

Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 14, 31 March to 6 April 2019

In summary, we report:

- [Measles](#) – six new cases
- [Hepatitis A](#) – two new cases
- [Summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW](#)

For further information see NSW Health [infectious diseases page](#). This includes links to other NSW Health [infectious disease surveillance reports](#) and a [diseases data page](#) for a range of notifiable infectious diseases.

Measles

Six new cases of measles were notified in this reporting week ([Table 1](#)), taking the number of people infectious with measles in NSW since Christmas 2018 to 33, including cases notified in other jurisdictions who spent time while infectious in NSW. [Health alerts](#) have been released advising people who may have been exposed to these cases while infectious to be alert to the signs and symptoms of [measles](#).

Four of the cases this week were acquired locally in people with no history of recent travel. One person was a known contact of a recent case, while the other three people were likely to have been exposed to known cases in Sydney (in Eastwood and in the CBD Haymarket area). Two of these cases occurred in infants too young to be vaccinated against measles.

The two other measles cases were in unvaccinated travellers from northern NSW who acquired their infections in the Philippines. They were likely to have been infectious on a return flight from Singapore to the Gold Coast and on their return to northern NSW.

Measles is a serious viral illness and one of the most highly communicable infectious diseases. The measles virus is usually spread through coughing or by contact with the nasal or throat secretions of an infected person.

The symptoms of measles usually start 7 to 18 days after exposure to someone who has measles. They include fever, cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis (red, watery eyes) and feeling unwell. After three to five days a rash with flat red spots breaks out, usually starting on the face before spreading to the rest of the body. People are infectious from four days before the onset of the rash until four days after it appears.

People are considered immune to measles if they have had a documented measles illness in the past or have evidence of having received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine. People born before 1966 are also considered immune as they are highly likely to have had measles infection as a child.

While one dose of vaccine induces effective protection in 95% of people, two doses are recommended as this provides long-term protection in 99% of people.

People who think they might have measles should avoid public places and see a doctor, but should call ahead to ensure they do not come in to contact with other people in the waiting areas.

For more information see the NSW Health [measles fact sheet](#) and [measles website](#).

For more information on measles vaccine recommendations see the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

Hepatitis A

Two new cases of hepatitis A infection were reported this week ([Table 1](#)). One was thought to have acquired the infection while overseas in Pakistan.

The second case is thought to have acquired their infection locally from a household contact who was diagnosed with the disease in the previous week. This case worked as a food handler at a hotel in Griffith while unknowingly infectious. The local public health unit has issued a [health alert](#) advising anyone who had eaten at *The Area Hotel* in Griffith on Wednesday 20 March from 5pm until close to be alert to symptoms of hepatitis A.

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver. Symptoms include feeling unwell, lack of appetite, aches and pains, fever, nausea, and abdominal discomfort, followed by dark urine, pale stools and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). The illness usually lasts from one to three weeks.

There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A and people sometimes require hospitalisation for supportive care. People who experience symptoms of hepatitis are advised to see their doctor straight away.

The hepatitis A virus is spread by the faecal-oral route, including through the consumption of contaminated food or water or by direct contact with an infected person. People with hepatitis A can transmit the virus to others from two weeks before the development of symptoms until one week after the appearance of jaundice. This means that people diagnosed with hepatitis A should avoid preparing food or drink for other people, sharing utensils or towels, or having sex for at least one week after onset of jaundice.

A safe and effective hepatitis A vaccine is available, with two doses spaced at least six months apart shown to provide high levels of protection against infection for many years.

Hepatitis A vaccination is routinely recommended for people at higher risk of infection, including travellers to countries where hepatitis A is common (most developing countries), people in some occupational groups, men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs. Vaccination is also recommended for people with chronic liver disease, and for people with developmental disabilities and their carers.

People exposed to hepatitis A can be protected from developing the disease if they receive the vaccine or protective antibodies (immunoglobulin) within two weeks of their exposure.

Follow the links for NSW Health [hepatitis A notification data](#) and the NSW Health [hepatitis A fact sheet](#).

For more information on hepatitis A vaccine recommendations see the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

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 31 March to 6 April 2019, by date received*

		Weekly		Year to date			Full Year	
		This week	Last week	2019	2018	2017	2018	2017
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	15	22	309	312	782	708	1266
	Giardiasis	92	87	1085	908	1175	2798	3135
	Hepatitis A	2	4	25	39	10	86	71
	Paratyphoid	2	6	30	13	7	34	17
	Rotavirus	12	6	155	279	192	806	2319
	Salmonellosis	96	91	1384	1248	1591	3343	3681
	Shigellosis	23	14	245	64	65	532	236
	Typhoid	1	0	31	22	24	58	55
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	721	699	8033	3458	2522	17422	103852
	Legionellosis	2	2	55	48	36	171	138
	Tuberculosis	12	9	145	134	133	513	542
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	640	565	8834	8613	8606	31188	29006
	Gonorrhoea	267	223	3195	2867	2837	10623	9161
	LGV	1	1	18	22	9	85	50
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Measles	6	0	28	4	22	18	32
	Mumps	1	1	15	28	39	72	127
	Pertussis	143	102	1746	1060	1812	6281	5366
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	9	4	94	96	89	688	683
	Rubella	2	0	7	0	0	1	5
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	5	2	20	26	26	74	127
	Dengue	6	10	115	100	106	299	306
	Malaria	1	0	17	18	22	66	68
	Ross River	14	27	179	134	1020	569	1652
Zoonotic Diseases	Q fever	4	6	80	61	70	227	210

* Notes on Table 1: NSW Notifiable Conditions activity

- Only conditions which had one or more case reports received during the reporting week appear in the table.
- 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 (i.e. by report date).
- Note that [notifiable disease data](#) available on the NSW Health website are reported by onset date so case totals are likely to vary from those shown here.
- Cases involving interstate residents are not included.
- The shigellosis case definition changed on 1 July 2018 to include probable cases (PCR positive only), hence case counts cannot be validly compared to previous years.
- 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](#).
- Chronic blood-borne virus conditions (such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C) are not included here. Related data are available from the [Infectious Diseases Data](#) and the [HIV Surveillance Data Reports](#) webpages.