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Ashe County Communicable Disease Update

TRENDS, UPDATES & IMPORTANT POINTS

- Respiratory diseases have been sharply increasing across the district and state in recent weeks. These increases have been reflected in emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and COVID-19 wastewater levels over the past month.

- Updated COVID and influenza (flu) vaccines are available in the community and are the best way to protect against serious illness. The COVID-19 vaccine is available for everyone 6 months and older.

- With flu season progressing, and increasing hospitalizations and deaths from influenza, now is the time to ensure vaccination. Flu shots are readily available for individuals ages 6 months and older. Visit MySpot.nc.gov/Flu for more information on the flu vaccine.

- Appointments for vaccines are readily available. Call to schedule with AppHealthCare at (828) 795-1970.

North Carolina COVID-19 and Respiratory Surveillance Updates

Data from the CDC and NCDHHS, accessed 1/10/2024

Ashe County, New COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level:

LOW

STATE WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE DATA

NCDHHS tracks the level of COVID-19 shed into wastewater. This metric provides a reliable population level picture of the amount of virus at the community level.

Latest Week: An average of **125.1 Million COVID-19 virus particles** per person were found in wastewater samples statewide, **an increase** from the week before. (The week before was 77.6 Million.)
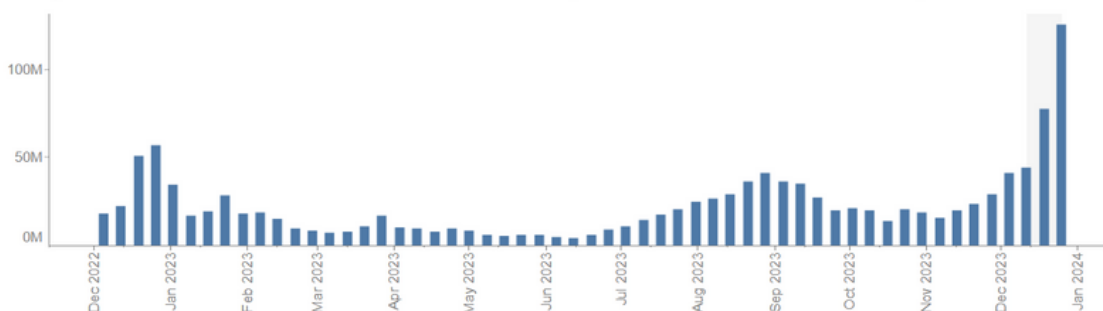

Average COVID-19 virus copies found per person per week from participating North Carolina wastewater treatment plants. COVID-19 virus particles appearing in wastewater can signal how quickly the virus is spreading, even if people don't get tested or have symptoms. Levels of influenza and RSV can also be measured in wastewater. More Info

(NCDHHS, 2023)

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS FOR RESPIRATORY VIRUS

This metric shows the percent of emergency department visits that are for symptoms or diagnoses of COVID-19, RSV, flu, and all acute respiratory illnesses combined. This metric provides an early indication of rising levels of respiratory illness in the community, and insight into the burden on local emergency departments.

Latest Week: **17.2% of emergency room visits** had symptoms of a respiratory virus, **a decrease** from the week before. (The week before was 23.3%.)
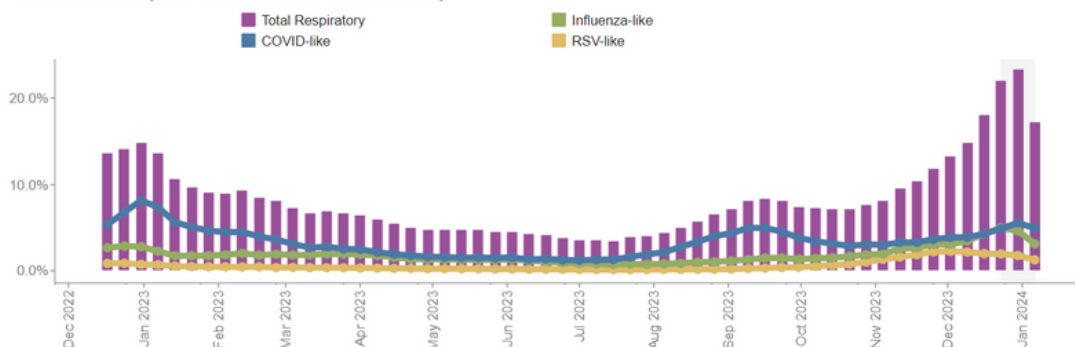
Percentage of North Carolina emergency department visits with symptoms or a diagnosis of a particular respiratory virus. More info

