

## Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

### Week 21, 22 May to 28 May 2022

In this report we provide information regarding *Legionella pneumophila* and a summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW over the reporting period 21, 22 May to 28 May 2022.

Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the situation, data on **COVID-19** notifications can be found separately on the NSW Health [Latest Updates on COVID-19](#) page.

For up-to-date information regarding the **Japanese encephalitis** outbreak and the NSW response, please visit the [NSW Health Japanese encephalitis page](#).

Information on notifiable conditions is available at the 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.

### Legionella pneumophila

NSW Health, in conjunction with the South Eastern Sydney Public Health Unit and the City of Sydney, are currently investigating an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease due to *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1. Seven confirmed cases with illness onsets between 6 and 25 May have been identified who had all been in the Sydney Central Business District (CBD) during their exposure period. All cases, five males and two females, are aged between 46 and 73 years, all have required hospitalisation with four requiring respiratory support. Five of the seven had known underlying risk factors associated with Legionnaires disease.

A media release was issued alerting people to be aware of symptoms for Legionnaires' disease. Additionally, information about the cluster was issued to NSW general practitioners and hospital clinicians to be on the lookout for this disease. All high priority cooling towers in the area have been inspected and sampled. Results of these investigations are pending.

Legionnaires' disease, an infection of the respiratory system caused by *Legionella* bacteria, is characterised by fever, chills, cough and shortness of breath. Some people may also experience muscle aches, headache, tiredness, loss of appetite and diarrhoea. Legionnaires' disease typically affects people over the age of 50 years and can result in severe pneumonia requiring hospitalisation, especially in those who smoke tobacco, have an existing lung condition or a suppressed immune system.

Legionnaires' disease is not spread from person to person, but infection may occur after breathing in water aerosols or environmental dust contaminated with *Legionella* bacteria.

There are two types of *Legionella* bacteria that commonly cause Legionnaires' disease: *L. longbeachae*, which may be found in soil, bagged potting mix and landscaping products, and *L. pneumophila*, which can be present in building water systems such as air-conditioning cooling towers and warm water systems.

Following notification of a case of Legionnaires' disease, the Public Health Unit (PHU) works closely with the case and their family to investigate potential sources. NSW Health in conjunction with the PHU consistently checks for common potential sources between cases, and monitors for any further cases or crossover in exposures.

### Reducing risk of Legionnaires' disease:

Certain activities such as gardening, irrigation, and re-commissioning of spas or large air conditioning systems may increase the risk of *Legionella* bacteria exposure. The risk of Legionnaires' disease can be reduced by:

- Taking appropriate precautions when gardening and handling soil, potting mix and similar products, including:
  - Wetting down gardening products while working to reduce dust
  - Use of appropriate personal protective equipment including a P2/N95 mask and gloves
  - Washing hands after handling soil and potting mix and before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Businesses ensuring cooling water systems are well maintained, particularly after periods of intermittent operation or seasonal usage, in line with the NSW Public Health Regulation.
- Regular maintenance (including disinfection) of spas, hot tubs and irrigation systems – particularly those sourced from untreated water sources such as dams or reservoirs.

### Further information:

- [NSW Health Legionnaires' disease fact sheet](#)
- [NSW Health Legionellosis notification data page](#)
- [NSW Guidelines for Legionella Control in Cooling Water Systems](#)

## Summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW

The following table summarises notifiable conditions activity over the reporting period alongside reports received in the previous week, year to date and in previous years (Table 1).

**Table 1. NSW Notifiable conditions from 21 May-28 May 2022, by date received\***

		Weekly		Year to date				Full Year		
		This week	Last week	2022	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019
Bloodborne	Hepatitis C - Newly Acquired	1	1	6	4	7	13	13	17	29
Enteric Diseases	Campylobacter	201	207	4214	5234	3866	4854	11954	10008	11482
	Cryptosporidiosis	13	9	192	260	384	382	443	549	669
	Giardiasis	18	32	511	826	1001	1769	1504	1871	3328
	Hepatitis A	1	0	10	0	17	35	8	18	61
	Listeriosis	1	0	14	9	6	4	22	20	16
	Rotavirus	16	5	168	133	333	280	356	500	1777
	STEC/VTEC	7	1	59	58	42	31	126	115	79
	Salmonellosis	61	46	1585	1643	1792	1899	3096	2884	3555
	Shigellosis	6	9	109	37	361	373	60	494	867
	Typhoid	1	4	17	0	32	37	2	37	64
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	8061	6067	23331	36	7264	15683	124	7488	116431
	Legionellosis	8	9	108	100	73	76	213	170	153
	Tuberculosis	4	8	178	249	218	230	557	625	589
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	439	496	10023	12355	11591	13147	25369	27243	32475
	Gonorrhoea	206	196	3994	3884	4208	4860	7624	9883	11688
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Haemophilus influenzae type b	1	0	1	4	1	3	9	6	11
	Meningococcal Disease	2	0	7	10	9	11	23	22	59
	Mumps	1	0	2	3	47	25	6	56	57
	Pertussis	5	0	18	21	1265	2548	43	1400	6386
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	9	10	120	165	141	168	386	358	690
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	1	0	39	60	109	34	111	271	63
	Dengue	1	1	18	1	74	200	4	76	456
	Malaria	3	0	11	2	18	27	8	25	73
	Ross River	10	18	499	469	1274	341	659	1990	595
Zoonotic Diseases	Q fever	2	1	72	85	96	125	187	206	248

**\* 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.
- Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the situation, data on COVID-19 notifications can be found separately on the NSW Health [Latest Updates on COVID-19](#) page.
- 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.
- 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](#), the [HIV Surveillance Data Reports](#) and the [Hepatitis B and C Strategies Data Reports](#) webpages.
- Notification is dependent on a diagnosis being made by a doctor, hospital or laboratory. Changes in awareness and testing patterns influence the proportion of patients with a particular infection that is diagnosed and notified over time, especially if the infection causes non-specific symptoms.