

Disease outbreaks

Oregon state and local health departments investigated 212 reports of communicable disease outbreaks in 2008 and 184 in 2009. The majority of these were person-to-person transmissions of norovirus causing gastroenteritis in the elder inhabitants of Oregon’s assisted and long-term care facilities, or younger populations in restricted environments such as the state hospital or prison. However, there were a number of outbreaks of other bacterial and viral pathogens. Fifty-six were foodborne, 33 respiratory, four due to animal contact, and one waterborne. In many (52) outbreak

investigations the mode of transmission remained undetermined. Sharing of respiratory secretions caused clusters of influenza (27), pertussis (9), meningococcal disease (3), and adenovirus (1).

Fifty-six outbreaks of foodborne transmission were identified. Foods contaminated with a garden variety of *Salmonella* made folks ill at a variety of venues including restaurants, markets and fairs. Every outbreak reinforces the age-old public health mantras — “wash your hands” and “cover your cough.”

Disease outbreaks by etiology: 2008–2009

210 - Norwalk-like virus	1 - <i>Cryptosporidium</i>
30 - <i>Salmonella</i>	1 - adenovirus
27 - influenza	1 - <i>Campylobacter</i>
9 - pertussis	1 - <i>Giardia</i>
7 - <i>E. coli</i> O157	1 - respiratory synovial virus
4 - <i>staphylococcus</i>	1 - <i>Mycobacterium</i>
3 - <i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	1 - <i>Mycoplasma</i>
3 - <i>Neisseria meningitidis</i>	1 - rotavirus
3 - sapovirus	1 - scabies
2 - hepatitis C	1 - <i>Shigella</i>
2 - <i>pseudomonas</i>	

In 2002, a dramatic increase in the number of outbreaks of gastroenteritis in institutions, long-term care facilities, cruise ships and other similar settings resulted in beefed-up

investigation and reporting of such outbreaks in Oregon. A summary of Oregon’s enhanced data collection follows.

Gastroenteritis outbreaks, 2003–2009

Outbreaks of vomiting, diarrhea or both (gastroenteritis) accounted for 1,028 (73%) of 1,311 outbreaks investigated by Oregon state and local health departments from 2003–2009. Although state and local health departments were unable to collect stool specimens from 141 (14%) of 1,028 gastroenteritis outbreaks, rigorous collection

of at least two stool specimens resulted in confirming the etiology of 688 (67%) of 1,028 gastroenteritis outbreaks and finding no agent to explain 63 (6%) of 1,028 of gastroenteritis outbreaks. Norovirus caused 546 (79%) of 688 gastroenteritis outbreaks with confirmed etiologies.

Gastroenteritis outbreaks, Oregon, 2003–2009

