

Hunter New England and Central Coast Public Health Units Communicable Diseases Report August 2018

Influenza activity remains lower than previous years
Annual NSW meningococcal campaign launched
Q-vax available soon
Sexual Health Info Link
Measles – Immunization – Global updates

Influenza

- Influenza seasonal activity remains low compared to previous years.
- Influenza activity is generally lower than usual for most districts, particularly rural and remote areas. Influenza A(H1N1) strain continues to be the most common strain identified in NSW, although there has been increased Influenza B activity in HNELHD, particularly in Glen Innes and Inverell.
- Weekly ED visits and admissions for influenza like illness remains steady and well below last year's counts (Fig 1)
- Flutracking indicates low levels of influenza like illness being reported in HNELHD and CCLHD (Fig 2).
- Weekly influenza updates are available on the [NSW Health](#) and [Flutracking](#) websites.

Figure 1. Total weekly counts of Emergency Department visits for influenza like illness that were admitted, all ages, from 1 Jan – 19 Aug 2018 (black line), compared with the 5 previous years

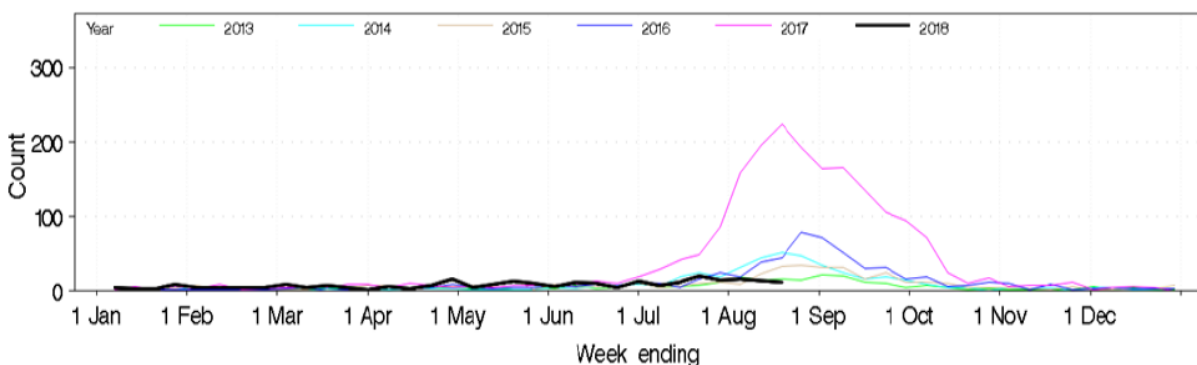
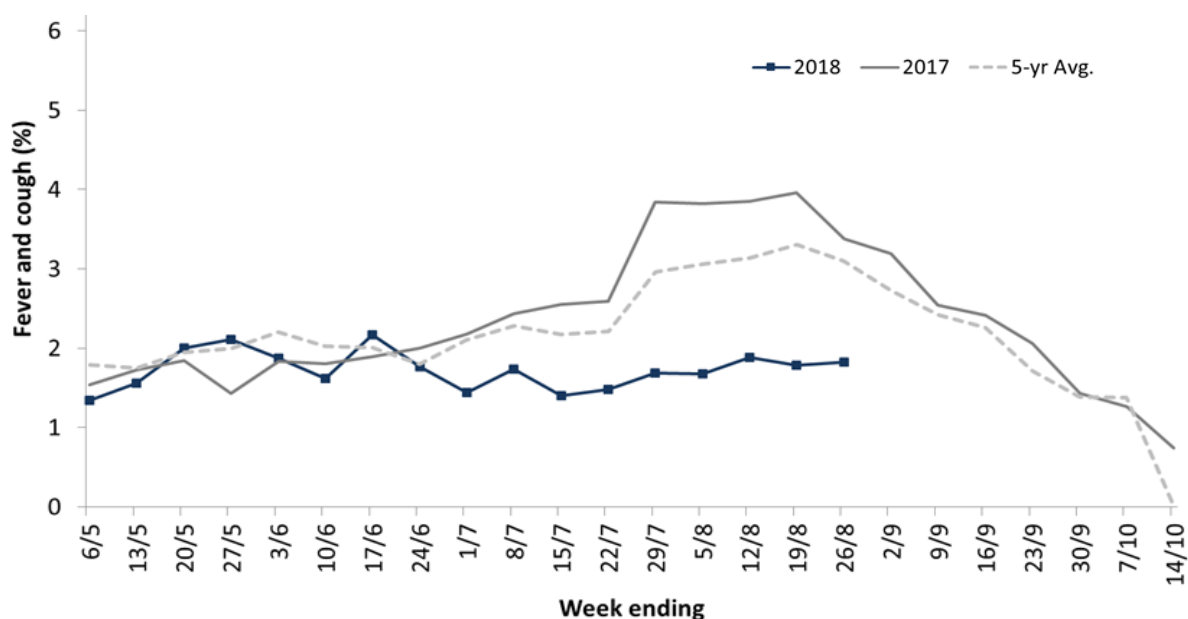


Figure 2. Flutracking - weekly reporting of Influenza like illness symptoms (fever and cough) reported in Hunter New England and Central Coast LHDs, 6 May – 26 Aug, 2018.



