

Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 34 17 August - 23 August 2015

In summary, we report:

- **Influenza (Flu)** – high notifications consistent with the peak of the seasonal outbreak
- **MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV)** – increased activity in Saudi Arabia; Hajj travel advice
- **Summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW**

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

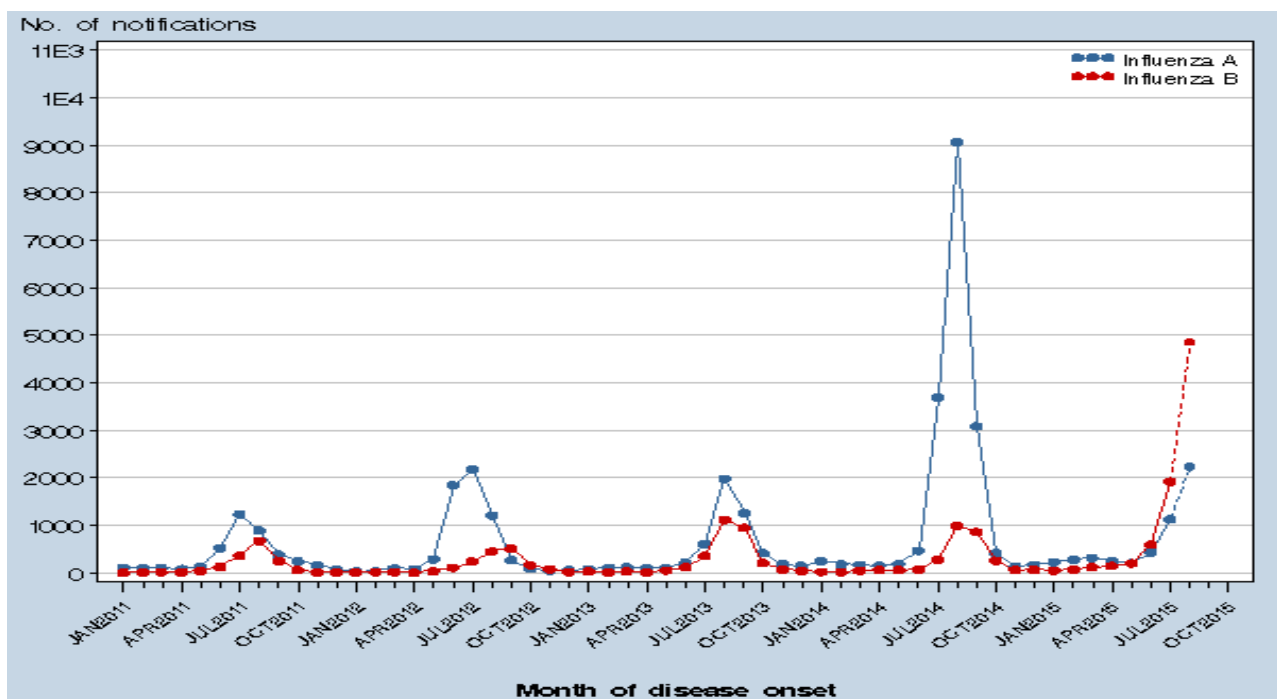
Follow the [A to Z of Infectious Diseases](#) link for more information on specific diseases.

For links to other surveillance reports, including reports on Influenza, HIV/STIs and foodborne disease, see the [NSW Health Infectious Diseases Reports](#) webpage.

Influenza (Flu)

Influenza (flu) notifications in NSW continue to increase with 3388 notifications in this reporting week 2015 (Table 1 and Figure1). This is consistent with the peak of activity seen in 2014 – which had the most influenza activity since the 2009 pandemic – and activity may not yet have peaked. Four influenza strains are currently circulating with the unusual predominance of influenza B strains continuing (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Influenza notifications in NSW residents by month of disease onset, January 2011 to August 2015 *.



* Note incomplete data for August 2015.

