

Infectious Diseases in Louisiana: Annual Surveillance Reports

The Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section

The Infectious Disease Epidemiology (IDEpi) Section is housed within the Louisiana Department of Health – Office of Public Health’s Bureau of Infectious Diseases. IDEpi is staffed by epidemiologists and support staff who track the causes and consequences of infectious diseases. The purpose of the section is to study the distribution of infectious diseases in the community and to carry out or coordinate programs to prevent and mitigate the spread of communicable diseases.

Disease Reporting in Louisiana

The reporting of notifiable diseases is the backbone of disease surveillance in Louisiana and nationally. All healthcare providers and related professionals (such as laboratories) are required by law to report cases of certain diseases and conditions. In order for the data to be comparable among states and nationally, reported cases are evaluated by IDEpi to determine if they meet uniform case definitions from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE).

The List of Reportable Diseases/Conditions in Louisiana can be found on the IDEpi web page and in the State Sanitary Code (LAC 51:II.105).

Annual Surveillance Reports

Tracking certain diseases allows IDEpi to identify outbreaks, promote mitigation efforts, monitor seasonal disease trends, identify imported and emerging diseases, and help identify groups at higher risk for certain infections. Disease information is shared routinely with healthcare providers and the public through press releases, health alert network notifications, and annual disease surveillance reports. Healthcare providers and residents can use this information to understand their risk for certain diseases and to make informed decisions for their health and well-being.

Publishing reports on surveillance activities and data provides the healthcare community, government and regulatory agencies, and individuals with important statistical information on Louisiana’s reportable diseases and conditions. These reports contain information including disease summaries, historical contexts, trends over time, demographic summaries, geographic distributions, seasonal trends, and examples of exposure risks. The data provided in each report is tailored to each specific disease. These reports are updated once annual data is reviewed and finalized for past years.