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EPI-MONITOR

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Disease Spotlight: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning occurs when excessive inhalation of carbon monoxide gas causes it to build up in the blood, reducing oxygen delivery throughout the body. CO is a colorless, odorless, and toxic gas, and symptoms often mimic the flu—headache, nausea, dizziness, and weakness—but can rapidly progress to confusion, seizures, or even death with high exposure.

CO is produced when fuels like propane, gasoline, charcoal, and wood burn incompletely. Common sources include portable generators, grills, gas stoves, vehicle exhaust, and fuel-powered space heaters—especially dangerous when used indoors or in poorly ventilated areas.

In Collier County, CO poisoning cases have historically increased following major hurricanes, as residents often rely on fuel-powered devices during extended power outages. These post-storm surges contrast sharply with the lower numbers typically seen in non-hurricane years.

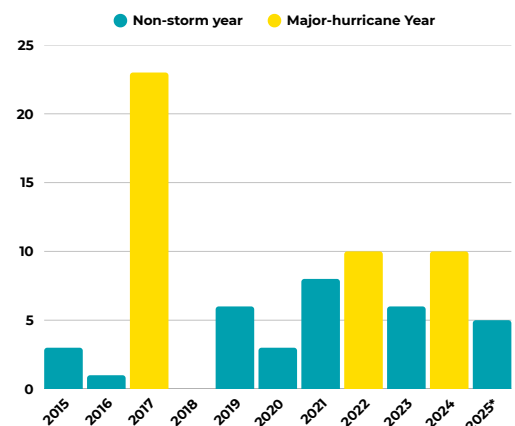
So far in 2025, 5 cases have been reported from January through July.

Prevent Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning by:

- Use generators outdoors—at least 20 feet from doors, windows, or vents.
- Never use grills or fuel-burning devices indoors, including garages.
- Install CO detectors in your home and test them regularly.
- Avoid running vehicles in garages, even with doors open.
- Have fuel-burning appliances inspected and vented properly.

CO risks rise after storms. Follow these tips to stay safe during power outages.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Cases in Collier County (2015-2025)



*2025 data are preliminary and reflect cases reported from January through July only.

Post-Hurricane & Disaster Safety

After hurricanes and other natural disasters, floodwaters and debris can pose serious health risks. Avoid contact with standing water and damaged water lines, which may contain sewage, harmful chemicals, or bacteria such as *Vibrio* that can cause severe wound infections, especially in people with open cuts or weakened immune systems. Wear waterproof boots and gloves if you must enter floodwater, and wash thoroughly afterward.

Standing water can also create ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which may spread illnesses like West Nile virus or dengue. Protect yourself by using EPA-approved insect repellents, wearing long sleeves and pants, and eliminating any containers or areas holding water around your home.

Flooding and power outages can also impact food and drinking water safety. Follow boil water advisories, discard food that may have spoiled or come into contact with floodwater, and never consume tap water unless you are certain it's safe.

Wildlife such as bats, raccoons, or stray animals may be displaced into residential areas. Avoid approaching or handling them, as some may carry rabies or other diseases. If bitten or scratched, seek medical care immediately.

Stay alert, use protective gear, and practice good hygiene to reduce your risk of injury or illness in the aftermath of a storm.



Holiday Food Safety

Don't Let Salmonella Crash Your Holiday Feast

Keep your holiday meals safe by following essential food safety practices during preparation, cooking, serving, and storage. Protect your guests from foodborne illness with these simple tips:

- **Cook Thoroughly:** Use a food thermometer to ensure meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs reach safe internal temperatures to kill harmful germs.
- **Prevent Cross-Contamination:** Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from ready-to-eat foods at the store and in the fridge.
- **Avoid the "Danger Zone":** Refrigerate leftovers, cooked meats, seafood, and rice within 2 hours to prevent bacteria growth (40°F–140°F is the danger zone).
- **Wash Hands Often:** Always wash hands with soap and water—especially before, during, and after food prep; before eating; after using the restroom; changing diapers; feeding pets; or handling trash.
- **Thaw Food Safely:** Thaw frozen turkey in the fridge, cold water (changed every 30 minutes), or microwave. Never thaw on the counter.

