

HEALTH MATTERS

Newsletter for the Division of Communicable Disease & Epidemiology - Fall 2023

Disease Matters

Severe *Vibrio vulnificus* Infections

Background

So far in 2023, Davis County has seen an increase in multiple enteric illnesses compared to last year. One of these is vibriosis. As people travel to warmer areas for the winter, or to coastal areas for summer vacations next year, we provide this information from CDC about severe vibriosis infections.

Vibrio are a bacteria that naturally live in coastal waters, including salt water and brackish water. It causes an estimated 80,000 illnesses each year in the U.S. The majority of infections are caused by *V. parahaemolyticus* and *V. alginolyticus*. Most people with vibriosis have diarrhea, but others may also have stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, and chills. One species, *V. vulnificus*, is known to cause life-threatening infections. About 150–200 *V. vulnificus* infections are reported to CDC each year and about one in five people with this infection die—sometimes within 1–2 days of becoming ill.

Most people get infected with *Vibrio* by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters. Some people get infected when an open wound is exposed to salt water or brackish water containing *Vibrio*. Open wounds include those from a recent surgery, piercing, tattoo, and other cuts or scrapes—including those acquired during aquatic activity.

How is *V. vulnificus* different from other *Vibriosis* species?

Unlike other *Vibrio* species, *V. vulnificus* is primarily transmitted through open-wound contact with salt water or brackish water, but occasionally the bacteria also can infect people if they eat raw or undercooked shellfish. *V. vulnificus* wound infections have a short incubation period and are characterized by necrotizing skin and soft tissue infection, with or without hemorrhagic bullae. Many people with *V. vulnificus* wound infection require intensive care or surgical tissue removal.

V. vulnificus bacteria thrive in warmer waters—especially during the summer months (May to October) and in low-salt marine environments like estuaries. In the United States, *V. vulnificus* infections have been most commonly reported by Gulf Coast states. However, *V. vulnificus* infections in the Eastern United States increased eightfold from 1988–2018, and the northern geographic range of infections has increased approximately 30 miles per year.

Recommendations for Healthcare Professionals

- Consider *V. vulnificus* as a possible cause of infection in wounds that were exposed to coastal waters, especially in patients at higher risk for *Vibrio* infection, including those with underlying health conditions such as liver disease (including alcohol-associated liver cirrhosis), diabetes, and immunocompromising conditions.

Recommendations for the Public

- Stay out of coastal waters (salt and brackish water) if you have an open wound or cut. If you get cut while in the water, leave the water immediately.
- Cook raw oysters and other shellfish before eating.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling raw shellfish.

For more recommendations and information for clinicians, laboratories, and the public, please visit

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2023/han00497.asp>



During July-August 2023, the U.S. experienced above-average coastal sea surface temperatures and widespread heat waves.

*During this same period, several East Coast states reported severe and fatal *V. vulnificus* infections. Many of these occurred after an open wound was exposed to coastal waters.*

Need to Report a Communicable Disease?



Call Davis County Health Department at
801-525-5220



Or fax the information to
801-525-5210

Seasonal Matters

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) 2023-2024 Season

Background

RSV is a common cause of respiratory infection in infants, most of whom are infected with RSV during their first year of life. RSV is the leading cause of hospitalizations among infants in the U.S. The highest incidence of RSV-associated hospitalization occurs in infants aged < 3 months and then decreases with increasing age.

2023-2024 Season

Current reports to CDC indicate that RSV transmission has increased to seasonal epidemic levels in the Southern regions of the U.S. and is expected to continue to increase in the rest of the country within the next 1-2 months.

Recommendations for the Public

Families should be aware of everyday preventative measures to limit the spread of RSV and other respiratory illnesses:

- Washing hands,
- Covering coughs and sneezes,
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces, and
- Staying home when sick.

Expectant mothers should talk to their healthcare provider about receiving the RSV vaccine during pregnancy to protect their infant from severe RSV. CDC recommends that all infants are protected against RSV through either vaccinating the mother during pregnancy or giving the infant nirsevimab (monoclonal antibodies) after birth.

Parents should talk with their healthcare provider about whether nirsevimab is available for their infant.

Number Matters

Selected Notifiable Diseases, 2022 & 2023

	2022 Year-to-Date	2023* Year-to-Date	% Increase or Decrease Year-to-Date
Campylobacteriosis	40	52	30% ↑
Chlamydia	737	761	3.3% ↑
Cryptosporidiosis	14	104	642.9% ↑
Cyclosporiasis	1	4	300% ↑
Giardiasis	14	10	28.6% ↓
Gonorrhea	183	126	31.1% ↓
Hepatitis A	1	0	100% ↓
Hepatitis C, acute	6	11	83.3% ↑
Meningitis, viral	6	4	33.3% ↓
Norovirus	54	101	87% ↑
Pertussis	9	12	33.3% ↑
Salmonellosis	31	34	9.7% ↑
Shiga-toxin-producing <i>E. coli</i>	11	29	163.6% ↑
Shigellosis	2	13	550% ↑
Vibriosis (non-cholera spp.)	0	2	— ↑
West Nile Virus disease	1	2	100% ↑

*Data are provisional and subject to change

Calendar Matters

November 10: Veterans Day
(observed)

November 11: Veterans Day

November 14: Board of Health
meeting

November 23: Thanksgiving Day

December 25: Christmas Day

2024

January 1: New Year's Day

January 15: Martin Luther King Jr.
Day

