Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 38 16 September 2013 – 22 September 2013

In summary, we report:

- **Measles** – three new locally-acquired cases reported in Sydney
- **Listeriosis** – two new cases reported including one case in a newborn
- **Gastroenteritis** – rise in Emergency Department activity for young adults
- **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 influenza reports, see the NSW Health Infectious Diseases Reports webpage.

Measles

Two new laboratory-confirmed measles cases were notified in this reporting week (Table 1). Both cases were unvaccinated young men aged 25 – 35 years who had spent time in suburbs in the inner west and inner south of Sydney. Local Public Health Units have investigated these cases to identify and manage close contacts, including those identified at general practice surgeries and the Royal Prince Alfred Emergency Department. No source of infection was identified for either case.

Since this time, another measles case in young adult male has been notified, prompting NSW Health to issue a media release and alerts to GPs and emergency departments in the affected areas. Follow the links to see the NSW Health media release and the GP measles alert (pdf).

Measles is highly infectious and is spread easily through the air. Symptoms can include fever, tiredness, runny nose, cough and sore red eyes which usually last for several days before a red, blotchy rash appears. Complications can range from an ear infection and diarrhoea to pneumonia or swelling of the brain. Endemic measles has been eliminated from Australia however outbreaks do occur, often in association with unvaccinated young adults travelling overseas. To date this year, there have been 16 measles case notifications in NSW, 12 of which are known to have been either acquired overseas or linked to people who were infected overseas.

Children should receive two doses of vaccine, one at 12 months and the second at 18 months. Children over 18 months who have not had their second dose of measles vaccine can be vaccinated now. Anyone born during or after 1966 should have two doses of vaccine (at least 4 weeks apart).

Follow the link for further information on measles vaccines (external link).
Follow the link for more information on measles case notifications data.

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Listeriosis

Two new cases of listeriosis were notified this week (Table 1). The first case was in a newborn baby who is assumed to have acquired the infection from their mother, and who required resuscitation at birth. The second case was in an older male with a number of chronic illnesses. The local Public Health Units are investigating both cases to identify possible sources of infection.

Listeriosis is an illness that is caused by eating food contaminated with a bacterium called *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Listeria* bacteria are common in the environment and some raw foods however eating foods that contain *Listeria* does not cause illness in most people. Pregnant women are at high risk of serious illness, miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth and serious infection in their newborn if infected with *Listeria*. Listeriosis is most common in people aged over 45 years and particularly in people who suffer from chronic illness or who have impaired immunity.

The risk of infection can be reduced by avoiding high risk foods such as unpasteurised dairy products, soft or semi-soft cheese, cold cooked chicken, cold processed meats, pre-prepared salads, freshly squeezed fruit and vegetable juices, raw seafood, rockmelon and pâté. In addition, it is important to always wash hands, cooking utensils and foods thoroughly during preparation, to cook foods thoroughly, and quickly refrigerate foods that require storage.

Follow the links for further information regarding *Listeria* and food risks:

- NSW Food Authority: Pregnancy and Food Safety
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand: Listeria and Food brochure
- NSW Health: Listeriosis factsheet

Follow the link for more information on listeriosis notifications data.

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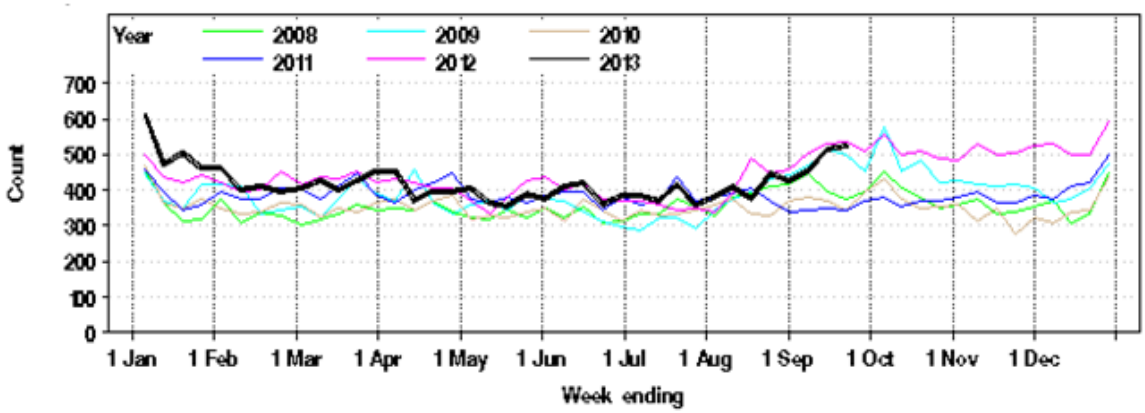
Gastroenteritis

The number of patients presenting with gastrointestinal illness to emergency departments in NSW increased slightly this week but remains within the usual range for this time of year. The increase was highest in the 17-34 year-old age group (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Total weekly counts of emergency department visits for gastrointestinal illness, for 2013 (black line), compared with each of the 5 previous years (coloured lines); persons aged 17-34 years, for 59 NSW hospitals.



Follow the links for further information on viral gastroenteritis and other infections, some of which can cause of gastroenteritis.

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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 16 September 2013 to 22 September 2013, by date received

		This week	Last week	Year to date			Full Year	
				2013	2012	2011	2012	2011
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	3	5	995	544	280	655	354
	Giardiasis	26	42	1704	1562	1882	2015	2377
	Listeriosis	2	0	29	25	15	36	20
	Rotavirus	7	15	316	1041	597	1761	1208
	Salmonellosis	33	40	2536	2149	2902	2942	3567
	Shigellosis	2	3	89	98	89	131	126
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	503	707	6644	7133	4936	8039	5791
	Legionellosis	4	2	76	90	83	105	105
	Tuberculosis	6	7	270	296	377	440	538
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	345	374	15315	15742	15073	21261	20448
	Gonorrhoea	61	72	3155	2988	1931	4114	2818
	LGV	1	0	26	12	31	28	36
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Adverse Event Following Immunisation	7	3	424	211	286	262	352
	Haemophilus influenzae type b	1	0	7	2	4	2	4
	Measles	2	0	15	137	76	172	88
	Mumps	1	0	65	99	45	110	61
	Pertussis	64	42	1700	4743	9822	5996	13411
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	9	8	374	426	404	563	530
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	3	10	342	238	398	344	471
	Dengue	1	2	188	229	103	289	148
	Ross River	6	10	402	491	519	596	591

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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