(NCDHHS, 2023)
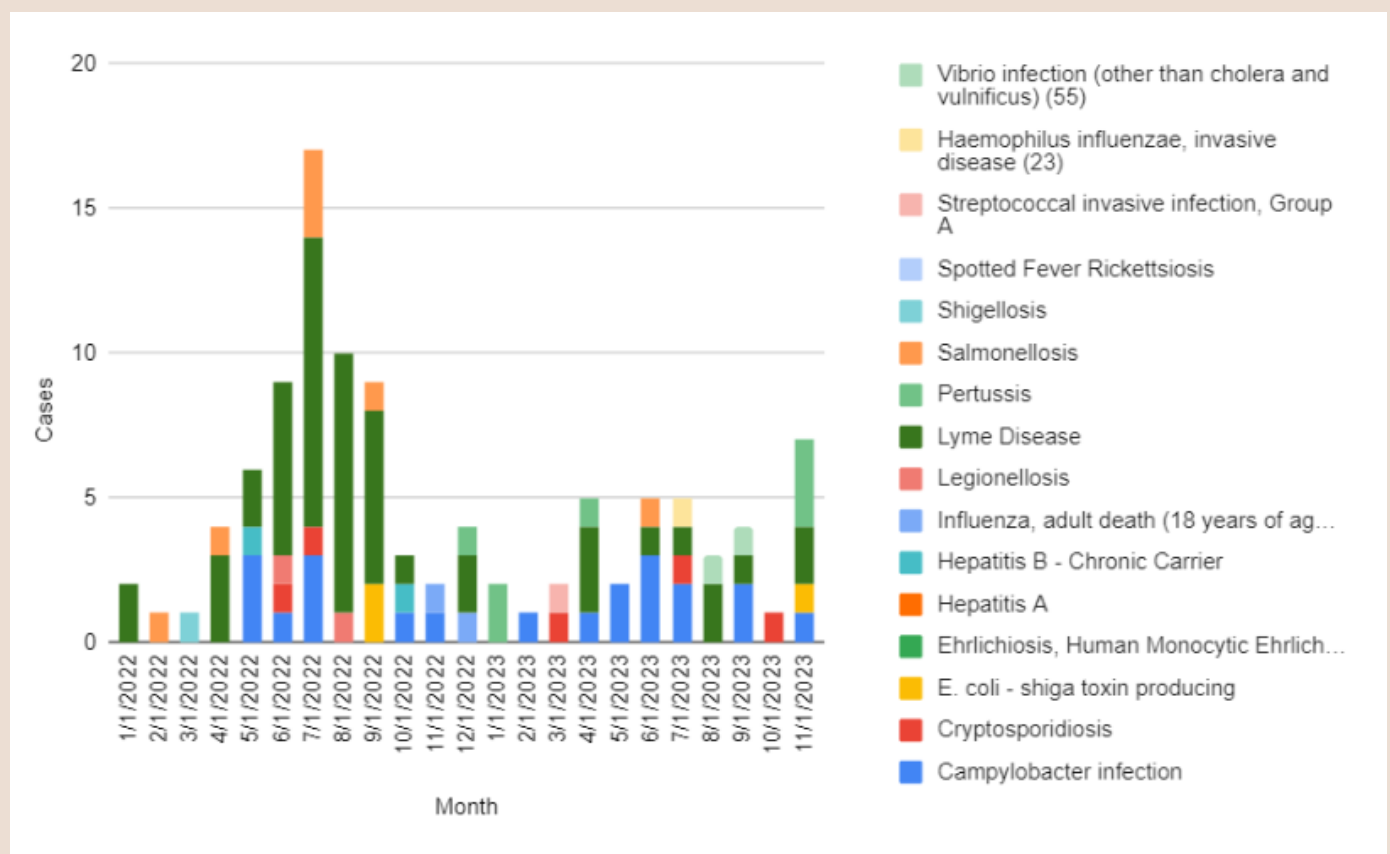
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Ashe County
General Communicable Disease Data

Data from the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System, accessed 1/9/2023, reflecting data through November 2023.