Meningococcal disease

There have been 37 cases of invasive meningococcal disease notified in NSW this year; children aged less than 5 years and young adults aged 15-24 years are the most affected age groups. NSW Health have launched their annual meningococcal awareness campaign. This year's campaign is using social media platforms Facebook and Snapchat to target parents of young children (especially those 0-2 years) and young adults (15-24 years), encouraging them to 'know the symptoms' and 'act fast' if they suspect meningococcal disease. The NSW Health [Meningococcal Disease webpage](#) has also recently been updated.

Q vax

Seqirus has advised that a batch of Q-VAX Vaccine and Q-VAX Skin Test have been released by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and stock is currently being positioned in the State warehouses, to be able to support the supply of all back orders by the end of this week (31 Aug 2018). Customers requiring stock will now be able to order via their normal processes. Further product information can be obtained by contacting the Medical Information on 1800 642 865 or MedicalInformation.Aust@csl.com.au.

As mentioned in previous communicable disease reports, a [Q Fever Toolkit](#) has been developed to assist clinicians with disease and immunisation information. In addition, a [one-minute assessment tool](#) is available to assist individuals determine their personal risk of Q fever and whether vaccination is indicated.

Sexual Health

The Sexual Health Info Link (SHIL) is a telephone and web-based resource for both community and health professionals with content on HIV, STIs and sexual health. It is provided by NSW Health:

- Tel 1800 451 624
- <https://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/>

In particular, the service specialises in HIV and STI risk assessment, testing, treatment and support. They provide specialist support to nurses, doctors, counsellors and other professionals who are caring for people with sexual health problems. They are open for telephone discussions from 9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). The Health Professionals Clinical Resources section includes links to national STI testing and treatment guidelines and to the NSW STI Programs Unit resources. The Health Professionals Partner Notification section can be used by GPs for assistance with partner notification. The service has the capacity to find and message partners through online and social media platforms even when the partner's real name is not available.

Measles

An infant travelling from overseas was recently diagnosed with measles in NSW; the infant visited several public venues and took public transport in the Sydney area from Aug 17-19; be alert for cases with symptoms compatible with measles. Highest risk is in infants under 12 months who are too young to be vaccinated and people 20-40 years who may have missed out on the full vaccination program for measles.

Immunisation

The latest immunisation information can be obtained from the HNE's [To the Point Newsletter](#) and [NSW Health Immunisation](#) website.

Global updates

MERS-CoV

- A new case of MERS-CoV has been confirmed in a traveler from the Middle East to the UK. While this is not the first case exported from the Middle East, it is a further reminder about the risk of a case being imported into Australia.
- For further information on MERS-CoV, please refer to the [MERS-CoV control guidelines](#) or the [national interim infection control advice for MERS-CoV](#).

Ebola in Congo

- The Ebola case count in the DRC continues to rise. As of Aug 24, there were 111 cases of Ebola (83 confirmed, 28 probable). Fourteen cases have been reported among health workers, of which 13 were laboratory confirmed.
- Currently no country has implemented any travel restriction to and from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Travelers to DRC should seek medical advice before travel and should practice good hygiene.

Communicable diseases notifications

Table 1. Summary of selected notifiable conditions (YTD* by year), 2014 – 14 August 2018

Condition	Hunter New England# (YTD* by year)					Central Coast# (YTD* by year)				
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Cryptosporidiosis	64	113	71	84	37	27	34	57	20	9
Gonorrhoea	346	231	256	169	175	151	107	76	61	45
Syphilis	51	39	39	34	26	4	18	22	24	27
Chlamydial Infection	2006	1785	1908	1727	1790	656	629	651	575	667
Influenza	440	2903	655	571	721	140	1351	247	201	209
Meningococcal Dx	3	5	4	2	6	1	1	2	2	2
Pertussis	387	496	754	532	164	53	67	288	162	11
Ross River Virus	118	305	77	292	131	9	59	9	68	15
Salmonellosis	253	276	282	280	339	110	172	113	95	120

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

Hunter New England population: 920,000 #Central Coast population: 350,000

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 HNELHD-PHEnquiries@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au