

Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 17 22 April 2013 – 28 April 2013

In summary, we report:

- [Viral meningitis/encephalitis and Hand Foot and Mouth disease](#) – update.
- [Psittacosis](#) – one new case reported.
- [Listeriosis](#) – one new sporadic case reported.
- [Summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW](#)

For further information on communicable diseases in NSW see the [NSW Health Infectious Diseases](#) website.

Click on the heading of each section to see a related factsheet. Updated data are provided in the links below each section, where available.

[Viral meningitis/encephalitis and hand foot and mouth disease](#)

During the reporting week, the number of meningitis/encephalitis presentations to NSW Emergency Departments (ED) increased slightly and remained just above the usual range for this time of year (Figure 1).

There were 11 meningitis/encephalitis presentations in children aged under 10 years (all admitted), compared with six cases in the previous week and an average of two cases for the same period in previous years (Figure 1A).

The number of ED presentations for hand, foot and mouth disease increased in the past week, numbers decreased and remained well above the usual range. The majority of these were in children under 5 years (Figure 1B).

Figure 1. Total weekly counts of ED presentations for meningitis/encephalitis to 28 April 2013 (black line), compared with each of the 5 previous years (coloured lines), persons of all ages, for 59 NSW hospitals.

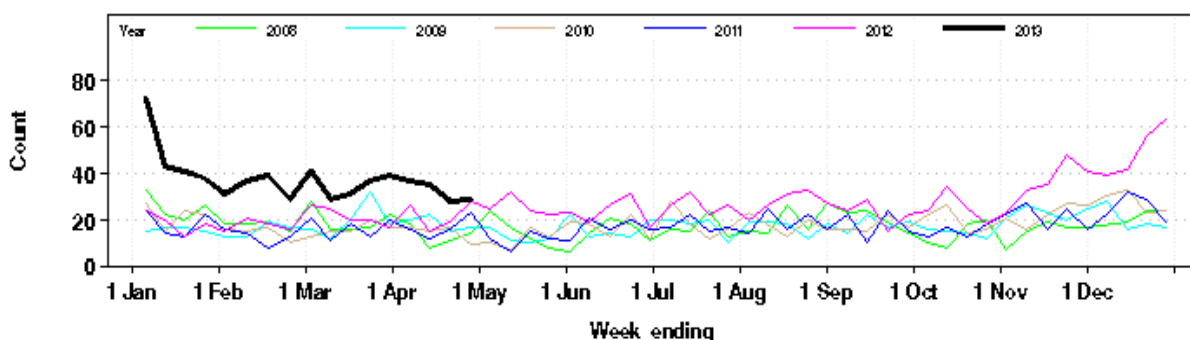


Figure 1A. Total weekly counts of ED presentations for meningitis or encephalitis that were admitted, for 2013 (black line), compared with each of the 5 previous years (coloured lines), children aged under 10 years, for 59 NSW hospitals.

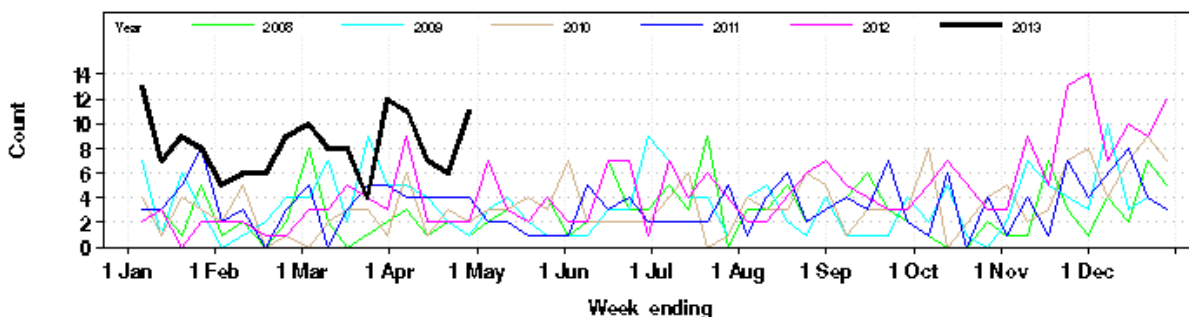
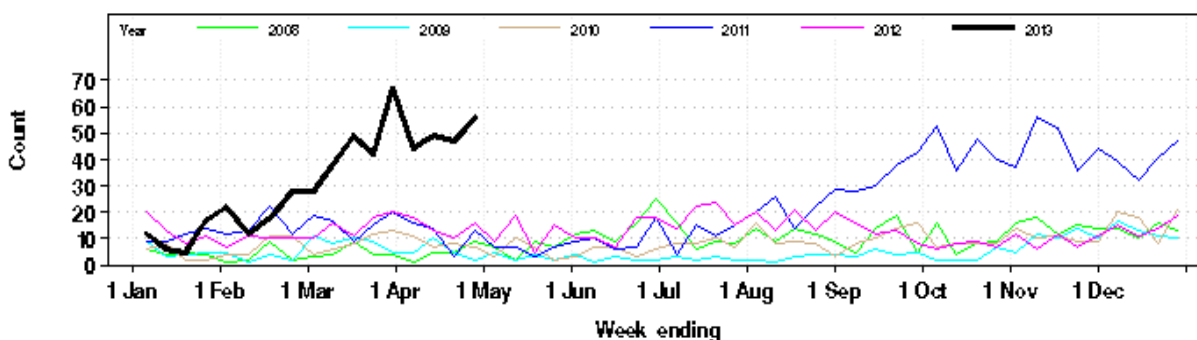


