



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

For Joplin City, Barton, Dade, Jasper, McDonald, Newton and Vernon Counties

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Special Point of interest

The most important step to prevent the spread of germs and infection is **hand washing**.

Influenza Activity Update: 2008-09 influenza Season - September 28, 2008- February 28, 2009

Influenza activity has remained low in the United States since the beginning of the 2008-09 flu season (September 28, 2008, to February 28, 2009). This season has fewer cases than the previous season, 2007-08 both nationwide and locally. However, there was an increase of cases at the beginning of February 2009, with influenza A viruses predominating the incidence.

Locally, the City of Joplin area shows the highest flu cases as compared to McDonald, Newton, Jasper, Barton and Vernon counties as shown in the table below. No data were available for Dade county.

The table also compares the 2008-09 season with 2007-08 season.

Table 1:
Cumulative Confirmed Influenza cases as of the beginning of two flu seasons. 2007-08 and 2008-09 in selected S.W region areas.

	Influenza Seasons		Change from Previous Season	
	2008-09	2007-08	Cases	%
Joplin	413	1127	-714	-63.4%
Jasper	10	24	-14	-58.3%
McDonald	1	0	1	*
Newton	0	0	0	*
Vernon	3	8	-5	-62.5%
Barton	4	6	-2	-33.3%
Dade	Data not available			

Source: Crystal Reports, DHSS. Data analysis : Joseph Njenga

Additionally, according to flu data, the cases reported in February within the City of Joplin area do represented 77 percent of all cases reported during the season i.e. 317 out of 413 cases. The third week 02/15/09 through 02/21/09 had the most cases (109).

According to surveillance data from two Tri-County surveillance sites, similar trend of increased cases of Influenza-like illnesses in February was observed as compared with January.

However, in spite of the trend, the current season has fewer cases than the previous season.

Ways to prevent the spread of flu

- Wash your hands often,
- Stay home when you are sick,
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose,
- Cover your coughs and sneezes, and
- Keep distance from people who are coughing or sneezing.

More preventive health actions are in page 3 of this issue.

Adapted from DHSS website
Other sources: CDC

Communicable Diseases Report

Table 2

Cumulative Cases From January Through End of February By Local Jurisdiction (2008 & 2009)														
(Includes confirmed, probable and suspect cases)														
CONDITION / YEAR BY LPHA	JOPLIN		JASPER		BARTON		DADE		MCDONALD		VERNON		NEWTON	
	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	09	2008	09	2008	09	2008	09	2008	2009
ANIMAL BITES	18	13	16	12	1	0	1	0	1	4	1	0	1	5
CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS	1	3	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
E. COLI SHIGA TOXIN	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E. COLI O157 H7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GIARDIASIS	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HEPATITIS A ACUTE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
HEPATITIS B PREGNANCY	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
HEPATITIS B ACUTE	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
HEPATITIS B CHRONIC	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
HEPATITIS C ACUTE	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HEPATITIS C, CHRONIC IN	16	7	7	9	1	0	0	1	11	3	1	5	9	7
LEGIONELLOSIS	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUMPS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
PERTUSSIS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
RABIES POST EXPO PROPH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOT	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SALMONELLOSIS	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	1
TULAREMIA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX)	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2
Total Cases Year To Date	41	34	31	32	4	5	3	2	15	12	5	5	18	24

Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Crystal Reports

Data period : January through end of February 2009

Although the cases to-date were almost at the same level as last year, some cases in Joplin, Barton and Newton Counties showed an increase in 2009. Four cases of Hepatitis B Acute were reported in 2009 compared to no cases to-date in 2008. In Barton County, there were 5 legionellosis cases by the end of February, compared to no cases during the same time period in the last four years. Additionally, Newton County reported 4 cases of pertussis and 4 cases of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis compared to no cases in the last four years. The City of Joplin and Jasper County had the most cases of animal bites by the end of February (13 and 12 in 2009 respectively) when compared with the other five counties in the region.

In total, Jasper, Barton and Newton counties have reported more cases as of the end of February 2009 than was reported in 2008 within the same period.

Analysis by Joseph Njenga

ER Visits in Jasper, Newton, Vernon, Dade, Barton and McDonald counties in February, 2009

According to ESSENCE which is a surveillance system for hospital ER visits, there were several alerts/red-flags in February 2009. Most alerts (red flags)* in the six S.W jurisdictions were fever-related followed by respiratory-related illnesses. Five red alerts relating to fever and four relating to respiratory illnesses appeared during the first two weeks of February.

(* Alerts/red flags indicates that there are more than expected cases of an illness).

Additionally, according to two surveillance sites in the Tri-County region (Jasper, Newton and McDonald), fever-related illnesses had declined in the month but respiratory illnesses were gradually increasing.

Source: ESSENCE and Tri-County Surveillance sites

Preventive Health Actions

Perhaps the most precious resource we have is our health – a resource we really need to protect. There are several preventive measures you can take to improve and protect your health.

The most important step to prevent the spread of germs and infection is **hand washing**. Always wash your hands before you handle or prepare food, after using the bathroom, or after coughing or sneezing. Wash your hands after touching a sick person.

