

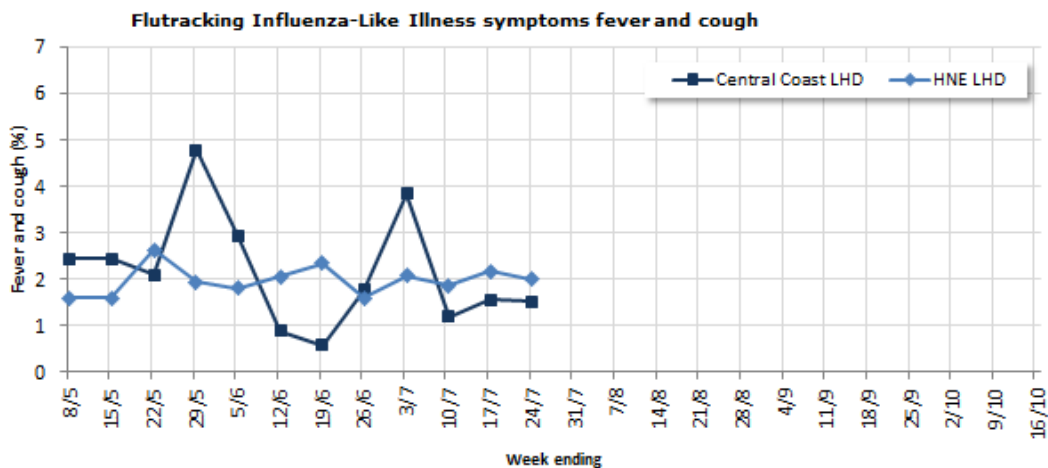
# Hunter New England and Central Coast Public Health Units Communicable Diseases Report July 2016

Influenza activity likely to rise in the next few weeks  
Increased Gastroenteritis activity  
Hepatitis C revolution

## Influenza and respiratory infection

The influenza season is underway in metropolitan Sydney, however, the community based influenza-like illness surveillance system Flutracking (Figure 1) indicates that influenza-like illness activity levels in the Hunter New England and Central Coast communities remain low. This activity is expected to increase over the coming weeks. Four respiratory outbreaks in aged care institutions have been notified to public health over the last month, with one confirmed to be an influenza outbreak.

**Figure 1.** Proportion of Flutracking participants with fever and cough, Hunter New England and Central Coast LHD, 2016



Caution: Number of Flutracking participants in the Central Coast LHD <1000

The majority (>86%) of influenza notifications for the Hunter New England and Central Coast LHD's in the last month have been influenza A, with the H1N1 and H3N2 strains circulating at similar levels. A number of other respiratory illnesses such as Respiratory Syncytial Virus and Picornavirus have also been circulating in the Hunter New England region over the last month.

The preferred specimen for diagnosis of influenza and respiratory viruses is a separate nose and throat swab collected with a viral transport medium swab set. Request an influenza PCR or a respiratory multiplex PCR (which includes influenza, RSV and rhinovirus).

## Gastroenteritis

Increased viral gastroenteritis activity in the community and institutions has been noted across NSW in the last month. Norovirus, the most common cause of viral gastroenteritis has been identified as the most likely pathogen.

Eleven gastroenteritis outbreaks- two in child care centres and nine in aged care facilities have been notified to Hunter New England and Central Coast Public Health units in the last month. Norovirus has been identified as the cause in two of these outbreaks.

There has also been an increase in Shigellosis cases across the state in the last month due to an outbreak of Shigellosis among gay men in metropolitan Sydney. Shigellosis is usually a self-limiting illness, however treatment reduces infectiousness. The current recommended empirical treatment of Shigellosis is ciprofloxacin (500mg bd for 5 days) or norfloxacin (400mg bd for 5 days). Request PCR, Culture and Sensitivity when ordering stool tests.

## **Hepatitis C**

### **HELP MAKE HEP C HISTORY: LINKING HEPATITIS C PATIENTS WITH GPs AND PHARMACIES**

Revolutionary treatments for Hepatitis C are now available on the PBS. They can be prescribed by General Practitioners (in consultation with a gastroenterologist, hepatologist, or infectious disease physician experienced in the treatment of chronic hepatitis C infection). Over the last three months, Hepatitis NSW has been building an online web directory of GPs and pharmacies who work with the new revolutionary Hep C DAA drugs with the aim of linking patients with their local service providers... <https://www.hep.org.au/services-directory/>

Do you know GPs we could add to the directory, or if you'd like more information about the DAA drugs, please email [pharvey@hep.org.au](mailto:pharvey@hep.org.au)

### **HEP C UPDATE FOR GP'S TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER, MUSWELLBROOK, NSW**

This update will provide GPs with the knowledge to engage their patients in care, perform investigations to assess for advanced liver disease and prescribe new hepatitis C treatments in consultation with a specialist. Register at: [www.ashm.org.au/courses](http://www.ashm.org.au/courses) Contact Sam Hoang T 02 8204 0740 [Sam.hoang@ashm.org.au](mailto:Sam.hoang@ashm.org.au) for further information.

## **Immunisation News**

### **It's not too late to vaccinate!**

Just a reminder- Two quadrivalent influenza vaccines are available under the National Immunisation Program– Fluarix Tetra® for eligible individuals 3 years of age and older and FluQuadri™ Junior, for eligible children 6-35 months of age. The [National Influenza Vaccination Program](#) offers free vaccine to people over 65 years of age, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 6 months to 5 years and those over 15 years of age, pregnant women and people with medical conditions predisposing to severe influenza.

## Communicable disease notifications

**Table 1. Summary of selected notifiable conditions (YTD\* by year), 2012 – 14 July 2016**

	Hunter New England (YTD* by year)					Central Coast (YTD* by year)				
	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>Hepatitis C – Unspecified</b>	251	215	227	192	161	101	85	125	95	93
<b>Hepatitis C – Newly acquired</b>	6	6	9	<5	10	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
<b>Cryptosporidiosis</b>	67	82	36	109	65	56	20	8	26	30
<b>Giardiasis</b>	280	264	239	170	151	96	72	70	59	48
<b>Shigellosis</b>	9	5	<5	<5	<5	14	<5	<5	<5	<5
<b>Gonorrhoea</b>	236	159	156	99	163	68	61	41	63	30
<b>Influenza</b>	322	291	271	57	323	114	100	109	15	77
<b>Meningococcal Disease</b>	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
<b>Pertussis</b>	686	469	135	121	362	277	133	10	25	137
<b>Ross River virus†</b>	73	273	127	83	121	7	65	13	14	15
<b>Salmonellosis</b>	256	259	314	262	188	107	94	114	79	80
<b>Syphilis</b>	30	29	23	26	15	6	24	24	18	17

\*YTD Year to date for each year (reporting delays may result in changes to 2016 figures)

† Note, a more stringent RRV case definition was introduced in January 2016

### **Population Health contact details (note, 1300 066 055 will find your local PHU)**

Hunter New England    Wallsend Office 4924 6477    Tamworth Office 6764 8000  
 Central Coast Public Health Unit    Gosford Office 4320 9730

This [Communicable Disease Report](#) and previous editions are available on the internet

Public Health contact    [ToveLysa.Fitzgerald@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ToveLysa.Fitzgerald@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au)