

# Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

## Week 43, 24 October to 30 October 2021

In summary, we report:

- [Legionnaires' disease](#) – new cases and advice
- [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.

## Legionnaires' disease

Seven cases of Legionnaires' disease were notified in this reporting week ([Table 1](#)); three caused by *Legionella pneumophila*, and four caused by *L. longbeachae*.

Legionnaires' disease is an infection of the respiratory system caused by *Legionella* bacteria and is usually 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 usually affects people over the age of 50 and can result in severe pneumonia, especially in those who smoke, have existing lung conditions or suppressed immune systems.

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. pneumophila*, which can be present in building water systems such as air-conditioning cooling towers and warm water systems, and *L. longbeachae*, which may be found in soil, bagged potting mix and landscaping products.

Following notification of a case of Legionnaires' disease, NSW Health works closely with the case and their family to investigate potential sources. To date, no links have been found to indicate common sources for the most recent cases of Legionnaire's disease, but Health Protection NSW continues to monitor 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:

- 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.
- 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.

Further information:

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

## 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 24 October – 30 October 2021, by date received\***

		Weekly		Year to date			Full Year	
		This week	Last week	2021	2020	2019	2020	2019
Enteric Diseases	Cryptosporidiosis	5	6	367	470	508	549	669
	Giardiasis	20	14	1330	1561	2848	1869	3323
	Listeriosis	1	0	19	13	13	20	16
	Rotavirus	6	4	245	428	1013	464	1754
	STEC/VTEC	4	1	96	70	58	114	80
	Salmonellosis	62	56	2483	2429	2995	2885	3556
	Shigellosis	2	1	50	460	715	494	867
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	2	7	81	7453	113797	7485	116432
	Legionellosis	7	4	159	130	127	170	153
	Tuberculosis	6	7	474	486	492	626	590
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	394	424	21663	22397	26706	27263	32482
	Gonorrhoea	110	94	6540	8288	9779	9890	11692
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Meningococcal Disease	1	0	18	19	53	22	59
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	4	5	359	289	568	359	690
Vector Borne Diseases	Ross River	3	6	616	1913	546	1990	593
Zoonotic Diseases	Q fever	1	1	133	175	210	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.