Figure 1B. Total weekly counts of ED presentations for hand, foot and mouth disease, to 28 April 2013 (black line), compared with each of the 5 previous years (coloured lines), children aged under 5 years, for 59 NSW hospitals.



Viral meningitis is generally less severe than bacterial meningitis and resolves without specific treatment. In Australia, most viral meningitis cases in the summer months are caused by enteroviruses. Only a very small number of people with enterovirus infections develop meningitis, encephalitis or other serious complications.

Hand, foot and mouth disease is generally a mild illness caused by enteroviruses, particularly coxsackieviruses. It is not usually a serious illness and is not related to the foot and mouth disease that affects animals. It mainly occurs in children under 10 years of age but can also occur in older children and adults.

Enteroviruses are most often spread from person to person through faecal contamination (such as by not washing hands properly after using the toilet). Enteroviruses can also be spread through respiratory secretions (saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus) of an infected person, and possibly through contaminated swimming and wading pools.

See the [NSW Health Enterovirus Alert page](#) for more information on enterovirus neurological disease.

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Psittacosis

One case of psittacosis was notified in this reporting week (Table 1). This case was in an elderly man from the Hunter New England Local Health District who developed pneumonia. His family had recently acquired a pet bird (a cockatiel). This is the first report of psittacosis in 2013; there are usually between 15 to 20 cases reported each year in NSW.

Psittacosis is a disease caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia psittaci*, carried by birds. All birds are susceptible to infection, but pet birds (for example parrots, parakeets, cockatiels) and poultry (turkeys and ducks) are most frequently involved in passing the infection to humans.

Human infection usually occurs when a person inhales the bacteria, usually from dried bird droppings from infected birds. People can also become infected by mouth-to-beak contact (kissing) with birds or by handling the feathers or tissues of infected birds. Psittacosis is not spread from person to person.

Follow the link for more information on [psittacosis notification data](#).

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Listeriosis

One case of listeriosis was reported this week (Table 1). This case was in an adult from Sydney and is not believed to be linked to any previously reported clusters.

Listeriosis is a rare illness caused by eating food contaminated with bacteria called *Listeria monocytogenes*. Listeriosis is usually contracted through eating food contaminated with the Listeria bacteria, particularly raw meat, unpasteurised milk and milk products, raw fruit and vegetables. Babies can be born with listeriosis if their mothers eat contaminated food during the pregnancy. Outbreaks of illness have been associated with raw milk, soft cheeses, pre-prepared salads (for example, from salad bars), unwashed raw vegetables, pâté, cold diced chicken and pre-cut fruit and fruit salad.

People are at risk of Listeria infection include pregnant women and the foetus, 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).

Follow the link for further information on [listeriosis notification data](#).

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Summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW

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

Table 1. NSW Notifiable Conditions activity for the period 22 April to 28 April 2013 (by date received).

		This week	Last week	Year to date			Full Year	
				2013	2012	2011	2012	2011
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	26	52	720	287	131	655	354
	Giardiasis	44	54	866	826	1033	2015	2376
	Listeriosis	1	1	19	14	7	36	20
	Rotavirus	12	4	150	228	266	1761	1207
	Salmonellosis	71	86	1458	1268	1957	2947	3570
	Shigellosis	1	1	45	54	52	131	126
	Typhoid	1	0	24	19	27	43	45
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	26	36	531	317	491	8041	5790
	Legionellosis	2	1	27	49	46	103	102
	Tuberculosis	1	6	96	136	170	438	538
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	289	441	6853	7270	6708	21264	20447
	Gonorrhoea	63	82	1449	1288	791	4114	2817
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Adverse Event Following Immunisation	6	11	285	106	151	261	343
	Meningococcal Disease	1	1	10	15	25	68	71
	Pertussis	30	48	829	2557	4723	5993	13410
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	5	8	102	93	106	569	529
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	8	15	170	125	263	344	472
	Malaria	1	6	33	17	29	68	82
	Ross River	10	10	162	272	358	596	591
Zoonotic	Psittacosis	1	0	1	8	4	18	20

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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