

# Hunter New England and Central Coast Public Health Units

## Communicable Diseases Report

### April 2018

Influenza vaccine advice  
Q fever awareness - information toolkit  
Recent public health alerts – Hep A, MDR gonorrhoea  
Antibiotic stewardship

**2018 Influenza vaccination:** This year there are seven different influenza vaccines available. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has developed advice for immunisation providers regarding the [administration of 2018 seasonal influenza vaccines](#), an [ATAGI statement on the 2018 influenza vaccines](#), a [safety check card](#), an [age-check safety sticker](#) for vaccine refrigerators and a [factsheet on the Australian Immunisation Register](#).

It is now [mandatory for every aged care provider to offer the flu vaccine](#) to every single worker.

Updated influenza activity data can be obtained from [NSW Health](#), the [Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing](#) (2018 reporting yet to commence) and [Flutracking](#).

The influenza season is fast approaching. It is important that we are able to monitor this disease. You can help by joining **Flutracking**, a 10-15 second weekly survey asking whether you have had influenza symptoms (fever or cough). Currently over 28,000 Australians complete the survey allowing researchers to determine the onset of the flu season by region and changes in influenza strains.

**The Flutracking survey for 2018 starts on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April, join on [www.flutracking.net](http://www.flutracking.net)**

**Immunisation:** Data released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that immunisation rates for five-year-olds in the Hunter and Central Coast regions have hit 95.7%, a rise of almost two per cent in four years. The number of fully immunised one-year-olds rose from 93.1% in 2012 to 95.5% in 2017, however, rates for two-year-olds fell from 94.5% to 93.2%. These are among the highest vaccination rates in Australia.

**Q fever awareness:** Q fever is a serious, but preventable disease often, but not always, associated with livestock contact. Hunter New England and Central Coast receive about 70 Q fever notifications each year but cases are likely under-reported. NSW Health, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and others have developed a [Q Fever Toolkit](#) and on-line training program to provide information disease and immunisation information for clinicians. Additional zoonosis resources have been published in the March 2018 edition of the [Australian Journal of General Practice](#).

#### **Recent public health alerts:**

- [Hepatitis A outbreak](#) linked to frozen pomegranate
- [Multi-drug resistant gonorrhoea](#): Two cases of antibiotic resistant gonorrhoea have been detected in Australia.

**Antibiotic stewardship:** cumulative antibiograms have recently been published for Northern NSW and provide updated information on antibiotic patterns. Gentamicin susceptibility remains high (93-96% susceptible) and is the best empirical Gram negative agent for severe sepsis in patients without contraindications. Ciprofloxacin susceptibility is declining (87-94% susceptible) and should be conserved in favour of first line agents. Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) has been slowly increasing, mostly in *Klebsiella* and *Enterobacter* species, with a NSW management policy under development.

MRSA remains prevalent across NSW and local strains are largely susceptible to cotrimoxazole and tetracycline. A recent article shows the majority of new MRSA detections are community acquired without connection to recent hospital admission. Nearly all detections of vancomycin resistant enterococci have been associated with prior healthcare admission.

**Communicable disease notifications:**

Table 1. Summary of selected notifiable conditions (YTD\* by year), 2014 – 17 April 2018

	Hunter New England (YTD* by year)					Central Coast (YTD* by year)				
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Cryptosporidiosis	32	89	47	64	28	14	18	38	17	7
Gonorrhoea	170	127	117	97	86	75	59	31	42	28
Syphilis	23	23	15	13	15	4	10	10	17	16
Chlamydial Infection	910	897	978	814	866	320	343	307	295	352
Influenza	209	223	117	87	63	92	51	51	24	15
Meningococcal Disease	1	2	2	1	1		1			2
Pertussis	180	233	476	256	76	25	31	220	50	6
Ross River Virus	26	203	41	189	40	2	24	6	49	8
Salmonellosis	157	168	160	166	186	69	137	58	69	84

\*YTD, Year to date for each year (reporting delays may result in changes to 2018 figures)

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

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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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