

Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 16, 14 April to 20 April 2019

In summary, we report:

- [Measles](#) – one new case in Western NSW
- [Legionellosis](#) – two new cases reported; potting mix warning
- [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

One new case of measles was notified in the reporting week ([Table 1](#)). The Western NSW Local Health District (LHD) has issued a [health alert](#) about this case, a young man who had recently returned from a trip to New Zealand. The man is known to have visited a number of places in Dubbo while infectious including a medical practice and Dubbo Hospital's Emergency Department.

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 usually infectious from around 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](#).

Legionellosis (Legionnaires' disease)

There were two new cases of legionellosis notified in this reporting week ([Table 1](#)). These unrelated cases were both due to the *Legionella pneumophila* species and affected a women aged in their 60s from the Hunter New England and Illawarra Shoalhaven LHDs. No likely environmental sources or links to other recent cases have been identified by the local public health units to date.

Legionellosis 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), smoking, and immunosuppression as a result of chronic medical conditions, cancer or taking high dose corticosteroids. People with Legionnaires' disease often have severe symptoms and infection is associated with a 10-15 per cent mortality rate.

Legionellosis is caused by *Legionella* bacteria. There are around 50 different species of *Legionella* bacteria, but most infections in NSW are caused by *Legionella pneumophila* or *Legionella longbeachae*. Legionellosis is not spread from person to person but is usually transmitted by inhaling contaminated water aerosols, soils or dust.

Legionella pneumophila is found in water and 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 inspection, disinfection and maintenance of cooling towers and plumbing systems limit the growth of the bacteria and prevent legionellosis outbreaks.

Legionella longbeachae is found in potting mix, compost and soils and infection is associated with gardening and the use of potting mix. NSW Health recently issued a [warning for gardeners](#) to take extra care to protect themselves from the risk of legionellosis when using potting mix. *Legionella longbeachae* bacteria is often found in potting mix and can cause the lung infection Legionnaires' disease if someone inhales dust from contaminated soil.

Gardeners can protect themselves by donning a special P2 mask and gardening gloves, while handling potting mix. Wetting the potting mix first also helps prevent any contaminated potting mix dust blowing up into the air and being inhaled. Gardeners should always make sure to wash their hands thoroughly with soap before eating or drinking, even if they have been wearing gloves.

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

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 14 April – 20 April 2019, by date received*

		Weekly		Year to date			Full Year	
		This week	Last week	2019	2018	2017	2018	2017
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	11	15	333	351	835	708	1266
	Giardiasis	54	64	1202	1029	1288	2799	3135
	Hepatitis A	1	3	30	43	10	86	71
	Hepatitis E	1	1	5	5	8	18	20
	Rotavirus	12	17	189	315	203	808	2319
	STEC/VTEC	1	1	25	21	21	57	53
	Salmonellosis	61	86	1526	1413	1756	3343	3681
	Shigellosis	12	14	271	74	66	532	236
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	685	856	9633	3727	2766	17422	103852
	Legionellosis	2	5	63	58	41	171	138
	Tuberculosis	8	15	169	154	154	513	542
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	534	585	10050	10006	9516	31197	29006
	Gonorrhoea	195	299	3699	3333	3125	10622	9160
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Measles	1	2	31	5	25	18	32
	Mumps	1	1	17	33	47	72	127
	Pertussis	81	128	1957	1196	1962	6281	5366
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	19	11	126	104	102	686	683
	Rubella	3	0	10	0	1	1	5
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	2	2	24	32	27	74	127
	Dengue	6	9	132	111	112	299	306
	Malaria	1	1	19	19	23	66	68
	Ross River	13	21	220	155	1070	569	1652
Zoonotic Diseases	Q fever	2	8	97	65	76	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.