

Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 1, 29 December 2014 to 4 January 2015

In summary, we report:

- [Listeriosis](#) – two new cases
- [Legionnaires' disease](#) – four new cases
- [Summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW](#)

For further information on infectious diseases and alerts see the [Infectious Diseases](#) webpage.

Follow the [A to Z of Infectious Diseases](#) link for more information on specific diseases.

For links to other surveillance reports, including influenza reports, see the [NSW Health Infectious Diseases Reports](#) webpage.

Listeriosis

Two cases of *Listeria* infection (listeriosis) were reported this week (Table 1). One case was from Western Sydney Local Health District and the other was from Sydney Local Health District. Both were elderly gentlemen who are likely immunosuppressed by their preexisting medical conditions and regular medications. Food history interviews did not identify a common potential food source for these two cases. Results of the typing of the *Listeria* bacteria isolated from each of these cases are pending.

Two cases of listeriosis were also notified at the end of 2014 in week 51, the week beginning 15 December 2014. One case was from South East Sydney Local Health District and the other was from Hunter New England Local Health District. Both cases were elderly women who had preexisting medical conditions. One case died. Interview information and initial typing of the specimens from these two cases indicates that they are not linked to a common food source.

Listeriosis is a rare illness caused by eating food contaminated with a bacterium called *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Listeria* bacteria are widespread throughout nature, being commonly carried by many species of both domestic and wild animals.

Listeria infection is most commonly linked to the consumption of undercooked meat, unpasteurised milk and milk products, soft cheeses, or raw fruit and vegetables. Babies can be born with listeriosis if their mothers eat contaminated food during the pregnancy. *Listeria* survives refrigeration but is sensitive to cooking temperatures.

People at higher risk of *Listeria* infection include pregnant women and their unborn child, newborns, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems (for example, people on cancer treatment or steroids and people with diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease and HIV infection). It can be a severe illness in these people, and is a recognised cause of still birth or premature delivery of a very unwell baby.

People at increased risk of listeriosis should not eat pre-packed cold salads including coleslaw and fresh fruit salad, pre-cut fruit, pre-cooked cold chicken, cold delicatessen meats, pâté, raw seafood, uncooked smoked seafood (for example, smoked salmon), unpasteurised milk or milk products, soft cheeses such as brie, camembert, ricotta, or blue-vein, sprouted seeds and raw mushrooms. Fruit and vegetables eaten raw should be thoroughly washed prior to eating.

Follow the links for further [listeriosis data](#) and the [listeriosis factsheet](#).

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Legionnaires' disease

Four new cases of Legionnaires' disease were notified in the week leading up to Christmas. All cases were caused by infection with the *Legionella* bacteria species known as *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1 (LP1). All cases had onset dates within one or two days of each other. Two cases had identified possible areas within the Sydney Central Business District (CBD) and the relevant Local Health District Public Health Units examined all possible exposures but did not find a source of the infections. The remaining two cases had not spent time within the CBD. There were no other potential common exposures between the four cases.

Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia and the symptoms include fever, chills, cough and shortness of breath. Some people also have muscle aches, headache, tiredness, loss of appetite and diarrhoea. Risk factors for Legionnaires' disease include increasing age (most cases are aged over 50 years), cigarette smoking and immunocompromising conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease, cancer or being treated with high dose corticosteroids. People with Legionnaires' disease can become very sick with pneumonia; most people recover but the disease is occasionally fatal.

Legionnaires' disease is not spread from person to person. *L. pneumophila* bacteria can contaminate air conditioning cooling towers, spas, plumbing systems and other bodies of warm water. Outbreaks are sometimes associated with contaminated cooling towers that are part of air conditioning systems in large buildings. Regular inspections, disinfection and maintenance of cooling towers and plumbing systems limit the growth of the bacteria and prevent outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease.

The *Public Health Act 2010* and the *Public Health Regulation 2012* control various man-made environments and systems which are conducive to the growth of *Legionella* bacteria and which are capable, under the right conditions, of transmitting Legionnaires' disease. Follow the link for more information on the [regulatory control of Legionnaires' disease](#).

Legionnaires' disease can also be caused by other serogroups of *Legionella pneumophila* and other types of *Legionella* bacteria. *Legionella longbeachae* is a common cause in NSW and is found in potting mix and soils. To prevent Legionnaires' disease it is recommended that people handling potting mix wet the mix beforehand to reduce dust, wear gloves and a mask and wash their hands after handling potting mix or soil.

Follow the links for more information on [Legionnaires' disease](#) and on [notifications of Legionnaires' disease](#).

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Summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW

The following table summarises notifiable conditions activity over the reporting period (Table 1).

Table 1. NSW Notifiable conditions from 29 December to 4 January 2015, by date received*

		Weekly		Year to date			Full Year	
		This week	Last week	2015	2014	2013	2014	2013
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	3	3	1	9	19	427	1132
	Giardiasis	22	37	21	32	30	2939	2242
	Hepatitis A	1	1	0	1	1	79	62
	Listeriosis	2	0	0	2	4	23	33
	Rotavirus	2	11	3	4	13	707	508
	Salmonellosis	56	56	28	83	109	4298	3483
	Shigellosis	1	0	0	2	1	207	136
	Typhoid	1	1	0	1	0	44	58
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	9	35	9	50	29	20747	8403
	Tuberculosis	2	4	1	8	9	456	437
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	39	219	57	210	354	22884	21089
	Gonorrhoea	10	63	10	64	74	4861	4267
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Mumps	1	0	0	2	0	79	89
	Pertussis	24	112	29	64	56	3013	2378
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	1	6	1	3	16	508	490
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	1	0	1	1	9	163	438
	Malaria	1	1	0	1	4	87	93
	Ross River	5	16	5	8	9	685	512
Zoonotic	Q fever	1	3	1	4	4	182	163

*Notes on Table 1: NSW Notifiable Conditions activity

- Data cells represent the number of case reports received by NSW Public Health Units and recorded on the NSW Notifiable Conditions Information Management System (NCIMS) in the relevant period.
- Data cells in the 'Adverse Event Following Immunisation' category refer to suspected cases only. These reports are referred to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for assessment. Data on adverse events following immunisation is available online from the TGA [Database of Adverse Event Notifications](#).
- Only conditions for which at least one case report was received appear in the table. HIV and other blood-borne virus case reports are not included here but are available from the [Infectious Diseases Data](#) webpage.

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