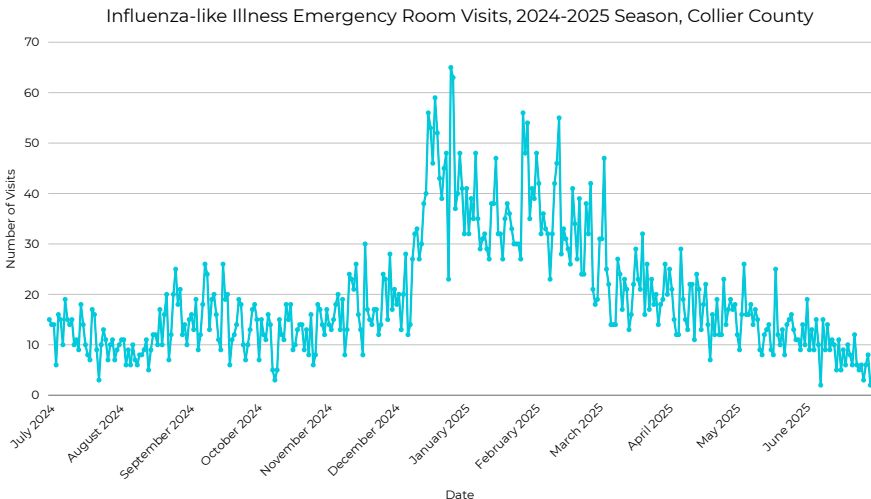


Holiday food safety matters. Salmonella, *E. coli*, Listeria, and Norovirus can all cause serious illness. Following these guidelines will help ensure a healthy and happy holiday gathering.

Influenza Updates

The 2024–2025 influenza season officially began on September 29, 2024. Flu activity in Collier County reached its peak in late December and remained elevated through late February. Although the season concluded on May 17, 2025, the Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier) continues year-round surveillance of influenza-like illness, as sporadic cases may still occur outside the typical season.

The 2025–2026 influenza season will commence on September 28, 2025. DOH-Collier distributes weekly influenza surveillance reports via email to community partners and medical providers. To be included in the weekly influenza distribution list, please contact the Epidemiology Program at DOH-Collier.



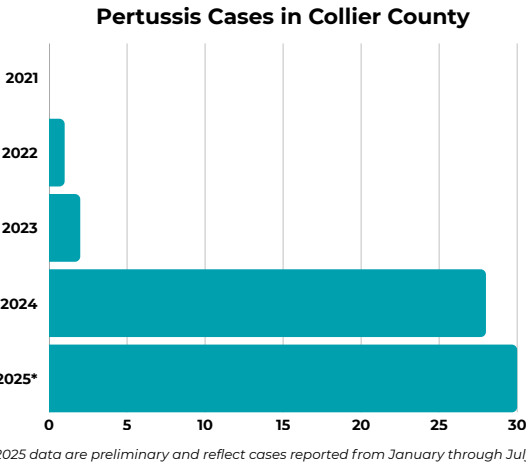
"Florida Influenza Surveillance Reports | Florida Department of Health." www.floridahealth.gov, www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/respiratory-illness/influenza/florida-influenza-surveillance-report-archive/index.html.
"Epidemiology | Florida Department of Health in Collier." Floridahealth.gov, 2025, collier.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/infectious-disease-services/epidemiology/index.html. 2025.

Pertussis Activity Increasing in Collier County

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by *Bordetella pertussis*. It typically begins with cold-like symptoms and can progress to severe coughing fits, posing serious risks to infants and individuals with compromised immune systems. This increase in cases reflects a broader statewide trend being observed across Florida.

The resurgence of Pertussis cases may be attributed to waning immunity and under-immunization. Healthcare providers are urged to remain vigilant, promptly report suspected cases, and encourage immunization, especially among vulnerable populations such as infants and their caregivers.

The epidemiology team has observed a notable uptick in pertussis cases in 2025. From January through July, 30 confirmed cases have already been reported—compared to 9 during the same period in 2024 and just 2 cases throughout all of 2023.



