

Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 41, 9 to 15 October 2022

In this report we provide information on flooding and health risks and a summary of notifiable conditions activity in NSW over the reporting period 41, 9 to 15 October 2022.

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.

Flooding and health risks

Many areas in NSW (and Australia) are currently experiencing extensive flooding. Flooding creates immediate and longer-term health risk.

Follow local emergency services announcements if flooding is occurring or expected in your area. Floodwaters are extremely dangerous. Do not enter or drive into floodwaters.

For help or assistance:

- If you need emergency assistance in a flood or storm, call the State Emergency Service (SES) on 132 500.
- For a medical, police or fire emergency call Triple Zero (000).
- Health advice is also available 24 hours a day from Healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222
- A number of resources are available for [mental health advice](#) during and after emergencies.

Health risks during and after floods:

The NSW Health website contains a range of information to help people stay healthy during and after floods: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/emergency_preparedness/weather/Pages/storms-and-floods.aspx.

Risks from contact with flood water:

Floodwater may be contaminated by sewage, manure, chemicals and harmful debris – for this reason, you should **never swim in flood waters**. Contact with flood water increases the risk of skin infections and of water-borne disease such as [cryptosporidiosis](#). It can also increase the risk of [leptospirosis](#), which can be caused by exposure to flood water contaminated with urine from infected animals.

Follow [tetanus immunisation recommendations](#) and seek medical attention for dirty wounds or wounds where the skin has been penetrated such as with a dirty nail.

Drinking water

Flooding can affect drinking water supplies. If this happens, local water utility may issue a boil water alert. When a boil water alert is issued, water used for drinking or food preparation should be brought to a rolling boil to make it safe. Kettles with automatic shut off switches can do this. Water should then be allowed to cool and stored in a clean container with a lid and refrigerated.

Everyone, particularly people caring for young children, should be careful to avoid scalding, when they are heating and then cooling the water.

Bottled water or cool boiled water should be used for drinking, washing uncooked food (e.g. salad vegetables and fruit), making ice, cleaning teeth, gargling and pet's drinking water.

Dishes should be washed in hot soapy water or in a dishwasher. Children should take bottled water or cool boiled water to school. Infant formula should be made with cooled boiled water.

Tap water is safe for bathing. There is a potential risk if water is swallowed during washing and bathing. Parents and carers could consider a sponge bath for children as an alternative.

If you cannot boil the water, unscented household bleach (containing 4% – 5% available chlorine) may be used. Add 2 drops of bleach to 1 litre of water (or 4 drops if the water is cloudy), mix well, and allow to stand for 30 minutes before use.

Food and medicine safety:

Flooding often results in extended power outages, which can lead to food spoilage. Any food that has been in contact with floodwater should be discarded. The [NSW Food Authority](#) provides advice on food safety after floods and power outages.

During flooding events, ensure you keep essential medications and portable medical devices accessible, and with you. See your GP to ensure you have an adequate supply of essential medication at all times.

Medications that have been contaminated by floodwater should not be used, and medications that require refrigeration may need to be discarded after power outages (unless essential to sustain health, in which case the medicine should be used until a new supply is available). For information on medications affected by power outages or floodwater, speak to your pharmacist or doctor, or contact Healthdirect on 1800 022 222.

Mosquito-borne risks:

A few weeks after flooding, mosquito activity may increase due to the presence of standing water. Increased mosquito activity can be a nuisance, but can also increase the risk of viruses transmitted by mosquitos such as [Ross River Virus](#) and [Barmah Forest Virus](#).

In some parts of NSW, there may also be a risk of Japanese Encephalitis virus (JEV). JEV was detected in NSW for the first time in early 2022 in southern and western regional NSW. While disease risk decreased over winter, the return of warmer weather in recent weeks alongside the flooding in these areas may reintroduce mosquito activity and risk of JEV infection. Some people may be eligible for free JEV vaccination, please see the [NSW Health website](#) for further information.

To avoid mosquito bites and reduce the risk of virus transmission:

- Empty out containers which may have become filled with water during rain or flooding.
- Avoid being outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- If you are outdoors, wear loose-fitting long sleeves and pants, and apply an appropriate mosquito repellent.
- Use mosquito netting around beds, following safety guidelines.

Further information

- [Emergency preparedness – storms and floods](#)
- [Mosquito control and floods](#)
- [Japanese encephalitis](#)

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 9 to 15 October 2022, by date received*

		Weekly		Year to date				Full Year		
		This week	Last week	2022	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019
Enteric Diseases	Campylobacter	318	260	9357	9066	7193	8675	12014	10054	11482
	Cryptosporidiosis	13	8	362	358	464	494	444	549	669
	Giardiasis	28	24	1053	1303	1497	2766	1504	1872	3329
	Rotavirus	60	59	754	281	442	920	356	500	1777
	STEC/VTEC	3	4	108	91	66	51	126	115	79
	Salmonellosis	42	36	2379	2365	2365	2851	3097	2883	3553
	Shigellosis	18	15	334	46	451	674	60	494	867
Other	Invasive Group A Streptococcus	7	9	36	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Monkeypox	1	1	54	0	0	0	0	0	0
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	118	94	113694	72	7448	112884	124	7484	116412
	Legionellosis	2	7	193	155	123	121	213	170	153
	Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)	300	300	3628	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tuberculosis	12	6	387	459	460	457	558	625	589
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	592	451	19913	20868	21198	25276	25368	27239	32473
	Gonorrhoea	212	143	8159	6324	7879	9328	7620	9880	11686
	LGV	2	0	22	32	36	45	36	44	69
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Meningococcal Disease	1	0	23	17	18	50	23	22	59
	Mumps	1	0	9	6	53	46	6	56	58
	Pertussis	1	2	56	38	1388	4908	43	1400	6386
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	10	13	442	346	275	531	387	350	690
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	3	1	64	89	238	56	111	271	63
	Dengue	9	8	92	3	76	358	4	76	456
	Malaria	1	0	24	6	24	53	8	25	73
	Ross River	6	7	610	615	1895	535	659	1990	595
Zoonotic Diseases	Bruceellosis	2	0	7	3	3	3	4	4	4
	Leptospirosis	1	0	25	92	8	7	96	12	9
	Q fever	2	0	147	156	174	201	206	212	249

* 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.