

Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

Week 1, 2 to 8 January 2022

In summary, we report:

- [Legionnaires' disease](#) – five cases
- [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

Five cases of Legionnaires' disease were notified in this reporting week ([Table 1](#)); four caused by *Legionella longbeachae*, and one caused by *L. pneumophila*. Sadly, one person who was diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease caused by *L. longbeachae* has since passed away.

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

Reducing the 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:

- 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 protective facemask and gloves.
 - Washing hands after handling soil and potting mix and before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Businesses ensuring that 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.

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 2 – 8 January 2022, by date received*

| | | Weekly | | Year to date | | | Full Year | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------|------|-----------|-------|
| | | This week | Last week | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 |
| Enteric Diseases | Cryptosporidiosis | 5 | 0 | 6 | 25 | 9 | 442 | 549 |
| | Giardiasis | 9 | 9 | 9 | 26 | 22 | 1498 | 1869 |
| | Rotavirus | 2 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 52 | 298 | 464 |
| | STEC/VTEC | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 127 | 115 |
| | Salmonellosis | 67 | 32 | 68 | 135 | 43 | 3100 | 2885 |
| | Shigellosis | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 60 | 494 |
| Respiratory Diseases | Influenza | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 179 | 118 | 7485 |
| | Legionellosis | 5 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 207 | 170 |
| | Tuberculosis | 7 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 563 | 625 |
| Sexually Transmissible Infections | Chlamydia | 152 | 148 | 161 | 543 | 258 | 25272 | 27254 |
| | Gonorrhoea | 87 | 61 | 78 | 186 | 83 | 7623 | 9890 |
| | LGV | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 36 | 44 |
| Vaccine Preventable Diseases | Meningococcal Disease | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 22 |
| | Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive) | 5 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 391 | 359 |
| Vector Borne Diseases | Ross River | 11 | 4 | 11 | 19 | 3 | 652 | 1990 |
| Zoonotic Diseases | Leptospirosis | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 93 | 12 |

* 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.