



This monthly report is meant to share the latest trends and news in communicable disease for Oak Park, IL and our surrounding community. Check out <http://www.oak-park.us/nursing> for past reports. If you have any questions about communicable or emerging diseases, please reach out to the Public Health Department at health@oak-park.us or 708-358-5480.

Disease Surveillance Update

Cyclosporiasis

The United States is currently experiencing the 3rd largest foodborne-illness outbreak in history with over 17,000 cases. Illinois typically logs fewer than 400 cyclosporiasis cases a year. As of **8/4/2026**, there are already **995 confirmed cases** statewide with 631 of these cases acquired in the United States.

What Is It?

- A parasite, cyclospora, that causes intestinal illness called cyclosporiasis is spread through contaminated food or water.
- It is not spread person to person.
- Common in tropical/subtropical regions — but U.S. cases have risen sharply in recent months.

Symptoms

- Symptoms usually appear 2–14 days after exposure.
- Watery diarrhea, loss of appetite, weight loss, cramps, nausea, fatigue, vomiting, sometimes fever.
- If you have symptoms of cyclosporiasis you should contact your healthcare provider to receive care, especially if consuming iceberg lettuce within the two weeks before becoming ill. If untreated, can last weeks to months and may return in repeated bouts.
- Those with a weakened immune system — from a condition like cancer or an autoimmune disease, or from medications like chemotherapy or steroids — may have more severe and longer-lasting symptoms and may need longer treatment.

Treatment

- Good news, cyclosporiasis is rarely life-threatening and is easily treated with a course of antibiotics. Hospitalization is uncommon and if so, it is usually for dehydration.

Prevention

- Past U.S. outbreaks were linked to basil, cilantro, snow peas, raspberries, mesclun and romaine lettuce.
- Washing produce doesn't always remove the parasite, **cooking food to 158°F is the only method guaranteed to kill it.**
- There are **35 different products** that consumers should discard immediately and not consume if they have purchased them. There are 27 states in which the products were sent, including Illinois.
- If you purchased any recalled products, you should clean and sanitize any surfaces that came into contact with them.

Current Outbreak

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) currently has 6 ongoing cyclosporiasis outbreak investigations with each outbreak taking 2-6 weeks from start to identification. As of August 4th, there are over 17,000 cases reported nationally. The FDA announced on July 18th that iceberg lettuce from the brand Taylor Farms tested positive for cyclospora. The FDA then walked back the positive test result however, experts know that cyclospora is known to be difficult to test for and recreate in a lab. Regardless of the test results, health officials still say that there is “very strong” evidence that iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms grown in central Mexico is the likely source. Taylor Farms has stopped sourcing iceberg lettuce from central Mexico for the remainder of the season and voluntarily recalled iceberg lettuce (linked to some Taco Bell locations). The food sources from the additional outbreaks have not yet been announced.

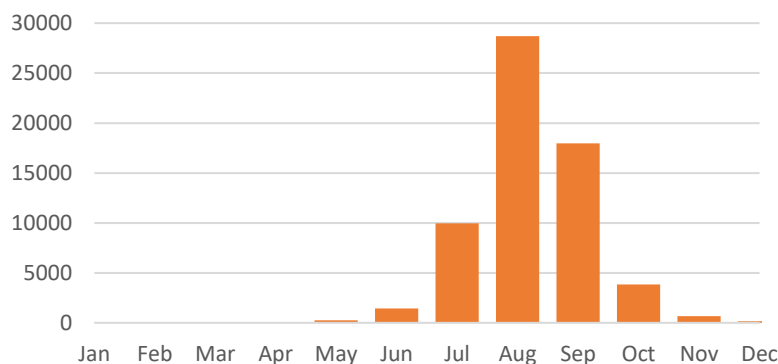
West Nile Virus

August is the peak of mosquito-borne illness season, with West Nile Virus (WNV) being the most common in the United States. The Desplaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District provides a variety of services to our area, including testing of mosquitoes for mosquito-borne pathogens. Starting in May, they test mosquito traps weekly for mosquitoes that carry diseases. They publish [reports of their results](#) on their website. This summer so far there have been 35 positive mosquito traps for WNV in Oak Park. This means there are mosquitoes in Oak Park that carry WNV. In order to prevent illness, you should take preventative actions to avoid being bitten.

