

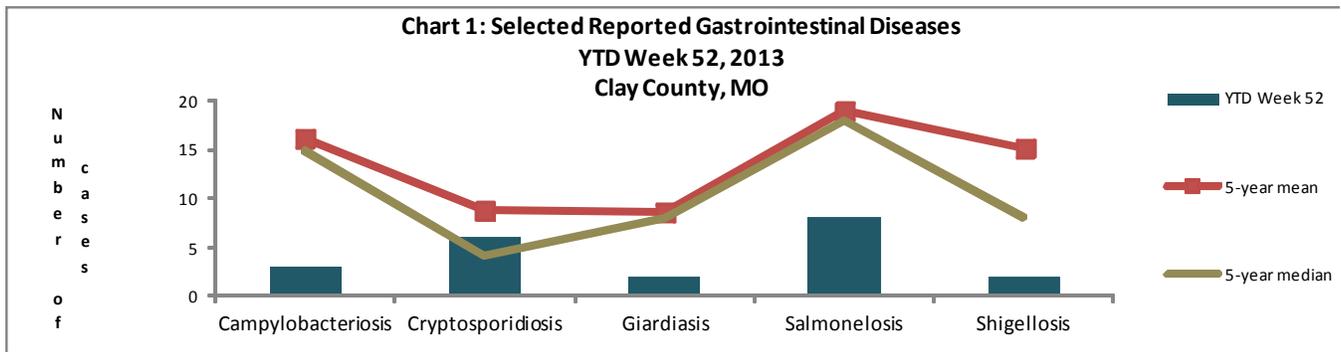


Summary-Communicable Disease Reports for Clay County Public

The number of reported cases of communicable diseases in the county in general continues to decrease. Several factors could have contributed to this, including the availability of vaccines, better treatments that limit the spread of communicable diseases, better sanitary systems, better healthcare and public health infrastructures, non-compliance to reporting requirements, etc. State law mandates reporting of communicable diseases to local public health agencies by doctors, nurses, hospitals, clinic, laboratories, etc. However, not everyone reports. Prompt reporting of communicable disease cases is essential for the containment of infectious diseases in the community and also for providing early alerts to new and emerging diseases.

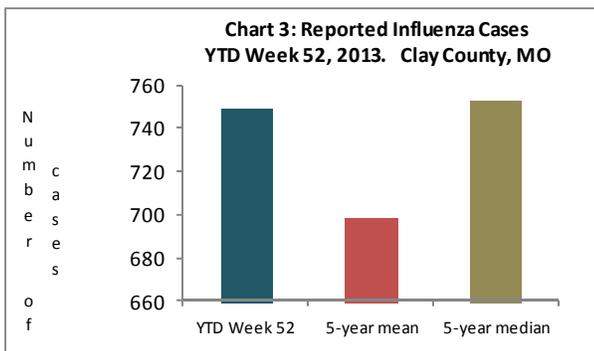
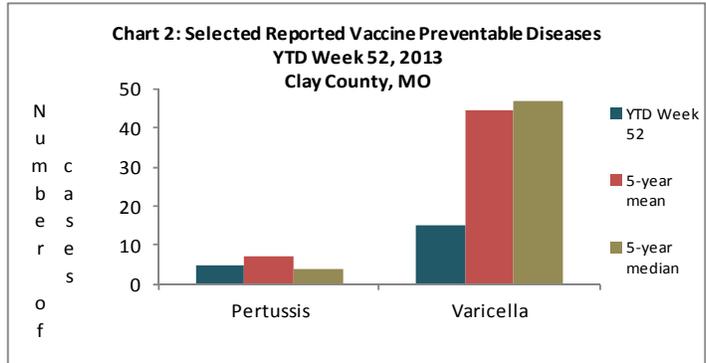
Among the cases reported in 2013 for Clay County, diseases that affect the gastrointestinal (GI) system, which causes symptoms such as stomach ache, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, had a lower number of cases than what was expected. Diseases more frequently reported were salmonellosis, campylobacteriosis, giardiasis and shigellosis (Chart 1). The number of cases of cryptosporidiosis reported in 2013 was slightly higher than expected in a given year, but this was mainly due to an accumulation of sporadic cases unrelated to an outbreak (defined as the occurrence of cases in excess of what would normally be expected in a defined community, geographical area, or season). Usually most GI diseases can be prevented by proper hand washing, proper handling of raw and cooked foods, proper diagnosis, and prompt following up/treatment of cases. These measures could help limit the spread of infection and ultimately reduce the number of cases or prevent unusual occurrences.

The charts below, show the year to date (YTD) counts of selected reported diseases in Clay County for 2013, the 5-year mean (the average count for the last five years), and the 5-year median (the middle number for each disease, and also the most likely number).



Among diseases reported that could have been prevented by the use of vaccines, were included pertussis, varicella (chickenpox) (Chart 2) and influenza (Chart 3). The numbers of these diseases reported were still comparable to what was expected in Clay County.

The 2013-2014 influenza season started much earlier than normally expected. The prevalent strains of the virus contracted, matched those in the seasonal flu vaccine. The counts for cases of influenza reported were fairly high, although lower than the previous year, and higher than average number expected.



The influenza vaccination is the most effective way of protecting yourself and reducing the number of seasonal flu cases. With a flu vaccine that completely matches the circulating seasonal flu viruses, cases could be greatly reduced if the majority of the population would get vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend a yearly flu vaccine for everyone over 6 months of age unless medically contradicted. Also, practicing good hand washing helps prevent the spread of diseases, including influenza. Providers should recommend and offer the influenza vaccine to their clients throughout the flu season, starting as soon as they receive their first vaccine shipment.

The data is collected and reported by the Epidemiology Program at Clay County Public Health Center.