

Yersiniosis

Agent: *Yersinia* species (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Ingestion of contaminated foods, particularly raw or incompletely cooked pork products and unpasteurized milk; 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 is believed to be related to the preparation of chitterlings for the holidays, and not to outdoor temperatures.

Ten cases of yersiniosis were reported in Virginia for 2011. This represents a 23% decrease from the 13 cases reported in 2010, and a 14% reduction from the five-year average of 11.6 cases per year.

The 1-9 year age group had the highest number of cases and highest incidence rate (5 cases, 0.5 per 100,000), followed closely by the 60 year and older age group (4 cases, 0.4 per 100,000). The remaining case was reported from the 10-19 year age group (0.1 per 100,000). Information on race was missing for 50% of cases. Among those cases with race information reported, the black and white populations had similar rates (0.1 per 100,000 each). Rates were also similar between males and females (0.1 per 100,000 each).

The southwest region had the highest incidence rate of yersiniosis with 0.3 per 100,000, while all other regions reported rates of 0.1 per 100,000. Cases were reported throughout the year, with a slight peak in the month of December.