

Amebiasis

Amebiasis is not a reportable disease in Louisiana. Outbreaks should still be reported.

Amebiasis (also called amoebiasis) is a parasitic infection caused by *Entamoeba histolytica* or *Entamoeba dispar*. The parasite is transmitted by the fecal-oral route, either through direct contact with feces or through the consumption of contaminated food or water.

Between 80% and 90% of infected individuals develop no symptoms. For symptomatic cases, the incubation period between infection and illness can range from days to weeks. Common symptoms include gastrointestinal issues, such as diarrhea or stomach pains. It is also possible for the parasite to spread to the liver and cause abscesses.

Entamoeba histolytica can be found world-wide, but is more prevalent in tropical regions with poor sanitary conditions. In some areas with extremely adverse conditions, the prevalence can be as high as 50% in the population. There are no recent data on prevalence of amebiasis in the U.S. However, prevalence is estimated to be between 1% and 4% of the population. High risk groups are refugees, recent immigrants, travelers (particularly those who have spent long periods of time in an endemic area), institutionalized people (particularly developmentally or mentally-impaired people), and men who have sex with men.

The number of cases reported within Louisiana is usually low. There are typically less than ten cases reported per year (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Amebiasis Cases - Louisiana, 1970-2023

