



EPI WATCH

Tetanus

By: Yilian Alonso Otano

205 Dr. MLK Jr. St. N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
727-824-6900

Director
Ulyee Choe, DO

Editor
Stephen Marlin, MPH, CPH,
Stephen.marlin@FLHealth.gov

**Division of Disease Control
and Health Protection**

Disease Reporting
To report diseases and
clusters of illness:
Phone: 727-824-6932
Fax: 727-484-3865
(excluding HIV/AIDS)

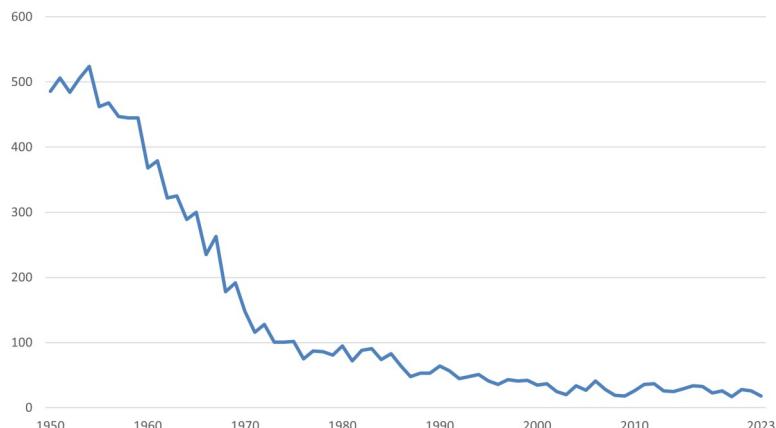
To report HIV/AIDS by
mail:
Surveillance Room 3-138
205 Dr. MLK Jr St. N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Find us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/HealthyPinellas

Follow us on X:
[@HealthyPinellas](https://www.x.com/HealthyPinellas)

Tetanus is a notifiable disease caused by spores that grow into the bacteria *Clostridium tetani* after entering the body through wounds. These spores can be found in the environment, often in soil, manure, concrete surfaces and rusted metal^{1,2}. Most commonly the first symptom reported for tetanus is "lockjaw" and may start within 3 to 21 days after exposure to *C. tetani* spores, with a mean incubation period of 8 days¹. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle spasms and stiffness, trouble swallowing, and seizures. It leads to respiratory problems that may need urgent medical treatment and can result in death. Individuals who have a wound, are not immunized against tetanus, use injection drugs, are immunocompromised, of older age, or diabetic are at higher risk of tetanus infection¹. Tetanus can be prevented by the Tdap, DTaP, or Td vaccines. Since tetanus immunization was introduced in 1947, cases in the United States have decreased by more than 95% and deaths have decreased by 99% ³.

U.S. Reported Tetanus Cases, 1947-2023



Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/tetanus/php/surveillance/index.htm>

There are fewer than 40 cases of tetanus reported per year in the United States in the past two decades, often consisting of individuals who are not fully immunized³. Since *C. tetani* spores are found in the environment in the United States², the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends to complete the immunization schedule for tetanus and receive boosters every 10 years to prevent an infection⁴. It is recommended to practice immediate wound care to any wound, even if minor, to prevent infections. If the wound was a result of a puncture, especially from an animal bite or a rusted metal object like a nail, is covered in dirt or feces, or has dead skin tissue, it is recommended to be evaluated by a healthcare provider.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/tetanus/site.html>

²<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11610744/>

³<https://www.cdc.gov/tetanus/php/surveillance/index.html>

⁴<https://www.cdc.gov/tetanus/hcp/vaccine-recommendations/index.html>

Select Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	Pinellas		YTD Total		Pinellas County Annual Totals		
	Oct 2025	Oct 2024	Pinellas 2025	Florida 2025	2024	2023	2022
A. Vaccine Preventable							
Coronavirus 2019	413	662	9195	205185	19906	45495	110629
Measles	0	0	0	6	0	0	0
Mpox	2	5	4	90	12	6	162
Mumps	0	0	0	7	2	0	0
Pertussis	15	5	92	1380	38	1	2
Varicella	1	0	16	449	175	25	24
B. CNS Diseases & Bacteremias							
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	0	2	35	3	1	3
Meningitis (bacterial, cryptococcal, mycotic)	0	2	2	107	16	6	12
Meningococcal Disease	0	0	1	25	1	3	2
C. Enteric Infections							
Campylobacteriosis	19	20	218	5376	227	224	208
Cryptosporidiosis	4	3	22	411	30	28	38
Cyclosporiasis	0	1	4	202	7	11	21
<i>E. coli</i> Shiga Toxin (+)	5	5	33	1068	34	37	28
Giardiasis	4	3	34	902	59	40	34
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	0	0	2	29	2	2	0
Listeriosis	0	0	4	47	1	2	3
Salmonellosis	24	27	160	7292	226	194	174
Shigellosis	5	4	45	1037	46	56	37
D. Viral Hepatitis							
Hepatitis A	0	0	0	123	1	1	20
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman +HBsAg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hepatitis B, Acute	1	5	11	441	32	37	33
Hepatitis C, Acute	5	4	62	1422	93	106	120
E. Vectorborne/Zoonoses							
Animal Rabies	0	0	1	94	1	1	0
Rabies, possible exposure	36	18	260	6868	249	227	151
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	0	54	1	0	0
Dengue fever	0	1	7	459	10	5	7
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	2	1	17	344	13	21	11
Malaria	0	0	0	38	2	4	4
West Nile Virus	0	1	0	8	1	0	0
Zika Virus Disease	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
F. Others							
Hansens Disease (Leprosy)	0	0	0	34	1	1	0
Legionellosis	1	7	34	596	36	16	38
Mercury Poisoning	0	0	0	33	0	0	0
Vibrio Infections	2	15	22	336	32	13	11
Tuberculosis	1	2	27	540	24	20	22
G. Sexually Transmitted Infections							
Chlamydia	283	216	2979	80293	3904	4256	4054
Gonorrhea	140	136	1353	29963	1806	1802	1752
Syphilis, Total	42	43	410	12950	577	687	766
Syphilis, Infectious (Primary and Secondary)	13	28	156	2369	286	361	347
Syphilis, Early Latent	17	7	146	4377	144	206	279
Syphilis, Late Syphilis (Late Latent; Neurosyphilis)	12	7	104	6008	140	112	135
Syphilis, Congenital	0	1	4	196	7	8	5

All data are provisional and subject to updates as new reports are received and reviewed.

*YTD up to October 31, 2025

**includes travel and non-travel associated cases