**Virus Watch**  
**Week ending 22nd March 2020**

**Key Points**

**Influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI)**
- **Summary:** Indicators of influenza activity remain at interseasonal levels. ILI activity at sentinel GPs remained low this week. One sample was submitted by sentinel GPs this week, and it tested negative for influenza and COVID-19.
- ILI presentations at sentinel EDs were higher than expected for this time of year, possibly due to community concern over COVID-19.
- Influenza notifications and PathWest test percent positivity were lower than levels usually reported at this time of year.
- Influenza B accounted for 63% influenza cases at PathWest in the past week. Influenza A accounted for 37% comprising 12% A/H1, 12% A/H3 and 12% untyped.
- Overall non-influenza activity fell this week, likely due to decreased testing of COVID-19 requests for other respiratory viruses.

**Gastroenteritis**
- The rate of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs and sentinel EDs remained in the range of levels normally reported at this time of year.
- PathWest laboratory detections of norovirus were low in the past week, and rotavirus notifications remained at low levels.

**Other vaccine-preventable diseases**
- **Shingles and chickenpox:** Chickenpox presentations reported by WA sentinel GPs and shingles presentations reported by sentinel EDs were above baseline levels this week.
- **Measles:** No measles cases were notified in the past week.
- **Mumps:** One mumps case was notified in the past week.
- **Rubella:** No rubella cases were notified in the past week.
- **Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD):** No IMD cases were notified in the past week.

**Other diseases**
- **Coronavirus COVID-19:** As of 25 March 2020 there has been a total of 205 COVID-19 cases confirmed in WA. See [webpage](http://www.health.wa.gov.au) for further information.

*these samples were tested using a rapid testing method that does not determine the influenza subtype (i.e influenza A/H3N2 or A/H1N1).*
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses

The number of routine PathWest influenza detections decreased this week and the single sample submitted for influenza testing by sentinel GPs tested negative for influenza and COVID-19.

The rate of ILI presentations to sentinel GPs in the past week was in the mid-range of 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 viral admissions to sentinel EDs remained steady this week, whilst viral-illness presentations continued to rise, likely due to community concern over COVID-19.

The number of respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs remained high this week and is above levels usually reported during this time of year.

*The graph is a summary of presentations at Emergency Department Sentinel Surveillance (EDSS) sites using the ICD codes B34.9 and J06.9 which are consistent with a clinical presentation of a viral illness. This data may differ from that presented in the Winter Respiratory Illness Report provided by the Information and System Performance Directorate.
Influenza notifications reported to the Department of Health in the past week remained below the seasonal threshold.

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 16/03/2020 and 22/03/2020. 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 was below levels usually reported at this time of year. Of 490 specimens submitted, 8 (2%) tested positive for influenza in the past week.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples reported by PathWest, excluding samples referred by other private laboratories for influenza subtyping.
Eight positive samples were reported by PathWest in the past week which included 3 influenza A and 5 influenza B. Of the 3 influenza A samples, 1 was A/H1N1, 1 was A/H3N2 and 1 was A/untyped*. The decrease in influenza detections may be partially due to decreased testing of COVID-19 requests for other respiratory viruses.

*These samples were tested using a rapid testing method that does not determine the influenza subtype (i.e. influenza A/H3N2 or A/H1N1).

Overall non-influenza activity fell this week, likely due to decreased testing of COVID-19 requests for other respiratory viruses.

*The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for a common respiratory virus other than influenza reported at PathWest.
The rate of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs remains in the lower range of levels normally reported at this time of year.

Gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs in the past week remained below baseline levels, whilst admissions were around baseline levels.

This graph is a summary of current EDIS data for gastroenteritis presentations and admissions. Baseline levels for gastroenteritis presentations and admissions were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2019.
The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs remains in the mid-range of values normally reported at this time of year.

**Viral rashes**

Chicken pox presentations reported by WA ASPREN GPs this week were above baseline level.

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, 2019.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department sentinel surveillance (EDSS) data for varicella-zoster virus presentations.

Shingles presentations to sentinel EDs in the past week were above baseline levels.

Baseline levels for varicella-zoster virus presentations were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2019.

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