- Wet your hands under running water.
- Apply soap and rub vigorously for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse with running water.
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or under an air dryer.
- Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet as well as opening the bathroom door.

Follow these additional steps to protect yourself from other people's germs:

- Stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- Sanitize common surfaces such as doorknobs, faucets, telephones, computer keyboards and handrails.
- Do not share personal items like towels, lipstick, food, eating utensils, drinking glasses, or anything else that might be contaminated with germs.

If you are sick, use common sense precautions to keep your germs contained and protect other people:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue every time you sneeze, blow your nose, or cough. Put used tissues into the nearest trashcan after use.
- If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve or the crook of your elbow to cover your mouth and nose. Do not use your bare hands.
- Always wash your hands after sneezing, blowing your nose, coughing, or touching used tissues.
- Stay home if you have a cough or fever.

For more information, contact your local public health department.

Adapted from Weekly Health Article by Jaci McReynolds

Investigation Update: Outbreak of *Salmonella* Typhimurium Infections, 2008–2009

Update for March 3, 2009

CDC is collaborating with public health officials in many states and the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to investigate a multi-state outbreak of human infections due to *Salmonella* serotype Typhimurium.

- Case count is 677 in 45 states with latest confirmed, most recent reported illness beginning on February 8, 2009
- The outbreak is continuing, though the numbers of new cases have declined modestly since December. Many recently ill persons report eating peanut butter and other recalled peanut-containing products.
- FDA and CDC are concerned that illness will continue to occur if people eat recalled peanut-containing products that are still on their shelves at home.
- Consumers should check at home for recalled peanut butter containing products and discard them.

The number of ill persons identified in each state is as follows:

Alabama (2), Arizona (13), Arkansas (6), California (76), Colorado (17), Connecticut (11), Florida (1), Georgia (6), Hawaii (6), Idaho (17), Illinois (10), Indiana (10), Iowa (3), Kansas (2), Kentucky (3), Maine (5), Maryland (10), Massachusetts (48), Michigan (38), Minnesota (42), **Missouri (15)**, Mississippi (7), Montana (2), Nebraska (1), New Hampshire (13), New Jersey (23), New York (31), Nevada (6), North Carolina (6), North Dakota (17), Ohio (99), Oklahoma (4), Oregon (13), Pennsylvania (19), Rhode Island (5), South Dakota (4), Tennessee (14), Texas (10), Utah (6), Vermont (4), Virginia (21), Washington (22), West Virginia (2), Wisconsin (5), and Wyoming (2). Additionally, one ill person was reported from Canada.

Consumers may use [FDA's online database](#)* to see if foods are on the recall list. Those without Internet access may call 1-800-CDC-INFO (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week) for product recall information.



Source: CDC and FDA

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Barton County: Linda Talbot
(417) 682-3363
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Vernon County: Beth Swopes
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Questions/Comments, please

contact:

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UPCOMING TRAININGS

Principles of Epidemiology Course: April 22-23, 2009, July 29-30, 2009 and October 21-22, 2009. Contact Rose.Kowieski.dhss.mo.gov or call 573-751-6113 for more information about registration.

NEW TB Program Management – April 21-23, 2009. Location: Overland Park, Kansas. Target Audience: Public health TB program managers who are actively engaged in the day-to-day responsibilities involved in supervising and managing a TB program at the local or jurisdictional level. Contact Lead Educator: jessica.quintero@uthct.edu. Download brochure at: http://www.heartlandntbc.org/training/brochure_overland_park_ks_21_apr_2009.pdf. Registration is through the Kansas University Area Health Education Center; a registration form can be downloaded at: http://www.heartlandntbc.org/training/regform_overland_park_ks_21_apr_2009.pdf. Registration closes March 27, 2009.

UPCOMING EVENTS

World TB Day—March 24, 2009

World TB Day raises awareness of tuberculosis related issues throughout the world



Communicable Diseases Surveillance

If your institution would like to participate in the Local Communicable Disease surveillance, please contact your local health department for more information.

A surveillance site can be:

- Public/Private school
- College
- Large employer
- Childcare facility
- Physician clinic
- Community clinic

Surveillance is the ongoing systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of health related data with the goal of detecting health related issues within our community, and using that information to control and prevent disease as well as promote health.

Reporting Foodborne Illness

In most counties, the public health departments have asked doctors and clinical laboratories to notify them when certain diseases are diagnosed. They typically include infections with *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157:H7, and other foodborne diseases, as well as tuberculosis, and many other communicable diseases. This is done in order to detect outbreaks, and to protect public health. If you have a notifiable disease the county health department may have been notified, and may call you to make sure that you are improving and to learn more about how you might have caught it, as well as to advise you about how to keep it from spreading any further. Please cooperate with the public health nurse or investigator if they call you.

A foodborne disease outbreak is defined as a group of people developing the same illnesses after ingesting the same food. If you think that you or others became ill from eating the same food, please report this outbreak to your local (city or county) health department. By investigating outbreaks, public health officials learn about problems in food production that lead to illness. Applying what is learned in the investigation of one outbreak can help to prevent many future illnesses.