Reminders

Rabies Possible Exposure: If a patient has an exposure requiring post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), treatment must start at the emergency room and the epidemiology program must be contacted 239-252-8226. Please fax a copy of the animal bite report to Domestic Animals Services (fax: 239-252-2343) as soon as possible. It is important that the bite reports are submitted to Collier County Domestic Animal Services in a timely manner so that investigations can begin as soon as possible. The epidemiology program is available for consultation regarding the initiation of rabies PEP.

Reportable Diseases/Conditions: Provided a patient is diagnosed with a disease or health condition that is reportable under Florida law, someone from the epidemiology program at the DOH-Collier will be contacting them via telephone, mail, and/or home visit to conduct an epidemiologic interview.

Attention: Certain diseases and conditions in Florida must be reported immediately upon suspicion to the Department of Health. These high-priority conditions, marked in red on the reportable diseases list, require urgent reporting to facilitate rapid public health response. Timely reporting ensures appropriate investigation, contact tracing, and control measures. For the full list and reporting guidelines, visit the link below.
https://collier.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/infectious-disease-services/healthcare-providers/_documents/reportablediseasepractitionerlist.pdf

Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention: Infants born to women who test HBsAg-positive should receive hepatitis B immune globulin and the hepatitis B vaccine series. DOH-Collier monitors these infants' records, and then requests testing to confirm immunity to hepatitis B after completion of the immunizations. Current household, sexual, and needle-sharing contacts of pre-natal clients who test HBsAg-positive will be identified, and the DOH-Collier will provide testing and immunoprophylaxis for these individuals. If you have a pregnant client who tests HBsAg-positive, please notify the epidemiology program at 239-252-8226.

Comparison of Selected Reportable Diseases for Collier County, 2024-2025

	January - July 2024	January - July 2025
Central Nervous System & Invasive Diseases		
CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE (CJD)	1	0
MENINGITIS (BACTERIAL, CRYPTOCOCCAL, MYCOTIC)	1	1
MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE	0	0
Hepatitis		
HEPATITIS A	0	2
HEPATITIS B ACUTE	4	2
HEPATITIS B (+HBsAg IN PREGNANT WOMEN)*	5	7
HEPATITIS B CHRONIC	65	38
HEPATITIS C ACUTE	5	4
HEPATITIS C CHRONIC	81	38
Enteric Diseases		
CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS	97	109
CHOLERA (VIBRIO CHOLERA, TYPE O1)	0	0
CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS	10	4
CYCLOSPORIASIS	0	0
ESCHERICHIA COLI, SHIGA TOXIN PRODUCING	24	8
GIARDIASIS	12	8
HEMOLYTIC UREMIC SYNDROME	0	0
SALMONELLOSIS	70	60
SHIGELLOSIS	7	4
VIBRIO ALGINOLYTICUS	6	1
VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS	1	1
VIBRIO VULNIFICUS	0	0
OTHER VIBRIO SPECIES	3	1
Vaccine Preventable Diseases		
INFLUENZA A (NOVEL OR PANDEMIC STRAINS)	0	0
INFLUENZA A (PEDIATRIC MORTALITY)	0	0
MUMPS	1	1
PERTUSSIS	9	30
VARICELLA	6	4
Vector Borne & Zoonotic Diseases		
ANIMAL BITE (PEP RECOMMENDED)	70	67
BRUCELLA	0	0
DENGUE FEVER (Imported)	4	3
LYME DISEASE	2	16
MALARIA	1	1
RABID ANIMALS	0	0
SPOTTED FEVER RICKETTSIOSES	0	0
WEST NILE VIRUS	2	0
Others		
CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING	9	5
CIGUATERA	1	1
LEAD POISONING	53	14
LEGIONELLA	6	8
LISTERIOSIS	0	2
PESTICIDE-RELATED ILLNESS/INJURY	0	0
Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)		
CHLAMYDIA	815	677
GONORRHEA	146	94
SYPHILIS	72	59

*Disease counts for 2025 are preliminary