

Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)

HUS Quick Fact: Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome is most detrimental among young children

OVERVIEW

Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS) is usually characterized by hemolytic anemia, low platelet count and acute renal failure.

- It is often preceded by diarrheal illness or respiratory infection.
- It is often associated with shiga-toxin producing *E.coli* O157:H7. However, it has also been associated with viruses and other infectious agents such as *Clostridium difficile*.

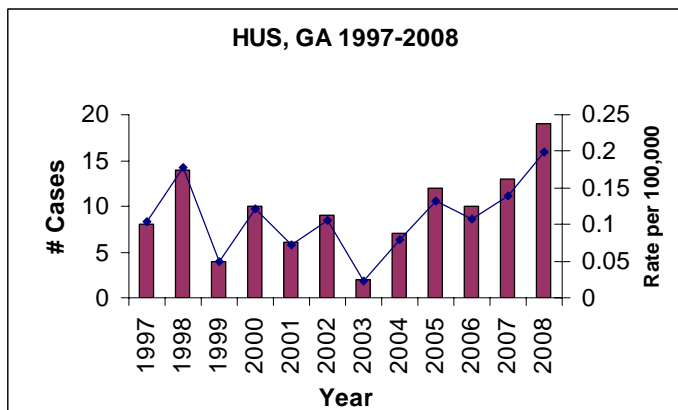
SURVEILLANCE

- All Georgia physicians and other health care providers are required by law to report HUS cases to the Georgia Division of Public Health.
- Nephrologists and Infection Control practitioners are also contacted once per month via telephone or email to inquire about any new cases.

INCIDENCE

In 2008, 19 cases of HUS were reported, for a rate of 0.20/100,000 (Figure 1). The incidence of HUS in Georgia has varied from year to year.

Figure 1. Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome Cases and Rate



DEMOGRAPHICS

- Consistent with the described epidemiology of HUS, in Georgia, higher rates of disease appear in infants and young children, followed by elderly individuals (Figure 2).
- In 2008, of the reported cases with known race and ethnicity, 65% of cases were White, 29% were Hispanic and 6% were Black (Figure 3.)

Figure 2.

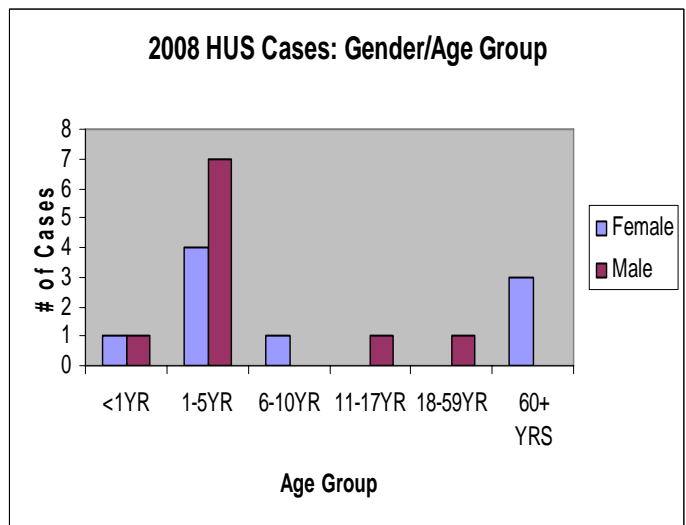
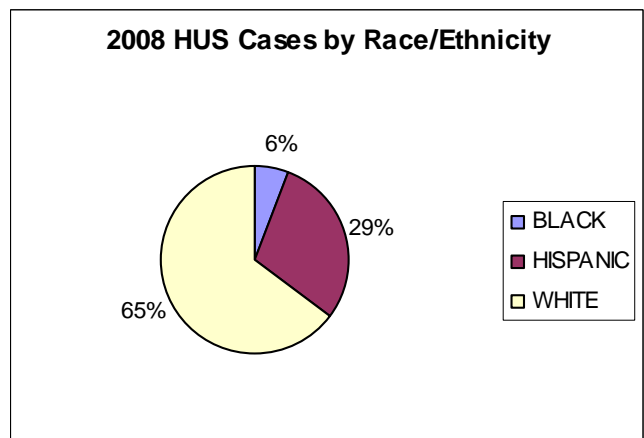


Figure 3.



IMPACT OF HUS

Hospitalizations & Deaths

- Of the 19 cases of HUS reported in 2008, all individuals were hospitalized, some for months.
- In 2008, 1 HUS patient died.

PREVENTION & RESEARCH

Food Preparation Tips

1. Always treat raw poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly:
 - Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other foods.
 - Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize holding time at room temperature.
 - Cutting boards and counters used for meat preparation should be washed immediately after use to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
 - Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats.
 - Ensure that the correct internal cooking temperature is reached, particularly when using a microwave.
2. Avoid using raw (unpasteurized) milk.

For more information, visit: www.foodsafety.gov

Hand Washing

1. Encourage careful hand washing before and after food preparation.
2. Always wash hands thoroughly after handling animals (pets, zoo, etc.) or feces of any kind.

FoodNet Projects

- Monitoring trends in HUS Epidemiology over time
- Interviewing *E. coli* O157 cases to determine risk factors for the development of HUS.

For more information:

<http://health.state.ga.us/epi/foodborne>