Communicable diseases are illnesses that spread from one person to another or from a source in the environment to a person, such as from animals, surfaces, food or water, respiratory droplets, bodily fluids, and bugs. Because communicable diseases can have so much impact on the population, the surveillance and control of such diseases is an important part of protecting the public's health. (CDC, 2023)

The figures below represent the general communicable disease cases in Ashe County that are reportable in North Carolina, excluding sexually transmitted infections, human immunodeficiency virus, syphilis, Hepatitis C, tuberculosis, and sensitive cases that may be identifiable due to low numbers and concerns for patient identity and privacy.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CASES IN ASHE COUNTY BY MONTH

Due to delays in reporting, data in recent months may be incomplete, and data in prior months may change as cases are reported.
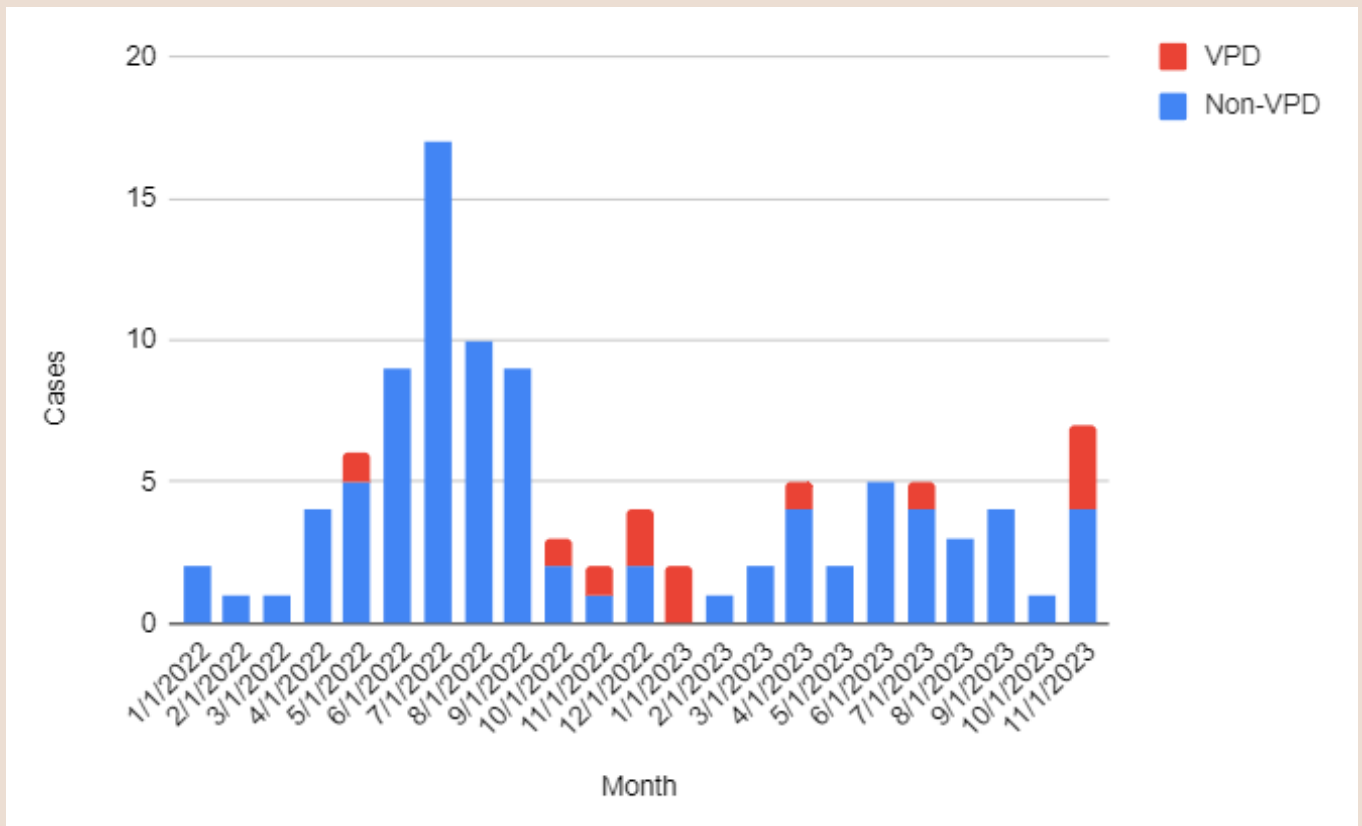
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Ashe County
Vaccine Preventable Disease Data

Data from the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System, accessed 1/9/2023, reflecting data through November 2023.

