Listeriosis is a bacterial infection caused by Listeria monocytogenes. People become infected by eating foods contaminated with the bacteria. To learn more about listeriosis, please visit our website.

The number of cases of listeriosis in NYS, excluding NYC, has remained relatively low in the past five years, with a 5 year average incidence rate of 0.42 listeriosis cases per 100,000 population.

Of the 233 listeriosis cases, 92% were hospitalized; 17% resulted in death.
Listeriosis primarily affects older adults, pregnant women, newborns, and other individuals with compromised immune systems. The cases observed here in those < 1 year of age are largely the result of infection that occurred in the mother during pregnancy.

The higher incidence among females in traditional childbearing ages of 18-39 compared to their male counterparts is related to these women being at higher risk of infection due to pregnancy. Of the 17 female listeriosis cases between the ages of 18 and 39 years, approximately 65% were associated with a pregnancy.

Among those 60 years and older, incidence increases with advancing age in both males and females, although by 80+ years of age, males have one-and-a-half times the incidence rate compared to females of the same age.

Pregnant women are more susceptible to listeriosis than non-pregnant healthy adults. An individual who is pregnant and contracts listeriosis is at an increased risk for miscarriage, premature delivery, and passing the infection to the infant, which can result in stillbirth. Among the 12 pregnancy-associated cases of listeriosis,

- 41.7% (n=5) resulted in live births
- 50.0% (n=6) resulted in fetal/neonatal deaths (miscarriage/stillbirth/died after birth)
- 8.3% (n=1) was still pregnant following discharge

In 2010, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed Healthy People 2020, the nation’s new 10-year goals and objectives for health promotion and disease prevention. One of the goals was to reduce the rate of listeriosis incidence, which is commonly transmitted through food, such as raw milk, soft cheeses, ready to eat meats (i.e., hot dogs, deli meats), and sprouts.

The five-year average incidence rate in the United States is 0.30. The target for the Healthy People 2020 goal is an incidence rate of 0.2 cases per 100,000 population. New York has consistently had a higher than average incidence rate, and has not yet been able to meet the Healthy People 2020 goal.