



Aiming to Inform

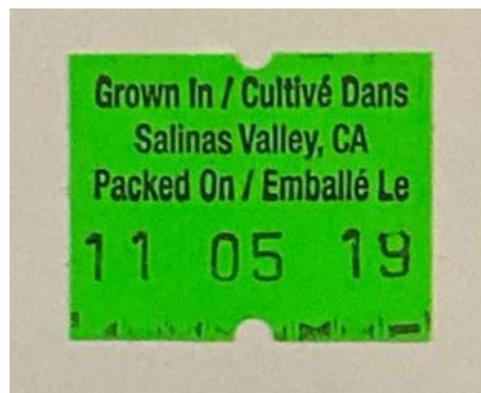
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E. coli Outbreak

Columbia County has had three individuals with [Shiga toxin-producing E. coli](#) that are connected with the [multi-state outbreak](#) of E. coli O157:H7. This outbreak has been linked with Romaine lettuce grown in Salinas, California.

Lettuce grown in this region should not be consumed. This includes all use-by dates and brands that come from this area. Most Romaine products are labeled with a harvest location, indicating where the product was grown. If the growing region can't be determined, it is recommended that the product be thrown away.



Example of harvest region label.

How Scientists Track Food Poisoning

Linkages to a suspected food or ingredient are sometimes made with the help of shopper loyalty cards. When an investigation starts to show some common food source based on interviews and questionnaires that have been completed, the State Department of Health Services may ask local public health to request an infected person's permission to obtain and use their shopper loyalty card to identify specific types and brands of food items purchased that people might not even recall having eaten. This lets investigators identify possible food sources, including processors and suppliers. In cases such as this current outbreak, specific geographical regions can then be identified as the original source of the contaminated food or ingredient.

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FOOD BORNE DISEASE OUTBREAKS

THE 3 TYPES OF DATA USED TO LINK ILLNESSES TO CONTAMINATED FOODS AND SOLVE OUTBREAKS



Public health and regulatory officials gather 3 types of data during an investigation:

EPIDEMIOLOGIC | TRACEBACK | FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING

EPIDEMIOLOGIC



Patterns in where and when people get sick, and past outbreaks caused by the same germs

Interviews with sick people to look for foods or other exposures occurring more often than expected

Discovery of clusters of unrelated sick people who ate at the same restaurant, shopped at the same grocery store, or attended the same event

TRACEBACK



A common point of contamination in the distribution chain from farms to forks, identified by reviewing records collected from restaurants or stores where sick people ate or shopped

Inspections in food production facilities, on farms, and in restaurants that identify food safety risks

FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING



The germ that caused illness is found in a food item collected from a sick person's home, a retail location, or in the food production environment

The same DNA fingerprint linking germs found in foods or production environments to germs found in sick people

ACTIONS TO STOP THE OUTBREAK

Health officials evaluate all of these types of data to try to identify the source of the outbreak. Actions to protect the public are taken when there is clear and convincing information linking illness to a contaminated food.



Pertussis is Ongoing

A small, localized outbreak of pertussis continues in a region of Columbia County, extending into both Marquette and Green Lake Counties. It is important to test, treat, isolate and immediately report any person suspected of having pertussis.

The State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health has surveillance and control guidelines for pertussis and can be found [here](#). A fact sheet about pertussis can be found [here](#).

Columbia County Immunization Coalition Meeting



The next meeting of the Columbia County Immunization Coalition will be on **Tuesday March 31, 2020 from 9-11 am**. It will be held at the Columbia County Health and Human Services Building, 111 E. Mullett St. in Portage. We'll be discussing the latest from ACIP, and other topics. Watch for additional information. If you have a topic you'd like to have discussed, please contact Laura Simonds, RN at (608) 742-9257 or laura.simonds@co.columbia.wi.us.

TB Skin Tests and Hepatitis B Vaccine

One or two-step TB (Mantoux) skin tests are available from the Columbia County Division of Health. Beginning January 1, 2020, the cost of a one-step TST will be \$20.00 and a two-step will cost \$40.00. They are available by appointment any weekday except Thursday by calling (608) 742-9227 and asking for the appointment nurse.

