KEY POINTS

INFLUENZA AND INFLuenza-LIKE ILLNESSES (ILI)

Summary: Influenza activity this week suggests that influenza season in WA has commenced.

- ILI activity at sentinel GPs and EDs remained well above levels usually seen at this time of year.
- PathWest influenza detections and test percent positivity was also above levels usually seen at this time of year.
- Influenza A/H3N2 comprised the largest proportion of influenza detections at Pathwest this week (75%) followed by influenza B (22%).
- Overall non-influenza activity increased this week, mostly due to an increase in RSV detections.

GASTROENTERITIS

- The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs is in the higher range of values normally reported at this time of year.
- PathWest laboratory detections of norovirus and rotavirus remain at low levels.

OTHER VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

- Shingles and chickenpox: Shingles and Chickenpox activity at sentinel GPs and EDs were below baseline levels this week.
- Measles: No measles cases confirmed this week.
- Mumps: One mumps case notified this week.
- Rubella: No rubella cases notified this week
- Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD): One meningococcal serogroup C case notified this week.


Virus WAtch is a weekly electronic publication by the Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD) and key collaborators. It provides a brief summary of General Practice and Hospital Emergency Department sentinel surveillance data on influenza-like illness, gastroenteritis and varicella-zoster disease, together with relevant laboratory information, to alert health care workers in WA to important circulating viruses. All figures and data were accurate at time of publication, but subject to change. The data collections used to create this publication include:

- Sentinel General Practice data collected by WA members of the Australian Sentinel Practices Research Network (ASPREN)
- Emergency Department data provided by the Emergency Department Information System (EDIS), which currently incorporates data from the following hospitals: Fiona Stanley Hospital, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, Perth Children’s Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital, St John of God Midland, Bunbury Hospital, Armadale Hospital, Joondalup Health Campus, and Rockingham General Hospital.
- Notification data derived from disease notifications received by CDCD, WA Department of Health from medical providers and public or private laboratories in WA. These data are updated routinely to include admission status for all public and public/private hospitals in WA and hospitalisation data are included in the report during the influenza season.
- Viral laboratory data obtained from PathWest laboratories at QEII Medical Centre, as well as via notification data sent by all WA laboratories to CDCD, WA Department of Health.
The number of routine PathWest influenza detections increased sharply this week. Nine of the seventeen samples (53%) submitted for influenza testing by sentinel GPs tested positive.

The rate of ILI presentations increased sharply this week, and is well above levels usually reported during this time of year.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department sentinel surveillance (EDSS) data for respiratory viral presentations.

Respiratory presentations and admissions to sentinel EDs increased this week.

The number of respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs increased sharply this week and is well above levels normally reported at this time of year.
The number of influenza hospitalisations have been much higher than expected so far in 2019, particularly in adults.

The graph is a summary of influenza notifications received by the DoH who were recorded as having a hospital admission to the end of the current reporting week, for which cases had a specimen collection date between 20/05/2019 and 26/05/2019. Paediatric notifications were defined as individuals less than 18 years of age.

Influenza notifications in Western Australia by week, 2015 to 2019

Influenza notifications reported to the Department of Health continue to increase, suggesting that influenza season in WA has commenced approximately eight weeks earlier than recent influenza seasons in the state.

The graph is a summary of all influenza notifications received by the DoH, Western Australia to the end of the current reporting week, for which cases had date of symptom onset or specimen collection between 20/05/2019 and 26/05/2019. The seasonal threshold defines a value above which may indicate epidemic seasonal influenza activity. The threshold value is calculated based on analysis of seasonal influenza data from the past four years.
The percentage of specimens positive for influenza virus at PathWest remains above levels typically reported at this time of year. Of 697 specimens, 229 (32%) tested positive in the past week.

Two hundred and twenty nine samples were subtyped by PathWest during this reporting week; 4 (2%) influenza A/H1N1; 169 (75%) influenza A/H3N2; 3 (1%) influenza A/unsubtyped; and 51 (22%) influenza B.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for influenza reported at PathWest as of Wednesday 29th of May 2019, excluding samples referred by other private laboratories for influenza subtyping.
Overall non-influenza activity increased this week, mostly due to an increase in RSV detections. The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for a common respiratory virus other than influenza reported at PathWest as of Wednesday 29th of May 2019.

Overall non-influenza activity increased this week, mostly due to an increase in RSV detections. The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for a common respiratory virus other than influenza reported at PathWest as of Wednesday 29th of May 2019.

The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs is in the mid range of values normally reported at this time of year.

The following is a summary of current Emergency Department Sentinel Surveillance (EDSS) data for gastroenteritis presentations. Baseline levels for gastroenteritis presentations and admissions were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2018.
Gastroenteritis presentations and admissions to sentinel EDs were above baseline level this week.

The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs is in the higher range of values normally reported at this time of year.
Shingles and chickenpox activity reported by WA ASPREN GPs this week was low. Baseline levels for chickenpox and shingles presentations to WA ASPREN GPs per thousand consultations were calculated using the mean of weekly WA ASPREN data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2018.

The following is a summary of current Emergency Department sentinel surveillance (EDSS) data for varicella-zoster virus presentations.

Shingles and chickenpox presentations at sentinel EDs were below baseline levels this week. Baseline levels for varicella-zoster virus presentations were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2018.