

# Varicella Surveillance

March 2020

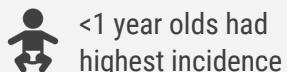
## March Key Points



32 cases



0 new outbreaks



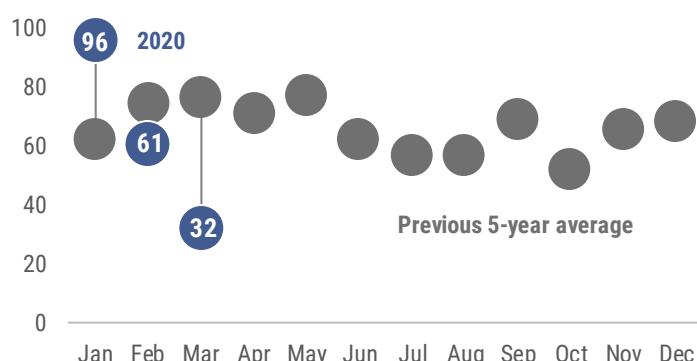
<1 year olds had highest incidence



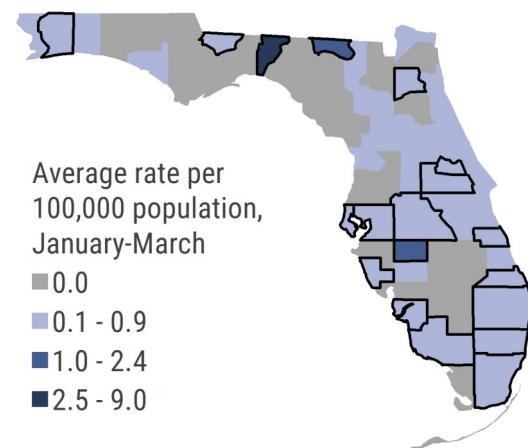
64% cases not up-to-date or unknown vaccination status



The number of varicella cases reported in March decreased from last month and was below the previous 5-year average. Due to robust vaccination programs, there is no longer discernable seasonality for varicella cases in the United States. ▼

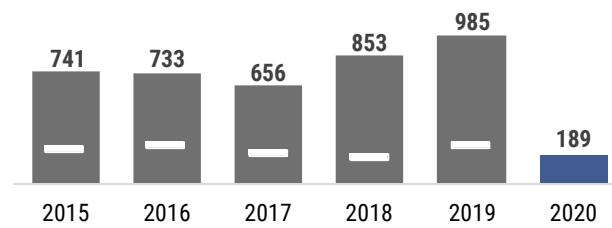


The 32 varicella cases in March were reported among the **19 counties outlined in black**. From January 2020 through March 2020 the average county rate varied throughout the state. ▼



From January 1, 2020 through March 31, 2020, **189 varicella cases** were reported in **42 counties**. ►

The annual number of reported varicella cases decreased from 2015 to 2017. In 2020, case counts were similar to those seen in previous years at this time, as indicated by the white bars in the graph.



In March, **5 (16%)** of 32 total cases were associated with transmission within households and **no cases** were outbreak-associated. For most varicella cases, exposure to other known cases is never identified, and they are not able to be linked to outbreaks.

No varicella outbreaks were reported in March.

**Household-associated | Outbreak-associated | Total cases**





In March, the varicella rate was highest among infants <1 year old at 1.3 cases per 100,000 population, which is consistent with previous months. Infants <1 year old are too young to receive varicella vaccination, which is why vaccination of siblings, parents, grandparents, and other age groups is so important to help prevent infection in infants.

