

The Amarillo Public Health (APH) Communicable Disease program is responsible for the investigation of disease to protect citizens in Potter and Randall counties.

**Table 1. 2022-2023 Selected Notifiable Condition Cases Reported and Residing in Potter/Randall Counties\***

	<i>Potter</i>		<i>Randall</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
<b><i>Vaccine Preventable</i></b>						
Haemophilus influenzae, invasive	2	3	3	5	5	8
Mumps	0	0	0	1	0	1
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	2	2	1	2	3	4
<i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> , invasive	19	36	16	17	35	53
Varicella (Chickenpox)	1	1	3	7	4	8
<b><i>Enteric</i></b>						
Campylobacteriosis	50	78	62	75	112	153
Cryptosporidiosis	3	15	9	10	12	25
Cyclosporiasis	0	4	2	2	2	6
<i>E. coli</i> , Shiga-toxin producing (STEC)	9	9	17	15	26	24
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (post-diarrheal)	1	0	0	0	1	0
Listeriosis	0	0	0	1	0	1
Salmonellosis	87	37	146	44	233	81
Shigellosis	3	5	2	6	5	11
Vibriosis (non-cholera <i>Vibrio</i> sp. infections)	0	2	2	6	2	8
Yersiniosis	4	4	2	6	6	10
<b><i>Viral Hepatitis</i></b>						
Hepatitis A	2	2	0	0	2	2
Hepatitis C, acute	1	0	0	0	1	0
<b><i>Invasive/Respiratory</i></b>						
Legionellosis	0	3	4	2	4	5
<b><i>Vector-Borne Zoonotic</i></b>						
Dengue	0	1	0	0	0	1
Malaria	0	0	1	1	1	1
Typhus fever-fleaborne, murine	0	0	1	0	1	0
West Nile Virus, non-neuroinvasive (febrile)	0	6	1	4	1	10
West Nile Virus, neuroinvasive	0	3	0	7	0	10
<b><i>Multidrug Resistant Organisms</i></b>						
Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE)**	2	4	0	7	2	11
<b><i>Other Illnesses and Infections</i></b>						
Acute Flacid Myelitis (AFM)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ascariasis (roundworm)	1	0	0	0	1	0
Mpox	0	0	1	1	1	1
<b><i>Sexually Transmitted Infection</i></b>						
AIDS	9	7	1	3	10	10
Chlamydia	1520	958	111	609	1631	1567
Gonorrhoea	686	393	21	194	707	587
HIV	16	26	2	6	18	32
Syphilis	335	312	20	30	355	342
<b><i>Tuberculosis (TB)</i></b>						
Active	***	4	***	0	5	4
Latent <sup>Δ</sup>	***	40	***	10	67	50

## **Table Footnotes**

*\*Data are provisional and subject to change*

*\*\*Includes one case tested at a facility outside of Potter or Randall county.*

*\*\*\*These values were not available for the 2022 report.*

*^Started on latent TB therapy at Amarillo Public Health.*

Condition/case descriptions start on page 3.

## Vaccine Preventable Illnesses

When a person gets some, but not all the recommended vaccines, or they miss one or more doses of one type of vaccine, this is called *under-immunized*. Most infants and toddlers get all their recommended vaccines by age 2, however many children are under-immunized, leaving room for severe illness or outbreaks of disease. Some adolescents and adults are under-immunized as well and miss opportunities to protect themselves against vaccine-preventable diseases such as Varicella (chickenpox), influenza (flu), and illnesses caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

The APH Immunization program offers low to no cost vaccines to children and adults and uses the mobile unit to host and attend local vaccination events.

## Enteric Illness

Enteric illnesses mostly affect the stomach and intestines, and often enter the body through the mouth with food or drink. These germs can be spread to others through very tiny bits of stool from an infected animal or person which ends up in water, drinks, food, or on items that a lot of people touch such as door handles, light switches, shopping carts and railings. Good hand washing, food handling (such as rinsing fruits and vegetables, and being careful with raw meat) and cooking food all the way through is the best way to avoid these illnesses.

