

Microbe Monthly

Communicable Disease Report

September 2008

El Paso County Department
of Health & Environment

Immunization Rates in School Children and Vaccine Preventable Diseases

This is the time of year when parents visit their child's clinician for back-to-school physicals and immunizations. In light of the recent surge in measles across the United States (see section below), we are providing data on immunization rates among students entering kindergarten in Colorado and El Paso County. The latest data comes from a school-based audit of immunization records for the 2007-08 school year. As the adjacent table shows, the percent of kindergarten students up-to-date for all state required vaccines is less than 70%—well below the Healthy People 2010 goal of 95%. For measles, immunization rates of less than 90% puts our community at high risk for propagating an outbreak, should measles be introduced into a school.

Varicella immunization rates also are low despite data showing that a 2-dose regimen is necessary to prevent spread in close settings such as schools.

The second dose of varicella vaccine is being implemented on an integrated schedule in Colorado schools. For the 2008-09 school year, two doses of varicella vaccine is required for kindergarten and first grade; one dose is required for grades 2-8. In El Paso County, there were 89 varicella cases reported in 2007—down from 127 in 2006—and thus far in 2008 there have been 73 cases. As illustrated in graph below, varicella occurs seasonally with most cases reported during the school year.

For the 2008-09 school year in Colorado, Tdap vaccine will be required for all incoming sixth, seventh, tenth and eleventh grade students. There were 53 cases of pertussis reported in El Paso County for 2007; so far in 2008 there have been 7 cases reported.

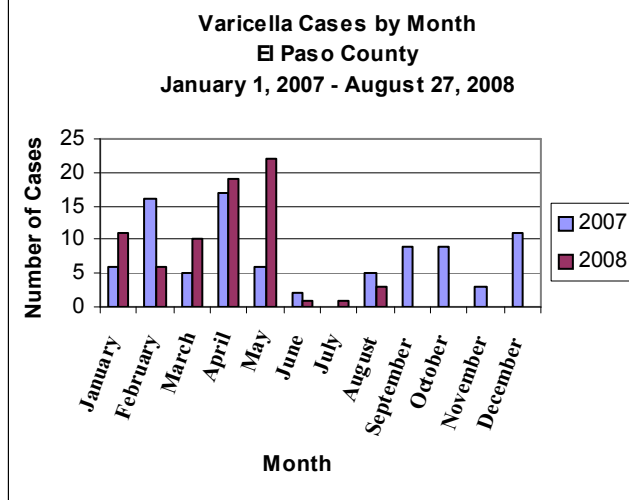
In the immunization audit, 73% of underimmunized school children did not have evidence of receiving all of the required vaccines, while 16% were underimmunized because of personal or religious exemptions taken by parents. The survey was not designed to explore why parents chose exemptions. Public health develops and disseminates messages regarding the benefits of vaccination, but we also rely heavily on community health care providers to promote vaccination and address parental concerns regarding vaccine risk and side effects.

**Immunization Rate Comparisons:
Percent of Students Up-to-Date at Kindergarten Entry
2007-2008 School Year**

Vaccine	El Paso County	Colorado
All CO-required vaccines	68.9%	69.6%
MMR	85.0%	86.2%
Varicella	73.4%	74.8%
DTaP	90.6%	94.8%

El Paso County Disease Trends

- In August 2008, 34 communicable diseases were reported and investigated: *Campylobacter* (6), chronic hepatitis B (1), cryptosporidiosis (1), *Giardia* (4), hepatitis A (2), invasive pneumococcal disease (1), *Salmonella* (5), *Shigella* (1), STEC (shiga-toxin producing *E. coli*) (4), *Varicella* (3) and viral meningitis (6).
- The Communicable Disease Program received 3 possible foodborne illness complaints in August, bringing the year-to-date total to 114.
- Thus far in 2008, there have been 35 illness outbreaks reported: 8 influenza in long-term care facilities (LTCFs); 10 norovirus/gastrointestinal in LTCFs; 13 associated with retail food establishments; 3 associated with schools; and 1 in a home/neighborhood.
- In El Paso County, the year-to-date (Jan-Aug 2008) total of varicella cases is 73, compared to a total of 57 for Jan-Aug 2007. By contrast, Colorado YTD totals have decreased (2007 = 739; 2008 = 607).



Hot Topics—State and National

- Limited supplies of **rabies vaccine** remain a concern nationally. Recommendations for human rabies prevention include: 1) precautions to the public for avoiding rabies exposure; 2) consultation with public health for appropriate use of vaccine for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP); 3) judicious use of rabies PEP for known rabies exposures or high-risk suspect exposures. For further information, visit: www.cdc.gov/rabies/news/2008-08-15_RabVaxupdate.html
- From Jan-July 2008, CDC reported 131 national **measles** cases compared to a yearly average of 63 from 2000-2007. Seventy-six percent of cases were under 20 years of age and 89% were imported or associated with an imported case. Ninety-one percent of the cases were unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccine status. Control of measles outbreaks in the United States is best achieved through high MMWR vaccination rates, especially in children and travelers. View the full report: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5733a1.htm

Contact Information

<u>CD/TB Program</u>	
Weekday Hours	719-578-3220
After-Hours Emergency	719-385-9622
<u>Immunizations</u>	
	719-578-3272
<u>Environmental Health</u>	
	719-575-8636
<u>STD Program</u>	
	719-578-3296
(Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Hep C, HIV/AIDS, Blood-borne Exposures)	
<u>Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment</u>	
Weekday Hours	303-692-2700
After Hours	303-370-9395