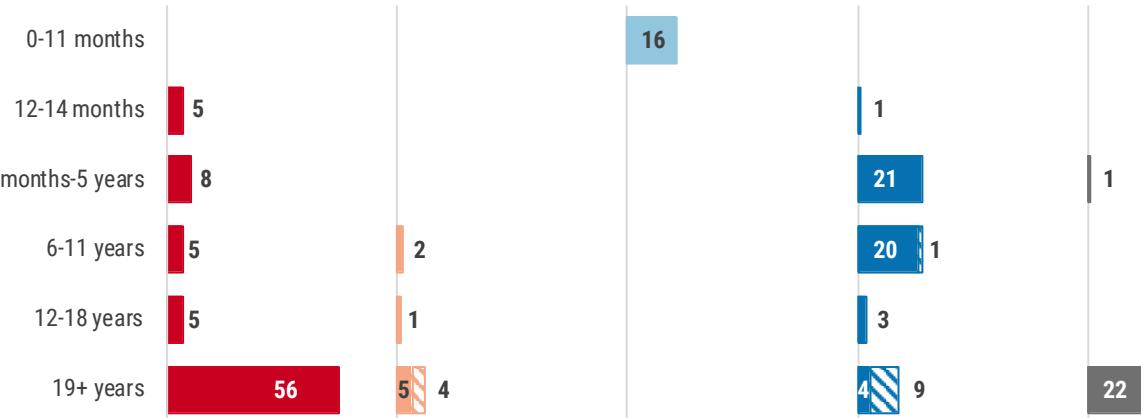


**Vaccination is the best way to prevent varicella infections.** In March, over half of individuals reported with varicella had not received the recommended number of varicella vaccinations for their age or had unknown vaccination status. Self-reported vaccination status that could not be verified is shown with a diagonal pattern. Vaccination against varicella is important for infants, children, teenagers, and adults. See the last page of this report for links to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended vaccination schedules.

Never vaccinated Under vaccinated Too young for vaccinations Up-to-date on vaccinations Unknown vaccination status



In 2020, the majority of adults aged 19 years and older with varicella were not up-to-date on their varicella vaccinations or had unknown vaccination status. Although individuals who have been vaccinated can still get varicella, **complete and timely vaccination remains the best way to prevent varicella and severe complications.** Self-reported vaccination status that could not be verified is shown with a diagonal pattern.



### National activity

Varicella incidence decreased significantly following the vaccine becoming available in 1995 and has continued to decrease since 2006 when recommendations changed from 1 to 2 doses of varicella vaccine. From 2006 to 2015, all age groups had a substantial decrease in incidence with the largest decline in children aged 5 to 14 years. Although varicella is not reported to the CDC by all states, based on available data, the number of varicella cases nationally has steadily decreased each year from 2012 to 2015.

### Varicella surveillance goals

- Identify and control outbreaks and monitor trends and severe outcomes
- Monitor effectiveness of immunization programs and vaccines

To learn more about varicella, please visit [FloridaHealth.gov/Varicella](http://FloridaHealth.gov/Varicella). For more information on the data sources used in Florida for varicella surveillance, see the last page of this report.

# Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Surveillance System Summary

## Case Data

- Current case data are preliminary and will change as new information is gathered. The most recent data available are displayed in this report.
- Pertussis, varicella, and hepatitis A are reportable diseases in Florida. Case information is documented by county health department (CHD) epidemiologists in Merlin, Florida's reportable disease surveillance system.
- Only Florida residents are included in case counts, but contact investigations are conducted for all exposed individuals.
  - Pertussis, varicella, and hepatitis A case counts include both confirmed and probable cases.
- Map counts and rates are determined by the individual's county of residence; these data do not take into account location of exposure.
- CHD epidemiologists also report outbreaks of pertussis, varicella, and hepatitis A into Merlin.
  - Household-associated cases are defined as  $\geq 2$  cases exposed within the same household.
  - Pertussis outbreaks are defined as  $\geq 2$  cases associated with a specific setting outside of a household.
  - Varicella outbreaks are defined as  $\geq 5$  cases associated with a specific setting outside of a household.
- For more information about reportable diseases, please visit [FloridaHealth.gov/DiseaseReporting](http://FloridaHealth.gov/DiseaseReporting).
- For more information about Florida's guides to surveillance and investigation, including disease-specific surveillance case definitions, please visit [FloridaHealth.gov/GSI](http://FloridaHealth.gov/GSI).

## Population Data

- Population data from 2020 used to calculate incidence rates are from FLHealthCHARTS (Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set).
- For more information about FLHealthCHARTS, please visit [FLHealthCharts.com](http://FLHealthCharts.com).

## Vaccination Data

- Vaccination data for identified cases are from Merlin, as documented by CHD staff.
- Vaccination status is determined using the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Recommended Immunization Schedule for Children and Adolescents Aged 18 Years or Younger, 2018.
- For more information about immunization schedules, please visit [www.CDC.gov/Vaccines/Schedules/index.html](http://www.CDC.gov/Vaccines/Schedules/index.html).
- Individuals are considered up-to-date on vaccinations if they have received the recommended number of doses of vaccine for a particular disease for their age at the time of their illness onset. Individuals are considered under-vaccinated if they have received at least one but not all doses of vaccine recommended for a particular disease for their age at the time of their illness onset.