

# Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

## Week 18, 2 May to 8 May 2021

In summary, we report:

- [Influenza](#) – Winter flu campaign launch – Time to get vaccinated against influenza
- [Novel coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [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.

### Influenza – Winter Flu campaign launch – Time to get vaccinated against influenza

Influenza is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. There are two main types of influenza virus that cause infection in humans - types A and B - and many sub-types or strains. Influenza can occur throughout the year, but activity usually peaks in winter.

Globally, across Australia, and in NSW, flu case numbers in 2021 have been lower than expected. For the year to date, only 22 confirmed influenza notifications have been reported (by date of report) in NSW ([Table 1](#)). By comparison, by this point in the year of 2020, over 7,000 influenza cases had been recorded in NSW and by the same point in 2019 there had been over 11,000 recorded cases.

It remains difficult to predict how many cases of influenza will be seen in NSW in 2021, particularly while Australia's international borders remain closed, and the requirement for mandatory quarantine for international arrivals remains in place. It is possible that when restrictions lift, NSW will experience an atypical flu season, i.e. one that commences later in the year. It is possible that people may have reduced immunity to flu since during 2020 influenza activity was lower than average. The focus in 2021 is on ensuring that flu vaccination is not overlooked, particularly in people at greater risk of severe flu.

Annual flu vaccination provides the best protection against influenza. NSW Health encourages everyone to get vaccinated every year. Flu vaccination can save not only the life of the person receiving the vaccine, but also help protect those who are unable to be vaccinated, such as very young babies and others who cannot be vaccinated due to health reasons.

Under the National Immunisation Program, those eligible for a free flu shot include people aged 65 years and over, all children aged 6 months to under 5 years of age, pregnant women, all Aboriginal people from 6 months of age, and those who suffer from chronic medical conditions. An adjuvanted influenza vaccine is available for people aged 65 years and over, which has been shown to trigger a stronger immune response in this age group.

The 2021 Winter Flu Immunisation media campaign will be launched in the week of Monday 16 May. The campaign will employ a range of creative resources supported by interactive social media techniques to promote and encourage flu vaccination.

## Further information

NSW Health resources:

- [Influenza homepage](#) – landing page for a range of additional influenza resources in multiple languages.
- [Influenza factsheet](#) – overview of influenza
- [Information on 2021 influenza vaccinations in residential aged care facilities](#)
- Seasonal influenza vaccination 2021- [information for providers](#), [FAQs](#), [Influenza Vaccination Provider Toolkit](#), and [vaccine information sheet](#) (details on free vaccine eligibility)
- [Influenza notifications data](#)

Australian Department of Health resources:

- [ATAGI advice on seasonal influenza vaccines in 2021](#)
- [ATAGI advice on relative timing of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines](#)

National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS)

- [Influenza vaccine factsheet and FAQs](#)
- [Influenza vaccination during COVID-19 - FAQs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#)

WHO Influenza update

- [Global influenza data update](#) [29 March 2021]

## Novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)

For up-to-date information regarding the COVID-19 outbreak and the NSW response, please visit the [NSW Health COVID-19 page](#).

## 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 2 May – 8 May 2021, by date received\***

		Weekly		Year to date			Full Year	
		This week	Last week	2021	2020	2019	2020	2019
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	9	5	242	357	354	550	669
	Giardiasis	42	49	698	882	1564	1791	3271
	Rotavirus	2	6	92	312	232	464	1755
	Salmonellosis	45	50	1473	1640	1685	2888	3556
	Shigellosis	3	1	34	354	306	494	867
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	1	1	22	7218	11279	7487	116442
	Legionellosis	4	5	84	59	67	170	153
	Tuberculosis	16	10	213	194	195	624	590
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	580	583	10685	10357	11246	27278	32495
	Gonorrhoea	184	174	3364	3776	4129	9905	11702
	LGV	1	2	16	32	19	44	69
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Meningococcal Disease	1	1	6	8	10	22	59
	Pertussis	3	2	23	1222	2184	1405	6386
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	5	12	130	134	133	360	691
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	3	3	52	69	28	271	63
	Ross River	18	24	405	656	275	1989	593
Zoonotic Diseases	Leptospirosis	1	5	36	6	4	12	9
	Q fever	1	2	65	81	116	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.
- 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.
- 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.