Hepatitis B vaccines for adults are available from the Columbia County Division of Health. As of January 1, 2020, the cost will be \$55.00 per dose.

Arrangements can be made with businesses to be billed for both TB skin tests and Hepatitis B vaccine for employees. For more information, please call (608) 742-9227 and ask to speak with the appointment nurse.

Wisconsin Epi Express



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The latest issue of WI DPH Epi Express has just been released. It contains information on staff updates, new resources, the mumps outbreak in ICE facilities, updated information and resources about rabies, and more. [Click here](#) to view the current issue. If you'd like to get on the distribution list to receive every issue, [click here](#) to sign up.

Candy Land and Polio—What’s the Connection?



The classic children’s board game Candy Land was invented by a school teacher, Eleanor Abbott in 1948, during the polio epidemic of the 1940’s and 1950’s as she recovered from polio in a hospital ward in California. It was made for, and tested by, children in her ward.

Seasonal Influenza Update

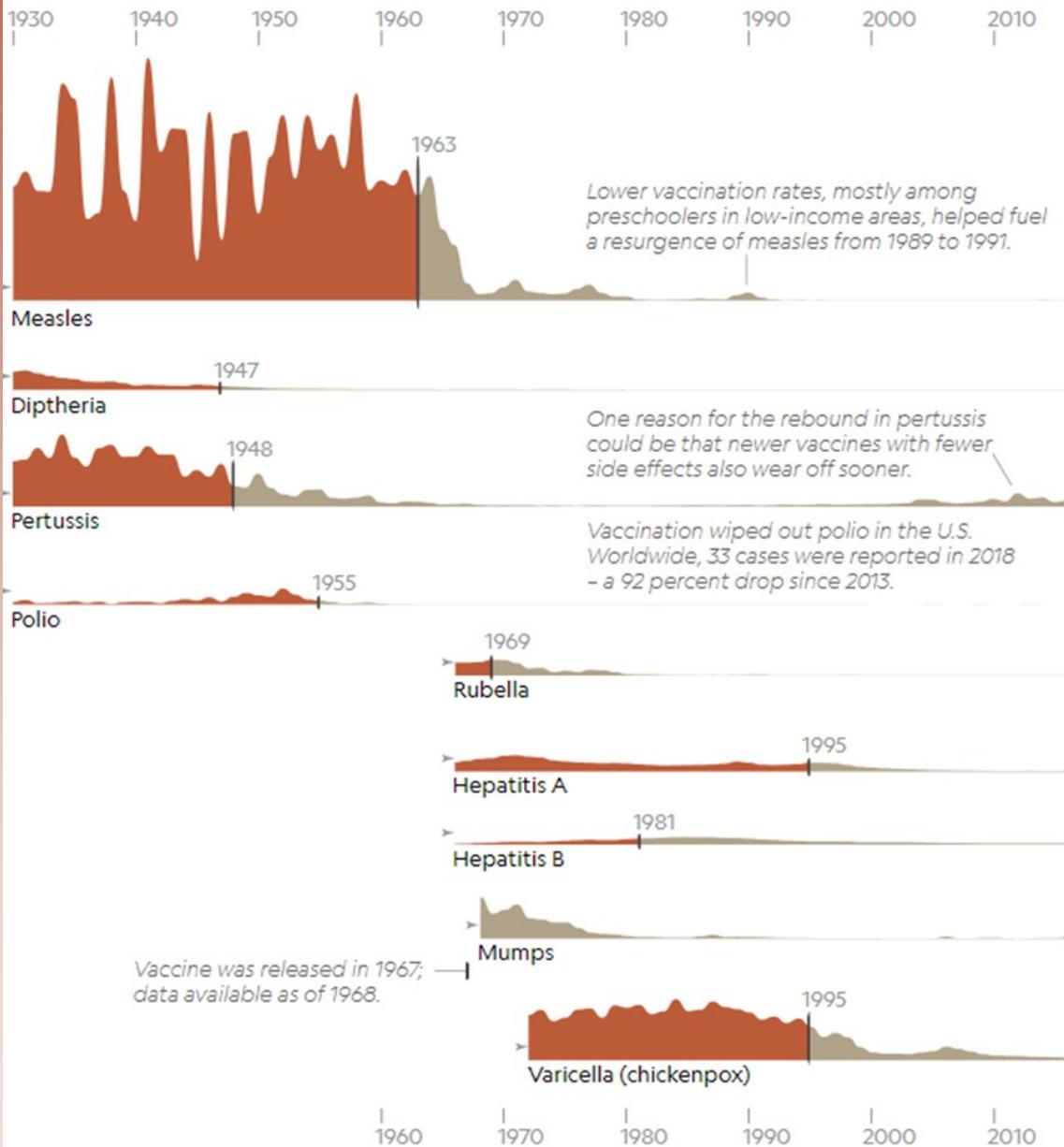
Flu season is in full swing, starting somewhat earlier than in past years. For the week ending December 7, 2019, Wisconsin reports regional activity. Columbia County has just received its first report of a resident with an influenza-associated hospitalization. One of our long-term care facilities had a small, brief outbreak earlier this fall, with Influenza B being identified.