One of the two B strains circulating is covered by the 2015 trivalent influenza vaccine included in the National Immunisation Program. The second B strain is only covered by the 2015 quadrivalent vaccine. Both of the circulating influenza A strains are covered in the trivalent and quadrivalent vaccines.

Influenza is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. There are three main types of influenza virus that cause infection in humans - types A, B and C - and many sub-types or strains. Influenza can occur throughout the year but activity usually peaks in winter.

Influenza vaccine is strongly recommended and available free for all people aged 65 years and over, Aboriginal children aged from 6 months to 4 years, Aboriginal people aged 15 years and over, pregnant women, and all people aged 6 months and over with medical conditions predisposing to severe influenza.

Follow the link for further information on [seasonal influenza vaccination 2015](#).

For more detailed influenza surveillance information from a range of sources see the NSW Health [Influenza surveillance reports](#). Follow the link for more information regarding [influenza notifications](#).

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MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

As of 21 August 2015 the World Health Organization (WHO) has been notified of 1,432 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including at least 507 related deaths, since the first cases were reported in September 2012. For the latest updates from WHO see the [WHO Coronavirus infections](#) website.

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia outbreak: The majority of the 101 cases reported from Saudi Arabia since the beginning of August 2015 have been linked to a large on-going MERS-CoV outbreak in Riyadh involving the King Abdulaziz Medical City (KAMC) hospital. The KAMC hospital's Emergency Department has been temporarily closed in response to the outbreak.

On 26 August 2015, WHO reported that between 18 and 21 August 2015, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had notified 29 additional cases of MERS-CoV infection, including 6 deaths. Twenty-four of these reported cases are associated with the KAMC hospital MERS-CoV outbreak, and one additional case is associated with a smaller MERS-CoV outbreak currently occurring in another hospital in Riyadh.

Republic of Korea outbreak: The last case in the Korean outbreak was reported on 4 July 2015 and all identified close contacts have now completed their period of quarantine monitoring.

Hajj Travel Advice: WHO does not recommend the application of any travel restrictions to affected countries but have provided [travel advice for people making pilgrimages in Saudi Arabia](#). Also see the NSW Health [Hajj Travel Advice factsheet](#) with information for pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia to perform the Hajj or Umrah.

For further information for NSW Health Professionals see the following links:

- NSW Health [MERS-CoV Update for Clinicians](#) [11 June 2015]
- NSW Health [MERS-CoV updated advice for General Practitioners](#) [10 June 2015]

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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 17 August to 23 August 2015, by date received.*

Condition Group	Condition	Weekly		Year to date			Full Year	
		This week	Last week	2015	2014	2013	2014	2013
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	3	6	658	296	985	429	1132
	Giardiasis	44	42	2380	2024	1606	2942	2242
	Haemolytic Uremic Syndrome	1	0	7	5	8	7	10
	Hepatitis A	4	1	60	47	47	80	62
	Rotavirus	22	19	299	348	286	714	508
	Salmonellosis	35	42	2896	3075	2486	4302	3483
	Shigellosis	1	8	120	148	82	209	136
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	3388	2005	13949	14461	4396	20888	8403
	Legionellosis	5	0	69	50	71	72	109
	Tuberculosis	1	5	250	303	282	472	443
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	345	332	14532	15697	14327	22897	21089
	Gonorrhoea	73	84	3374	3250	2938	4875	4265
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Adverse Event Following Immunisation	2	2	123	197	423	256	509
	Haemophilus influenzae type b	1	0	4	4	6	6	9
	Meningococcal Disease	2	2	29	20	29	37	48
	Pertussis	275	260	5415	1414	1567	3051	2379
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	13	18	310	329	345	511	490
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	1	3	158	130	324	163	438
	Dengue	2	4	221	309	215	378	303
	Malaria	2	2	29	69	66	87	93
	Ross River	12	16	1443	424	391	677	512
Zoonotic	Leptospirosis	1	0	8	9	9	16	11
	Q fever	2	1	137	126	108	190	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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