

# Communicable Diseases Weekly Report

## Week 9, 27 February to 5 March 2022

In summary, we report:

- [Flooding and health risks](#)
- [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.

### Flooding and health risks

Excessive rainfall in NSW has resulted in widespread flooding across the region. Flooding can cause immediate and devastating effects, but there are several health risks associated with flooding that can persist for weeks.

#### **Health risks during floods:**

It is important to listen to local emergency services announcements if flooding is expected in your area. These may include boil water alerts if drinking water is potentially contaminated.

If a boil water alert is issued, cooled boiled water (or bottled water) should be used for:

- Drinking (including pets)
- Cooking
- Washing raw foods
- Brushing teeth

Dishes should be washed with hot water and soap, or in a dishwasher.

In the event of flooding you may need to move stock, equipment, garbage containers and any chemicals to higher ground to avoid loss of property or potential contamination. 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.

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.

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 after floods:**

#### *Food and medicine safety:*

Flooding often results in extended power outages, which can lead to food and medicine spoilage. Any food or medicine that has been in contact with floodwater should be discarded.

The [NSW Food Authority](#) provides advice on food safety after floods and power outages.

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.

#### *Water-borne disease risks:*

Floodwater may be contaminated by sewage, manure, chemicals and harmful debris – for this reason, you should **never swim in flood waters**. Flooding can also cause contamination of drinking water and natural water sources such as creeks, rivers and the ocean. This increases the risk of water-borne disease such as [cryptosporidiosis](#). It can also increase the risk of [leptospirosis](#), which can be associated with exposure to flood water contaminated with urine from infected animals.

- Natural water sources should not be used for swimming for a week after heavy rain.
- While swimming, avoid swallowing water.
- Water from natural sources should not be drunk unless it has been boiled to a rolling boil.

Entering floodwater, even for the purposes of clean up, should be avoided at all costs.

#### *Mosquito-borne risks:*

After flooding, mosquito activity generally increases 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](#).

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](#)

## **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 27 February – 5 March 2022, by date received\***

		Weekly		Year to date				Full Year		
		This week	Last week	2022	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019
Enteric Diseases	Campylobacter	213	243	1950	2266	2108	2311	11179	9457	11179
	Cryptosporidiosis	2	5	67	178	230	218	442	549	669
	Giardiasis	26	29	210	334	564	832	1501	1868	3322
	Rotavirus	12	8	59	55	267	126	356	500	1777
	Salmonellosis	90	77	736	909	1107	955	3097	2884	3555
	Shigellosis	6	5	38	14	276	173	60	494	867
	STEC/VTEC	3	0	22	25	22	19	127	115	79
	Typhoid	1	1	6	0	25	26	2	37	64
Respiratory Diseases	Influenza	17	5	54	13	5608	4761	124	7487	116434
	Legionellosis	2	4	42	53	22	40	210	170	153
	Tuberculosis	9	14	66	101	90	90	559	624	589
Sexually Transmissible Infections	Chlamydia	502	513	3935	5494	6391	5915	25352	27249	32478
	Gonorrhoea	189	180	1512	1711	2250	2079	7629	9887	11690
	LGV	1	0	3	6	18	13	36	44	69
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Pertussis	2	0	5	6	798	1175	43	1404	6386
	Pneumococcal Disease (Invasive)	2	2	31	60	83	62	390	359	690
Vector Borne Diseases	Barmah Forest	3	0	10	24	17	12	110	271	63
	Dengue	1	0	3	1	49	83	4	76	456
	Malaria	2	0	4	2	9	12	8	25	73
	Ross River	42	31	269	196	41	103	654	1990	593
	Brucellosis	1	0	2	0	0	2	4	4	4
Zoonotic Diseases	Q fever	2	0	20	39	54	65	177	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.