

# Hunter New England and Central Coast Public Health Units Communicable Diseases Report March 2017

Influenza vaccine available  
Adult vaccination reminder  
Measles cases associated with Bali travel

**Influenza and respiratory infection:** Influenza activity is decreasing in the northern hemisphere and increasing in South Asia where H1N1 predominates. The majority of influenza viruses characterized so far was similar antigenically to the reference viruses contained in vaccines for the 2016-2017 northern hemisphere influenza season. New South Wales has seen more influenza activity than usual during the summer inter-seasonal period with 2100 notifications so far this year compared with 1518 for the same period in 2016. Laboratory surveillance shows RSV activity is increasing and picornavirus is the most commonly identified respiratory virus.

Under the [National Immunisation Program](#) (NIP) free influenza vaccine is available for:

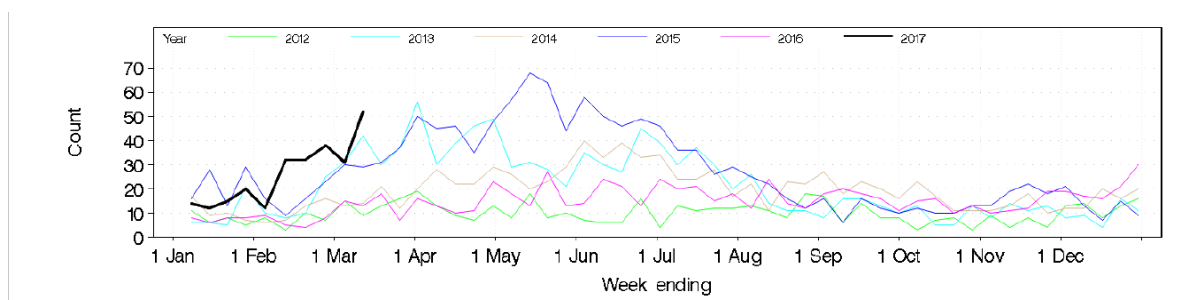
- All people over 65 years of age
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders between 6 months and 5 years, and >15 years of age
- Pregnant women
- People over 6 months with certain medical conditions

The 2017 influenza vaccine is now available in pharmacies and is able to be ordered from [the State Vaccination Centre](#) for GP clinics and Aged Care Facilities.

**Measles:** cases of measles have been identified in travellers to Bali with at least three notifications to NSW Health and cases returning to other states. [A media alert](#) has been issued to encourage vaccination and to remind clinicians to be vigilant for patients, especially recent travellers to Bali, with fever, sore eyes and a cough followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy rash spreading from the head and neck to the rest of the body. Please contact the PHU immediately if a case is suspected.

**Hand foot and mouth disease:** cases generally present with mild symptoms of fever and papulovesicular rash following enteroviral infection.

Figure 1. Total weekly counts of ED presentations for HFM for 2017 (black line) compared with 5 previous years (NSW MoH).

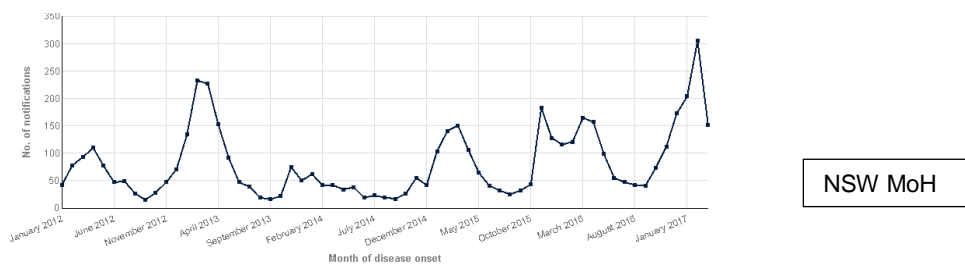


**Adult vaccination:** a [recent MJA article](#) reports an estimated 4.1 million Australians are 'under-vaccinated'. A large proportion is adults who are eligible for free influenza, 23-valent pneumococcal and herpes zoster vaccine under the NIP.

**Mosquitoes and arbovirus infection:** high mosquito numbers continue to be recorded in surveillance traps around the state and also there have been occasional Ross River virus detections in these samples. Clinicians can expect to see more RRV cases this autumn although it is difficult to determine the exposure location as the incubation period can be up to 12 days and symptom onset may be insidious. People are reminded of the importance of [protection against mosquito bites](#) especially when travelling.

**Cryptosporidiosis:** notifications have been higher than usual this year possibly due to transmission in child care and swimming pools. Oocysts may be present in the faeces for a fortnight after diarrhoea has resolved making it important to cease swimming activities during this period.

**Graph 1. Cryptosporidiosis notifications in NSW residents, by month of onset, January 2012 to 25 March 2017**



**Shingles vaccine:** this [vaccine is now available under the NIP](#) to people aged 70-79 and has valuable benefits, but clinicians are reminded that this is a live vaccine and must NOT be given to immune compromised people.

**Communicable disease notifications**

**Table 1. Summary of selected notifiable conditions (YTD\* by year), 2013 – 21 March 2017**

	Hunter New England (YTD* by year)					Central Coast (YTD* by year)				
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
<b>Cryptosporidiosis</b>	62	33	49	27	55	14	23	10	6	8
<b>Gonorrhoea</b>	86	81	60	62	33	43	18	35	22	23
<b>Syphilis</b>	13	10	8	11	12	5	5	13	10	5
<b>Chlamydial Infection</b>	605	733	591	619	652	279	231	224	275	207
<b>Influenza</b>	120	74	55	39	19	34	25	13	12	<5
<b>Meningococcal Disease</b>	2	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	0
<b>Pertussis</b>	171	369	163	66	50	23	196	20	6	18
<b>Ross River Virus</b>	146	28	114	23	22	8	3	24	<5	5
<b>Salmonellosis</b>	117	116	128	129	96	112	45	59	70	42

\*YTD, Year to date for each year (reporting delays may result in changes to 2017 figures)

**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

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