



EPI WATCH

Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter



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Disease Reporting

To report diseases and clusters of illness:

Phone: (727) 824-6932

Fax: (727) 484-3865

(excluding HIV/AIDS)

To report HIV/AIDS by mail:

Surveillance Room 3-138

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COVID-19 and Schools

On July 6, Florida Executive Order 2020-06 was issued opening in-person school options in August. Whether parents choose the virtual or in-person school, classes are set to begin on August 24 in Pinellas County. Learning is an important component of child development and the Florida Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the CDC and the Department of Education, have developed strategies, to conduct classes while limiting the spread.

For parents sending children to in-person classes, both the Florida Department of Health and CDC have developed guidance to assist with preparations. The CDC checklist includes monitoring your child for symptoms and having a plan in place in the event that your child has to transition to virtual learning.

Please review the [Checklist: Planning for In-Person classes](#)

For more information please review [FDOH School Guidance](#)

Multistate Salmonella Outbreak

Salmonellosis is a infection caused by salmonella bacteria. Those infected typically develop diarrhea, fever and stomach cramps 6 hours to 6 days after ingesting the bacteria. Symptoms typically last from 4 to 7 days and usually do not require medical care. Persons with a weakened immune system, children younger than 5 years, and older adults may develop more severe illness.

Recently, some onion varieties from Thomas International, Inc. were found to be associated with a multistate outbreak of salmonella. As of August 6, 640 persons from 43 states have been infected with the outbreak; 85 of which have been hospitalized. Florida has reported between 3 and 5 cases to date². Persons infected range from 1 to 102 with a median age of 39.¹ The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that not all cases may be identified yet due to the delay between date infected and laboratory confirmed date.

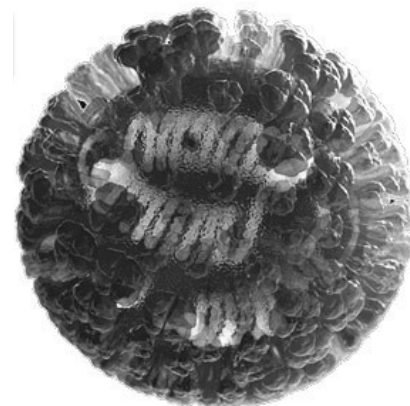
Persons are recommended to check their kitchen for onions from any of the listed brand names: Thomson Premium, TLC Thomson International, Tender Loving Care, El Competitor, Hartley's Best, Onions 52, Majestic, Imperial Fresh, Kroger, Utah Onions, and Food Lion. Along with whole onions, check the brand of any salad, wrap, or other prepared food that may contain chopped raw onions. If you cannot identify where the onions come from you should throw them away to avoid potential infection.

For updates on the outbreak please visit [CDC: Salmonella Newport Infections](#)

1. CDC. (2020). Outbreak of Salmonella Newport Infections Linked to Onions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/newport-07-20/index.html>
2. CDC. (2020). *Salmonellas* Infections Linked to Onions: Map of Reported Cases. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/newport-07-20/map.html>

Flu Season in the Southern Hemisphere

Flu season is defined as the temporal increase in flu cases each year and is often dependent on weather in temperate regions. In the southern hemisphere where winter begins in April, multiple countries have experienced not only a less severe influenza season, but a shorter one as well.¹ In Australia, 188 laboratory confirmed cases of influenza were reported in July 2020; dramatically fewer cases than July 2019 with 70,071 cases.² Similarly in Chile, cases decreased from 140 in week 30, 2019 to 0 cases in week 30, 2020, an early decrease, since July is typically peak flu season.³ The most recent Pan American Health Organization Influenza report notes that influenza-like activity is below expected levels in the southern cone, Andean region, and central America.⁴ Experts state the decreased activity is not a result of decreased testing rather, effective social distancing, masking, improved hand hygiene, and school closures throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.¹



In North America, Flu season begins in September and experts are hesitant to expect similar trends in the United States where mask wearing and social distancing remain a contentious issue. The addition of increased flu cases to an already burdened healthcare system highlights the need for prevention. To minimize flu transmission the CDC recommends continuing to wear a mask in public places, hand washing, and social distancing. It is now more important than ever that everyone 6 months of age or older should receive an annual flu shot by October this year.

