

Disease outbreaks

Oregon state and local health departments investigated 303 acute and communicable disease outbreaks in 2016, up from 291 in 2015. Thirty-eight percent (117) of these were outbreaks of calicivirus gastroenteritis. Twenty-nine outbreaks were foodborne, 87 were respiratory, five were due to animal contact and two were waterborne. The mode of transmission was undetermined in 89 outbreaks. Sharing of respiratory secretions caused outbreaks of influenza (60), pertussis (5), respiratory syncytial virus (5) and mumps (2). Three outbreaks of chickenpox (varicella) can be considered airborne.

Foods contaminated with a variety of *Salmonella* made folks ill at a variety of venues. Almost every outbreak reinforces the tried-and-true public health mantras of “wash your hands” and “cover your cough.”

Gastroenteritis is by far the most commonly reported type of outbreak in Oregon, accounting for 200 (66%) of the 303 outbreaks investigated in 2016.

Thanks to rigorous specimen collection by local health investigators, 135 of these outbreaks were confirmed. Sixty-eight percent of gastroenteritis outbreaks had disease-causing agents identified, mostly caliciviruses (norovirus and sapovirus). The Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) now routinely tests for sapovirus, astrovirus and rotavirus when stool specimens are norovirus-negative.

Disease outbreaks, by etiology: Oregon, 2016