Vaccines prevent disease and disease transmission in the people who receive them and they provide protection for the broader community. Because of childhood vaccination programs, diseases like polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella, mumps, and tetanus are no longer widespread in the United States. However, cases and outbreaks of these diseases continue to occur due to travel to and from areas with lower vaccine coverage. Many diseases however are not preventable through vaccines, including but not limited to Lyme disease, rocky mountain spotted fever, and salmonella. (CDC, 2023)

The figures below represent vaccine preventable disease (VPD) cases in Ashe County by month, as compared to general non-VPD cases (excluding sexually transmitted infections, human immunodeficiency virus, syphilis, chronic Hepatitis C, tuberculosis, and sensitive cases that may be identifiable due to low numbers and concerns for patient identity and privacy).

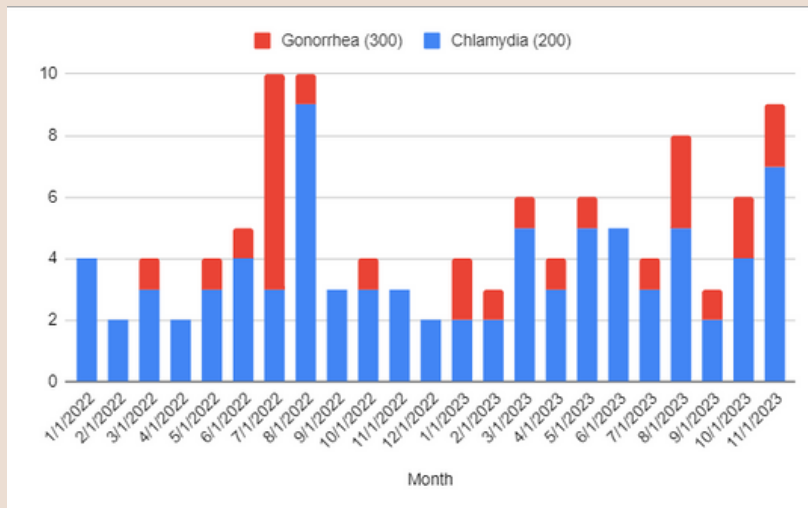## VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASE CASES IN ASHE COUNTY BY MONTH

Due to delays in reporting, data in recent months may be incomplete, and data in prior months may change as cases are reported.

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Ashe County
# Sexually Transmitted Infection Data

Data from the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System, accessed 1/9/2023, reflecting data through November 2023.

In North Carolina, there are various reportable bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including gonorrhea, chlamydia, and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). Chlamydia is the most prevalent STI in Ashe County, with gonorrhea as the second most prevalent. AppHealthCare provides clinical services, education and awareness efforts and monitors disease trends. To best prevent the spread of STIs, seek free routine testing and treatment if relevant, and take precautions to promote safety. The figures below represent STI cases in Ashe County by month. (NCEDSS, 2023)