To review the Pan American Influenza Report please visit [PAHO: Influenza Surveillance](#)

For more information on the 2020-2021 U.S. Flu season please visit [CDC: Preliminary Burden Estimates](#)

1. Advisory Board (July 24, 2020). Flu in the Southern Hemisphere has 'practically disappeared.' What does that mean for America's flu season?" retrieved from <https://www.advisory.com/daily-briefing/2020/07/24/coronavirus-restrictions>

2. Australian government department of health. (2020). National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System. Retrieved from http://www9.health.gov.au/cda/source/rpt_3.cfm

3. World Health Organization (2020). Influenza Laboratory Surveillance Information. Retrieved from <https://apps.who.int/flumart/Default?ReportNo=12>

4. Pan American Health Organization (2020). PAHO –CDC Generic Protocol for Influenza Surveillance. Retrieved from <https://www.paho.org/English/AD/DPC/CD/flu-snl-gpis.pdf?ua=1>



Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis

Primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) is caused by *Naegleria fowleri*, *Balamuthia mandrillae* and *Acanthamoeba*, single celled organisms that are typically found in warm freshwater. Cases are typically seen in warmer months when people spend more time in recreational waters. An individual may become infected when the organism enters through the nose via contaminated water and travels to the brain. Although the infection is rare with only 34 cases between 2009 and 2018 in the United States, it has a fatality rate of 97%. Symptoms for PAM start 5 days after infection and are similar to meningitis, which includes vomiting, fever, headache and nausea. As the illness progresses, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and seizures develop and death occurs within 1 to 9 days.

The Florida Department of Health would like to remind physicians to include PAM in their differential diagnosis for persons with meningitis symptoms and recent exposure to freshwater. Physicians who suspect PAM in a patient should **contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention immediately at 770-488-7100** as pre-requisite testing is not a requirement. In addition, amebic encephalitis is a **reportable disease and any confirmed case should be reported to DOH Pinellas County at (727) 824-6932**. Previous examples show that aggressive and timely treatment with the now commercial miltefosine was used in 3 out of 4 known survivors of the infection.

For more information on the diagnosis and treatment of PAM visit [CDC: Amebic Encephalitis](#)

Select Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	Pinellas		YTD Total		Pinellas Annual Totals		
	July 2020	July 2019	Pinellas 2020	Florida 2020	2019	2018	2017
A. Vaccine Preventable							
Measles	0	0	0	1	1	7	0
Mumps	0	1	1	45	7	10	3
Pertussis	0	8	8	200	27	32	36
Varicella	1	2	13	248	33	67	24
B. CNS Diseases & Bacteremias							
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	0	0	9	3	1	2
Meningitis (Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic)	1	1	1	50	7	9	7
Meningococcal Disease	0	0	2	16	1	1	0
C. Enteric Infections							
Campylobacteriosis	17	32	131	1946	310	264	207
Cryptosporidiosis	2	10	16	162	64	34	40
Cyclosporiasis	0	15	1	16	28	4	6
<i>E. coli</i> Shiga Toxin (+)	0	3	5	262	24	15	22
Giardiasis	0	4	16	398	52	41	45
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Listeriosis	0	0	1	20	2	1	0
Salmonellosis	17	27	91	2593	201	233	279
Shigellosis	1	2	12	363	22	40	26
D. Viral Hepatitis							
Hepatitis A	1	35	4	714	377	113	1
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman	1	1	13	203	24	14	25
Hepatitis B, Acute	3	5	24	385	72	52	51
Hepatitis C, Acute	2	5	35	575	82	40	30
E. Vector Borne/ Zoonoses							
Animal Rabies	0	0	0	43	2	1	3
Rabies, possible exposure	10	17	68	1,949	128	130	140
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dengue	0	0	1	46	3	0	0
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	0	5	1	75	22	14	19
Malaria	0	2	1	13	5	3	0
West Nile Virus	0	0	0	37	0	0	0
Zika Virus Disease	0	0	0	1	3	2	5
F. Others							
Chlamydia	330	387	2,223	n/a	4588	4422	418
Gonorrhea	127	138	830	n/a	1537	1439	1574
Hansen's Disease	0	0	0	20	0	0	0
Legionellosis	4	3	19	477	43	37	28
Mercury Poisoning	0	1	0	6	1	1	1
Syphilis, Total	27	46	221	n/a	479	438	382
Syphilis, Primary and Secondary	12	23	96	n/a	213	190	160
Syphilis, Early Latent	8	15	76	n/a	191	158	128
Syphilis, Congenital	0	1	2	n/a	6	2	5
Syphilis, Late Syphilis	7	7	47	n/a	69	88	89
Tuberculosis	1	3	10	n/a	23	33	28
<i>Vibrio</i> Infections	1	5	7	92	18	6	11

*YTD up to August 1, 2020. n/a = not available at this time

Reportable diseases include confirmed and probable cases only. All case counts are current and provisional. Data is collected from the Merlin Reportable Disease database, surveillance systems maintained at the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County, and Florida CHARTS <http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/default.aspx>. STD data in STARS is continually updated. Please note, data from the previous month takes up to an additional month or more to be correctly updated.