To prevent mosquito bites, you can take these actions:

- Use insect repellent, containing DEET or Picaridin.
- Avoid outdoor activities around dusk.
- Inspect and repair any holes in window screens, around air conditioning units, clothes dryer vents to avoid mosquitoes from entering the home.
- Clear any sources of standing water, including gutters/downspouts, bird baths, kids' pools, buckets, trash cans, wheelbarrows, and rimless tires.

Reported Human Cases of West Nile by Month in the U.S. 1999-2025



Source: [CDC](#)

Week Ending	Total Mosquito Traps Tested	Positive Traps for West Nile
May 3	0	0
May 10	1	0
May 17	2	0
May 25	2	0
May 31	2	0
June 7	9	0
June 14	8	1
June 21	8	0
June 28	9	0
July 5	8	1
July 12	12	2
July 19	11	0
July 26	17	9
August 2	25	22

Source: [DVMAD](#)

School Vaccination

Back to school is around the corner and now is the time to make sure your child's required vaccinations are up to date. Within Oak Park, we have 20 schools and a 98% average vaccination coverage for school vaccines, which is strong coverage. The lowest school is at 88% and the highest is at 100%. It is important to maintain this level of vaccination coverage for the safety of our community. You can view vaccination coverage by school and by vaccine on the Illinois Department of Public Health's School Vaccination Coverage Dashboard [here](#). You can find the vaccine schedule for school-aged children at [Recommended Vaccines for Young Children | Vaccines & Immunizations | CDC](#).

This strong immunization coverage matters because herd immunity is necessary to prevent illness from spreading within the community and to protect those who cannot get vaccinated, such as infants, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals. If vaccination coverage falls below the 95% needed for herd immunity, diseases can spread more easily and outbreaks become more likely. When herd immunity is not upheld, we risk outbreaks like the measles resurgence currently spreading nationally at a 30-year high.

Hantavirus

Back in May, you may remember seeing news about a hantavirus outbreak on a Dutch cruise ship. It began when a couple visiting South America acquired a strain of hantavirus from a rodent. Their specific strain was called the Andes strain, which spreads person-to-person unlike the other forms of the virus. The couple then boarded the cruise ship where they infected 11 other people.

There were no cases related to this outbreak in the United States and rodents in North America do NOT carry the Andes strain. There have only been **7 confirmed cases** of hantavirus in Illinois over the last **30 years**. The presence of rodents in the area is not a cause for concern. You may have heard about a recent case in Illinois linked to the cruise ship, but after confirmatory testing, there was no detection of hantavirus.

What Is Hantavirus?

- A group of viruses carried by rodents that can sometimes infect humans.
- Most often spread through contact with rodents, their droppings, urine, or saliva.
- There is no specific cure or vaccine — early hospitalization with supportive care is critical.
- In North America, the most common carrier of hantavirus is the deer mouse. In South America, the Andes strain is carried by the long-tailed pygmy rice rat.

Symptoms

- Symptoms usually appear 1–8 weeks after exposure.
- Fever, headaches, muscle aches, stomach pain, nausea, shortness of breath, and vomiting
- Can result in Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) which is rare but can quickly become severe and can lead to life-threatening lung and heart problems.
- If you've had rodent exposure, report it to your healthcare provider — testing can be done.

How To Protect Yourself

- **Don't touch rodents or droppings** — if you see dead rodents or droppings, do not touch or pick them up.
- **Use wet cleaning only: never dry sweep or vacuum droppings.** Wear gloves and a mask, spray with a bleach/water mix, let sit for 10 minutes, then wipe away with paper towels and disinfect. If in doubt, contact a professional.
- Check for and seal any openings where rodents can enter your home or workplace.

Answers to Common Questions

- There are no passengers from the cruise ship quarantining in Illinois — the last passengers and contacts were released from quarantine on July 2nd.
- The North American strains of hantavirus do NOT spread person to person.
- Rodents in North America do NOT carry the Andes strain that affected the cruise ship.
- Dogs and cats do NOT carry the virus and cannot spread it to humans.
- This is not a cause for another pandemic. Hantaviruses do not normally spread person to person, and unlike COVID, it does not mutate to avoid immunity. The Andes strain is not a new virus; experts have tracked it for over 30 years.