



Epi-Center



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General Notifiables: What's the Word?



Enteric (Food-/Water-borne) Diseases

INCREASING CASES

As the weather warms, so too increases the number of cases of food- and water-borne illness. There were 133 reports of enteric infections between April and June this year in the district, with the most common pathogens being *Campylobacter* (57 confirmed), *Salmonella* (46 confirmed), and Hepatitis A (1 confirmed). Notably, however, cases of *Vibrio* and *Yersinia* have also increased from 0 to 6 and 1 to 5, respectively, from the first quarter to the second.

ENTERIC DISEASE PREVENTION

The best way of stopping the spread of foodborne illness is to practice [proper hand hygiene](#) each time your hands may be contaminated in addition to before food preparation and after using the restroom. When ill, you should stay home, rest, and wait for symptoms to stop or when public health officials say you may return to your normal activities. This is especially true for those working in childcare and/or in healthcare. Ensure your food is cooked thoroughly to kill any remaining microorganisms, and don't prepare ready-to-eat items in the same area as raw meat to avoid cross-contamination. For more on enteric diseases and prevention, please visit the [Georgia Department of Public Health \(GA DPH\)](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) websites.

Tuberculosis (TB) Infections

Some areas of the district have seen increased rates of TB in the last quarter. Risk factors for TB exposure include prolonged exposure to someone with active TB or current/former residence and/or extended travel to countries where TB is common.

WHAT IS TB?

TB is a serious infectious disease that commonly affects the lungs but can impact any part of the body. The bacteria spreads through the air when someone with active pulmonary TB infection coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings. A latent TB infection can become active at any time.

SYMPTOMS, TREATMENT, & PREVENTION

Signs of active TB can include weight loss, fever, night sweats, loss of appetite, and fatigue. There may also be a persistent cough lasting 3+ weeks, blood from coughing, and chest pain. Those with active TB will usually have symptoms, an abnormal chest x-ray, and a positive culture or PCR test for TB. Both latent and active TB can be treated with antibiotics available at all District 2 health departments. Treatment is needed to prevent serious illness or death, development of drug-resistant TB, and further spread of the disease. For more information, please visit the [GA DPH page](#) or contact your [nearest local health department](#).

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Recently, GA DPH released a [health advisory on adult and congenital syphilis](#). Rates have notably increased among women of reproductive age and newborns. In District 2, communicable disease specialists (CDS) and other epidemiologists are reaching out to patients and community members to test for this infection and treat individuals who are positive for syphilis.

The CDS Team joined three events (05/23, 06/10, & 06/28) and collaborated with other programs and departments such as HIV Prevention and Adolescent Health & Youth Development, to distribute rapid syphilis test kits, condoms, and educational materials to the community. For up-to-date info on upcoming events, please visit the [District 2 webpage](#) or call the EPI Department at (770) 535-5743 ext. 2600.

District 2 Public Health Serves the Following Counties: Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, & White

Reminders/Announcements and Updates from the EPI Department

Reminders/Announcements

SCHOOL VACCINES

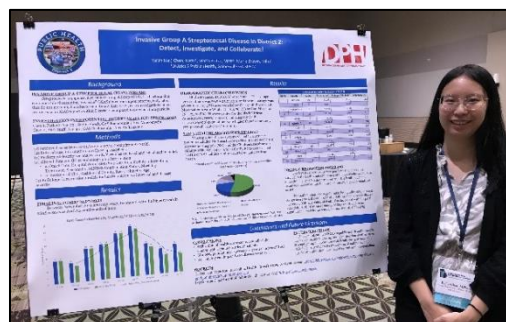
District 2 Public Health strongly recommends parents, guardians, and students to prioritize immunization in preparation for the upcoming academic year. Please review Georgia's Back to School requirements and the [GA DPH site](#) for more information. All county health departments in District 2 offer vaccine services, so don't hesitate to contact them!

Remember: All county health departments in District 2 offer comprehensive and confidential TB and STI services!

Epidemiology Department & Disease Reporting Updates

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

In May, the EPI Department presented a poster titled "Invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease in District 2: Detect, Investigate, and Collaborate!" at the Georgia Public Health Association Conference. This poster showcased data analysis findings for patient demographics, care facilities, and county rates between November 2022 and July 2023. It was great to share knowledge with so many public health organizations and institutions there!



STUDENT RESEARCH WITH FOOTHILLS AHEC

The District 2 Public Health EPI Department mentored three undergraduate students, hosted by the Foothills AHEC Pathway to Med School Program, in epidemiological research centered on adolescent sexual health over the course of a month from May to June. We were very excited to see our students graduate from this program and wish them all the best in their future goals and careers.

NEW DISEASE REPORTING DOCUMENT

As of July 2024, updated information on disease reporting can be found on the GA DPH website under the [Notifiable Disease Reporting Requirements](#) section. All notifiable diseases should be reported within seven days or sooner.

<i>Immediate Reporting</i>	<i>Reporting Within 7 Days</i>
Phone: (770) 519-7661 Public Health Line: 1-(866) 782-4584	Email: DPHDistrict2epi@gets.onmicrosoft.com
Fax: (770) 535-5848	Online: State Electronic Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (SENDSS)

EPI Staff of the Quarter: Sandy Cutright

Sandy Cutright graduated from Kennesaw State University in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in Forensics and Behavioral Science. Her CDS career began in 2011 when Georgia was 2nd in the nation for syphilis. As a CDS, she provides health education, risk reduction counseling, and partner services to individuals diagnosed with a STI. This involves identifying cases, locating and interviewing those infected, ensuring adequate treatment, and confidentially notifying partners/contacts of an exposure. Her goal is to increase awareness while decreasing fear, shame, and stigma by normalizing conversations around sexual health and wellness.



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