Nationwide, the CDC estimates that so far this season there have been at least 2.6 million flu illnesses, 23,000 hospitalizations and 1,300 deaths from flu. It is important to continue offering the flu vaccine to all eligible people ages 6 months and older. The Columbia County Division of Health has free flu vaccine for [VFC-eligible children](#), including a limited supply of flu-mist for eligible children ages 2 through 18. We also have flu vaccine for adults at a cost of \$40.00 or we can bill Medicare B. The CDC has many [influenza-related resources](#), as does the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#), including a weekly [Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report](#). [Click here](#) to sign up to receive the weekly report.

Vaccine Victories

Since the 1940s, as new vaccines have been released (black line), the incidence of infectious diseases that once afflicted hundreds of thousands of Americans has plummeted. Polio and rubella are gone from the U.S.; diphtheria is rare. It used to kill up to 15,000 a year.

New US cases per year
 50,000 cases > vaccine introduced



From [National Geographic August 16, 2019](#)

Acute and Communicable Disease Summary

Below is a summary of preliminary data from WEDSS (Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System) for acute and communicable diseases reported to the Columbia County Division of Health so far this year. For comparison, the year end numbers for 2018 are also shown. The numbers represent confirmed and probable cases and are based on data reported to the Columbia County Division of Health.

Disease Group	2018	2019 YTD
		Total
Arboviral Disease	2	1
Babesiosis	0	1
Blastomycosis	0	1
Campylobacteriosis	21	13
Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae	0	1
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning	3	3
Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection	150	131
Cryptosporidiosis	16	12
Cyclosporiasis	2	1
Ehrlichiosis	2	0
Giardiasis	6	4
Gonorrhea	21	26
Haemophilus Influenzae Invasive Disease	0	1
HEMOLYTIC UREMIC SYNDROME	0	1
Hepatitis C	27	20
Influenza	73	41
Invasive Streptococcal Disease	3	8
Legionellosis	4	3
Lyme Disease	49	50
Meningitis, Other	1	1
Meningococcal Disease	1	0
MRSA	0	2
Mumps	0	1
Mycobacterial Disease (Nontuberculous)	6	7
Pathogenic E.coli	20	15
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	3	26
Salmonellosis	29	9
Streptococcal Infection, Other Invasive	3	2
Streptococcus Pneumoniae Invasive Disease	8	2
Syphilis	1	1
Tuberculosis	1	0
Tuberculosis, Latent Infection (LTBI)	6	14
Varicella (Chickenpox)	2	3
Vibriosis, Non Cholera	1	1
Yersiniosis	1	1
Total	462	403

(Carbon Monoxide Poisoning and Latent Tuberculosis Infection became reportable in 2018)

Public Health Contact Information

To Report Communicable Diseases in all Columbia County Residents:

Call the Columbia County Health & Human Services main number.....(608)742-9227

Or mail to:

Columbia County Division of Health
 Attn: Communicable Disease Nurse
 P.O. Box 136
 Portage, WI 53901-0136

Or Fax to: Columbia County Health & Human Services attn. Communicable Disease Nurse.....(608)-742-9700

After Hours Contact Number for Columbia County Division of Health:

Columbia County Non-Emergency Dispatch.....(608)-742-4166