases are expected to be concentrated during the winter months, only four (36%) of the 11 cases occurred during the November through January period.