

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.

Thirteen cases of yersiniosis were reported in Virginia during 2010. This is an 18% increase from the 11 cases reported in 2009, and similar to the five-year average of 12.6 cases per year. The highest incidence rate was among the 1-9 year age group (1.0 per 100,000), followed by the 10-19 and 60 year and over age groups (each with 0.1 per 100,000). Race was not reported for 38% of yersiniosis cases in 2010. Among those with reported race, incidence of disease was slightly higher in the black population than the white population (0.3 and 0.1 per 100,000, respectively). The rate of incidence of yersiniosis was similar for males and females (0.1 and 0.2 per 100,000, respectively). By region, the southwest region had the highest incidence rate (0.4 per 100,000) and there were no cases in the eastern region. Rates in the other regions ranged from 0.1 to 0.3 per 100,000. Onset of yersiniosis infection occurred more often during the winter months from December through February, when 77% of cases occurred.