

# Summary

Foodborne disease is a common cause of illness in the Region of Peel. In Peel between 1993 and 2002, an overall general decline was observed in the incidence of the most common foodborne diseases caused by microorganisms.

The incidence of selected foodborne diseases in Peel was generally higher than the incidence for Ontario. In particular, higher incidence was observed in Peel for campylobacteriosis, salmonellosis, yersiniosis and amebiasis.

In Peel, the highest incidence of campylobacteriosis, salmonellosis, verotoxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (VTEC), yersiniosis, shigellosis and giardiasis was observed among children zero to four years of age. Similarly, the highest incidence of hepatitis A occurred among those five to nine years of age. Amebiasis was an exception, where incidence peaked among those aged 25 to 29 years.

A seasonal trend was observed for some foodborne diseases in Peel. Reported cases occurred much more frequently in the summer months (late summer and early fall) than in the winter. In particular, this trend was observed for campylobacteriosis, salmonellosis and VTEC during the period from 1993 to 2002.

The contamination of food usually results from improper food handling, which allows microbes to be introduced, survive and multiply in food during preparation. In most instances, awareness of the importance of proper cooking and storage of foods of animal origin, and the necessity for good hygiene practices (hand washing) will greatly reduce the risk of illness.