

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

Annual influenza vaccination
Pertussis activity continues
Sexually transmitted infections – MSM annual screen

Influenza and respiratory infection

High levels of influenza activity have been reported from the northern hemisphere. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus is predominant in Canada and USA while in northern Europe, influenza B virus detections are increasing. In South East Asia, influenza activity is ongoing with increasing levels of influenza B virus.

In Australia, Influenza A and B strains are circulating at higher levels than is usual for this time of year, with influenza A(H1N1) the most prevalent strain.

Currently, picornavirus and RSV are the most commonly identified respiratory viruses in NSW.

Pertussis: Activity remains high with over 230 notifications being received each week across NSW.

Zika virus: Women who are pregnant or who are considering pregnancy should delay their travel to areas with active outbreaks of Zika. Evidence suggests sexual transmission is possible so males returning from affected countries should take preventive measures to avoid the potential of transmission to their partners. See the NSW Health [website](#) for details, including a list of affected countries.

Sexually transmitted infections: Asymptomatic men-who-have-sex-with-men should be comprehensively [screened for STIs](#) at least annually. Tests should include pharyngeal and anorectal swabs for chlamydial/gonococcal PCR, first void urine for chlamydial PCR and serology for syphilis, HIV, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

An education session '[Undiagnosed HIV: not in my practice?](#)' providing support and updates for GPs and practice staff will be held in *Maitland - Wednesday 25 May 2016 @ 6:30pm*

Hepatitis B and HIV disclosure. Under the Public Health Amendment (Contact Tracing) Regulation 2015 which came into effect on 18 September 2015, a doctor is able to disclose the Hepatitis B and HIV positive status to partners who may have been exposed without stating who is responsible for the exposure (the source of the exposure may be obvious in some situations). Consent from the person with the notifiable condition is not required but is preferred. Should he/she withhold consent it is prudent to let them know that you can now disclose and intend to do so.

Tuberculosis: In Australia, more than 1200 people are diagnosed with [Tuberculosis](#) every year. Maintain a high index of suspicion when patients present with persistent (>3 weeks) cough, weight loss, night sweats and fever; and for people who were born in or have spent time in a high TB endemic country

Meningococcal disease: Since 2013 there has been an increase in notifications of invasive serogroup W meningococcal disease (MenW) in Australia, with 12 cases (8% of all invasive meningococcal disease cases) in 2013, 17 cases (10% of all IMD) in 2014, and 34 cases (19% of all IMD) in 2015. As of 18

February 2016, there have been 9 notifications of MenW in Australia accounting for 36% of all IMD, more than serogroup B notifications for this year.

Immunisation News

Two quadrivalent influenza vaccines will be 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 the following people:

- all people aged 65 years and over
- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 6 months to 5 years
- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over
- pregnant women
- people aged 6 months and over with medical conditions predisposing to severe influenza, including cardiac disease, chronic respiratory conditions, impaired immunity, diabetes mellitus, chronic renal failure and haemaglobinopathies.

Communicable disease notifications

Table 1. Summary of selected notifiable conditions (YTD* by year), 2012 – 15 March 2016

	Hunter New England					Central Coast				
	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Cryptosporidiosis	34	52	27	63	31	17	11	6	10	11
Salmonellosis	212	139	144	104	106	42	62	75	44	54
Chlamydia infection	798	656	696	728	740	225	151	303	228	310
Gonorrhoea	83	71	68	37	72	17	34	23	25	14
Syphilis	7	9	11	15	5	<5	10	10	5	6
Influenza	81	68	43	23	2	10	6	9	<5	6
Meningococcal disease	2	1	0	2	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Pertussis	388	195	67	55	188	195	27	6	18	85
Ross River virus†	37	131	29	25	58	10	33	5	6	<5

*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

Report prepared by Keith Eastwood

Keith.Eastwood@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au