



Vector-Borne Disease

2021 Weekly Surveillance Report

Iowa Department of Public Health | Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology | [West Nile Virus Website](#)

All data presented in this report are provisional and may change as additional reports are received

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West Nile Virus (WNV)

WNV is endemic in Iowa and activity usually peaks in late summer and early fall. IDPH works in collaboration with Local Public Health (LPH) and other appropriate partners to investigate all reported cases.

In 2020, three human cases were identified. Thus far in 2021, no WNV activity has been detected.

Malaria

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite that commonly infects *Anopheles* mosquitoes. Malaria is spread to humans by the bite of the infected female mosquito. Only *Anopheles* mosquitoes can transmit malaria and they must have been infected through a previous blood meal taken from an infected person.

Seven cases of malaria have been reported in Iowa. Cases are in travelers and immigrants returning from parts of the world where malaria transmission occurs. In 2020, six cases of malaria were reported to IDPH.

Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis

There are at least three species of bacteria responsible for ehrlichiosis/anaplasmosis in the United States: *Ehrlichia chaffeensis*, *Ehrlichia ewingii*, and *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. Ehrlichiae are transmitted by the bite of an infected lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*) which is found in Iowa. *A. phagocytophilum* is transmitted by the bite of an infected blacklegged tick (or deer tick, *Ixodes scapularis*) in Iowa. The clinical signs and symptoms of these infections are similar.

Two cases of ehrlichiosis/anaplasmosis have been reported in Iowa. In 2020, nine cases of ehrlichiosis/anaplasmosis were reported to IDPH.

Lyme

Lyme disease is caused by *Borrelia burgdorferi* and in Iowa is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected tick, the blacklegged tick (or deer tick, *Ixodes scapularis*). Ticks are most likely to spread the Lyme disease bacterium during their pre-adult stage (nymph). They are most common between May and July and found in tall grasses and brush of wooded areas.

As of May 21st, 13 confirmed and probable cases of Lyme disease have been reported in Iowa [Figure 1]. In 2020, 254 cases of Lyme disease were reported to IDPH.

Figure 1. 2021 Lyme disease case count and incidence rate by county of residence.

