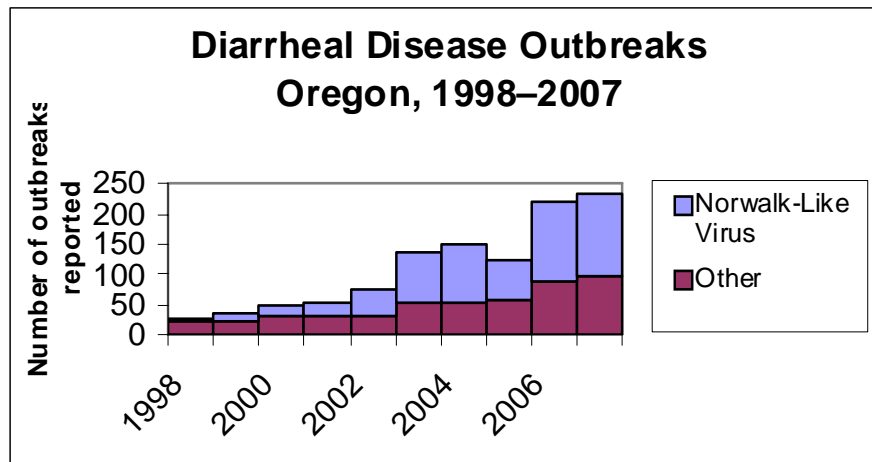


Foodborne Disease



What is the occurrence and costs of foodborne diseases?

- Six percent of Oregonians, or 200,000 people, acquire an acute diarrheal illness every *month*, of which half may be foodborne.
- Over 300,000 Oregonians seek medical care for diarrheal illness every year, including thousands hospitalized or treated in emergency rooms; most infections are minor, but the cost of a single case of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection with kidney failure may be \$300,000 or more.
- Outbreaks of gastroenteritis are common; during 2006–2007, Oregon public health agencies have investigated an average 17 such outbreaks per month.

What causes foodborne disease?

- Foodborne disease can be caused by viruses (e.g. Norovirus), parasites (e.g. giardia), bacteria (e.g. *E. coli* O157:H7), prions (Mad Cow Disease), and toxic exposures (staphylococcal food poisoning).
- Past foodborne outbreaks in Oregon have included: salmonellosis from alfalfa sprouts and commercial egg salad; shigellosis from bean dip; listeriosis from hot dogs; *E. coli* O157 infections from ground beef and raw milk; and *Vibrio* infections from raw shellfish.

What can be done to prevent foodborne disease?

State activities to prevent foodborne illnesses include:

- Investigating outbreaks to identify and stop transmission from ongoing sources.
- Trying to identify environmental antecedents of restaurant-associated outbreaks.
- Educating the public and food handlers about the importance of hand washing and proper food-handling practices (keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold).

For more information contact:

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