## Viral Hepatitis

The word *hepatitis* means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis also refers to a group of viral infections that affect the liver and can be passed from person to person. Hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplants. The best way to prevent Hepatitis A and B is through vaccination. There is now a very effective treatment for Hepatitis C.

**Hepatitis A** illness can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months. Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person eats germs from stool through contact with objects, food, or drinks that have very small amounts of stool from an infected person in it.

**Hepatitis B** is usually spread when blood, semen, or another body fluid from a person infected with the Hepatitis B virus enters the body of someone who is not infected.

**Hepatitis C** is usually spread when blood from a person infected with the Hepatitis C virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. Today, most people become infected with the Hepatitis C virus by sharing needles or other equipment used to inject drugs.

There is a treatment, but no vaccine for Hepatitis C. The best way to prevent Hepatitis C is by avoiding behaviors that can spread the disease, especially injection drug use.

## Invasive/Respiratory Illness

***Legionella pneumophila*** is bacteria which can cause a pneumonia illness called Legionellosis. A person becomes sick with Legionellosis when they breathe in very small droplets of water (like the ones found in a shower, mister, or humidifier) that have Legionella in them. Often Legionella gets into a water system because of changes in the environment such as construction, using water equipment away from home (like a shower in a hotel), or through using tap water instead of distilled water for breathing equipment like a humidifier, CPAP, BIPAP (used to help people who sometimes have trouble breathing) or inhaler. Legionella can also be found in soil.

## Vector-borne/Zoonotic Disease

Vector-borne diseases are carried to either humans or animals by another creature, usually a wild animal or insect. This animal or insect is known as a *vector*.

**Malaria** and **West Nile Virus** are both vector-borne diseases caused by bites from infected mosquitoes. Malaria is an illness that is often picked up during travel to countries where Malaria is common. There are medications which can be taken to help prevent getting Malaria, especially while traveling.

The way to help prevent both West Nile Virus and Malaria is to use personal mosquito or insect repellents, cover skin while outdoors to prevent bites, and make sure that there are no containers with standing water sitting around where mosquitoes can hatch from eggs.

**Murine or Flea-borne Typhus** is a fever illness that a person can get from the bite of an infected flea. Protect from murine typhus by controlling fleas in the home and on pets. Also clearing brush, rock piles, junk, and similar things from around the home makes it less likely for wild animals to live or get close enough to spread fleas. Remember to close holes in your home and keep outside garbage lids closed well, to help keep rodents and mice away.

## Multidrug Resistant Organisms

When medicines usually used against a germ (such as a bacteria or fungus) no longer work well against that germ, the germ is called *resistant*. Sometimes it can be resistant to multiple medications. These germs are called **multidrug resistant organisms or MDROs** and can be worrying because it means there are less helpful medicines for the doctor to choose for treatment. The medical and public health community works together to protect people from MDROs by understanding how patients get sick from MDROs and carefully prescribing medications like antibiotics and antifungals only when needed. A person is more likely to get an MDRO if they have a lot of other conditions which make them sick.

## Other Illnesses and Infections

**Acute Flaccid Myelitis** or AFM is a condition where a person experiences sudden limb weakness, usually in one or more of their limbs (arms or legs), loss of muscle tone, and reflexes. The person might also experience facial drooping/weakness, difficulty moving the eyes, difficulty with swallowing or slurred speech, and trouble urinating. Rarely numbness, tingling, or pain can be felt in the arms or legs. More severe symptoms include trouble keeping a stable body temperature or blood pressure, or having trouble breathing due to weakness of the muscles which support breathing. AFM can be caused by various germs, and is often a complication of another illness.

**Ascariasis** is an illness caused by a worm (roundworm) that is a *parasite*, meaning something that benefits from living in or on another living being, but also harms that living being. Most people get ascariasis by accidentally eating soil that has very small bits of stool in it. The soil can get on the hands or under the nails of people working, living, or playing outside or eating fruits and vegetables that haven't been rinsed very well. Good handwashing and rinsing fruits and vegetables well are the best ways to protect yourself.

**Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease** is a neurodegenerative disease believed to be caused by prions (a disease caused by an abnormally folded protein which has a destructive effect on the brain that worsens over time.) It is very rare

at an estimated 1-2 cases per million people and is often fatal.

**Mpox**, formerly known as “Monkeypox” is an illness that causes a rash and other symptoms like fever, tiredness, and body aches. It usually passes from person to person through close personal contact such as kissing, hugging, sex or similar activity. It is less likely to pass to someone from a sheet or towel or other personal item that someone with the illness has been using. There is currently a vaccine and a treatment for MPOX.

### **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

**Chlamydia** is a harmful infection which can damage a woman's reproductive organs. It is one of the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infections in the United States. There are a lot of people who have Chlamydia, but don't get tested because they don't have symptoms, although it can be harmful even without symptoms.

Chlamydia infection in women is usually mild or *asymptomatic* (doesn't show any symptoms.) Untreated infection can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) which is another illness and a major cause of infertility, problems during pregnancy, and chronic pelvic pain. Chlamydia infection might also make it easier to get and pass human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

**Gonorrhea** is caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, a germ that can grow and multiply easily in some of the warm, moist areas of the reproductive tract in women and men, but also in the mouth, throat, eyes, and anus.

Infections due to *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* are a major cause of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in the United States.

**Syphilis** is caused by *Treponema pallidum*. It has often been called "the great imitator" because so many of the signs and symptoms are similar to those of other infections and illnesses. Many people infected with syphilis do not have any symptoms for years and remain at risk for late-stage severe illness if they are not treated.

Syphilis is passed from person to person through direct contact with a syphilis sore. Sores appear mainly on the outside of the reproductive organs, vagina, anus, or in the rectum. Sores also can occur on the lips and in the mouth. Syphilis can NOT be spread through contact with toilet seats, doorknobs, swimming pools, hot tubs, bathtubs, shared clothing, or eating utensils. Pregnant people with the disease can pass it to the babies they are carrying.

### **HIV & AIDS**

**HIV** is the *human immunodeficiency virus*. It can lead to *acquired immune deficiency syndrome*, or AIDS. HIV damages a person's body by destroying specific blood cells which help the body fight illness.

People living with HIV may look and feel healthy for several years. However, even if they feel healthy, HIV is still affecting their bodies. All people with HIV should be seen on a regular basis by a health care provider experienced in treating HIV infection and possibly get helpful medications.

Support services are also available to many people with HIV. These services can help people deal with their diagnosis, reduce risk behavior, and find needed services.

**AIDS** is the late stage of HIV infection, when a person's immune system is badly damaged and has difficulty fighting illness and certain cancers. Currently, people can live much longer with HIV before they develop AIDS because of very helpful medications.

The Amarillo Public Health HIV/STD program conducts HIV prevention activities including screening and treatment, partner contact tracing, HIV prevention outreach and connection to support services.

## **Tuberculosis**

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a germ called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB usually attacks the lungs but can also attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain. If not treated correctly, TB disease can lead to death.

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease in their lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. People nearby might breathe in these germs and become infected. In most people who breathe in TB germs and become infected, the body can fight it off to stop it from growing.

TB is NOT spread by shaking someone's hand, sharing food or drink, touching, bedsheets, toilet seats, sharing toothbrushes, or kissing.

TB germs can live in the body without making you sick. This is called *latent TB infection (LTBI)*. People with LTBI do not feel sick, do not have any symptoms, and can't spread TB germs to others. However, TB can become active if the immune system cannot stop it from growing. If this happens, the person will go from having LTBI to being sick with TB illness.

The Amarillo Public Health TB program diagnoses and manages latent TB. They provide case management and directly observed therapy for patients with active TB.

All information from various resources, but mostly the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and the Red Book.

Please visit [www.amarillopublichealth.com](http://www.amarillopublichealth.com) for more information on any of our programs or services.