REPORTABLE SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION CASES IN ASHE COUNTY BY TYPE AND MONTH

REPORTABLE SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION CASES IN ASHE COUNTY BY YEAR
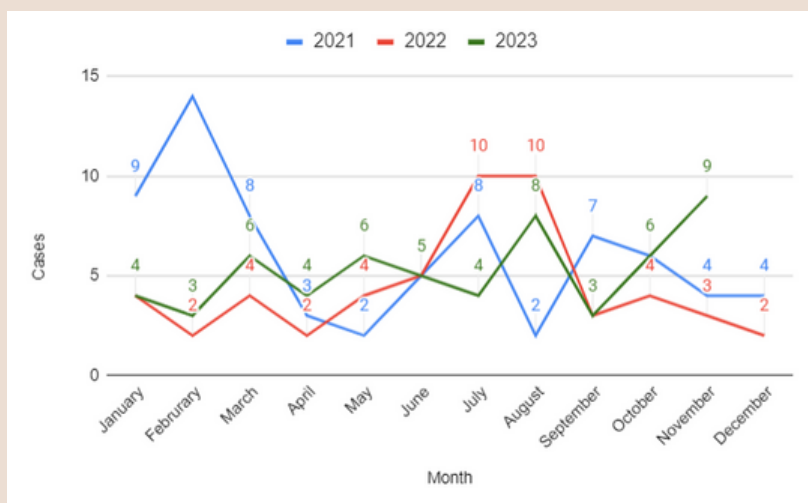
Due to delays in reporting, data in recent months may be incomplete, and data in prior months may change as cases are reported.

Ashe County
2022 Communicable Disease Data

Data from The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health's Interactive Disease Data Dashboard (NCD3), accessed 7/7/2023

The figure below shows the proportional disease burden in North Carolina as compared to Ashe County by disease group, with the disease with the highest proportional disease burden detailed. To hover and view each of the diseases and their incidence rate, refer to NCD3, the North Carolina Disease Data Dashboard.

Reportable Communicable Diseases: Annual Incidence Rates per 100,000 Population

(NCDHHS, 2023)

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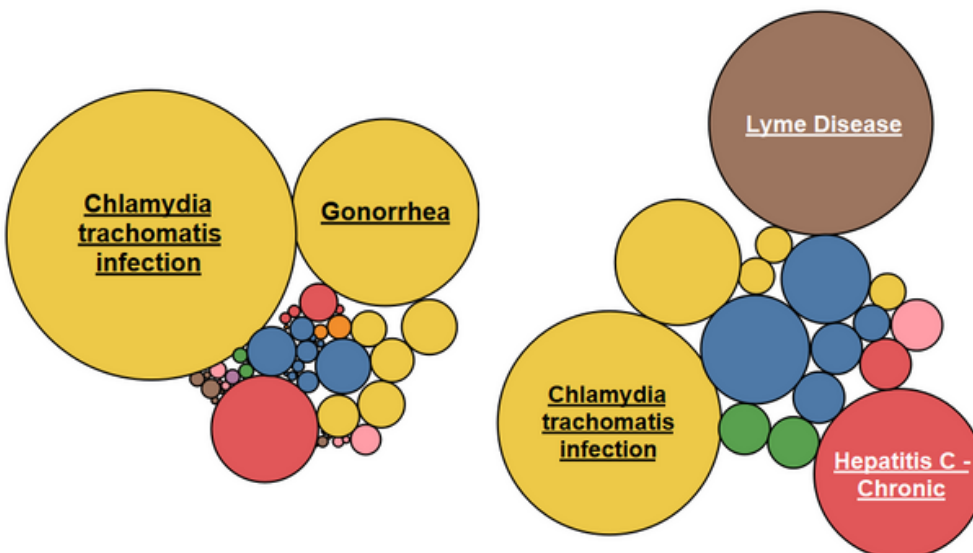
References and Data Notes

References

1. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (2023). COVID-19 data dashboard. https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard
2. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (2023). Interactive Data Dashboard (NCD3). https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/figures.html
3. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (2023). Treatment Readily Available if You Test Positive for COVID-19, [Media Release] https://www.ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/2023/09/06/treatment-readily-available-if-you-test-positive-covid-19
4. North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (2023). North Carolina Division of Public Health, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Data Notes

Cases reflected in Ashe County data are categorized by the reporting county, and have been updated to include both confirmed and probable cases. Confirmed and probable cases are classified based on case definitions for the respective disease according to the NC Communicable Disease Manual and as classified in the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System. Cases not reported include sensitive cases that may be identifiable due to low numbers and concerns for patient identity and privacy. Cases are categorized monthly based on their earliest date of their symptoms, or if unavailable or not relevant, their test date. Due to delays in reporting, data in recent months may be incomplete, and data in prior months may change as cases are reported. For further data on communicable diseases in NC counties by year, refer to the North Carolina Division of Public Health, North Carolina Disease Data Dashboard.