

Wheatbelt Population Health Unit

Wheatbelt Public Health Updates

Notifiable diseases/Immunisations

1. In 2009, the top five notifiable diseases reported to the Wheatbelt Population Health Unit were Chlamydia, Pandemic influenza 09, Campylobacter, Varicella and Seasonal influenza infection (a total of 623 communicable diseases were notified in 2009 – an increase of 27% compared with the total number of notifications in 2008 mainly due to pandemic influenza 09).
2. Pandemic influenza 09 dominated the world last year – out of a total of 139 confirmed cases in Wheatbelt, 38% were <20 years and 5% were >60years of age. Approximately 35% of the confirmed cases in the Wheatbelt required hospitalisation but did not result in any deaths.
3. There were four cases of Pertussis in both 2008 and 2009; however, it is on the increase in WA. For the first 3 months of 2010 there have been 7 cases reported in the Wheatbelt, and of these 6 involved adults, most of whom reported no contact with children. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has recommended that the **four year old pre-school booster DTPa-IPV can be offered to children from 3 years and 6 months of age** in order to accelerate protection against Pertussis in young children.

A booster dose of dTpa is recommended for adults in contact with young children (e.g. healthcare workers, childcare workers) or those planning a pregnancy, but is not funded under the National Immunisation Program

4. STIs and BBV diseases remain considerable public health problems state-wide. There has been a 16% increase in Chlamydia case notifications in the Wheatbelt in 2009 compared with the notifications in 2008. Please consider opportunistic STI/BBV screening in all at-risk individuals.

The WA Department of Health has launched an online Chlamydia testing service to increase screening in young people within WA:

www.getthefacts.health.wa.gov.au

This program will provide young people with easy access to testing and referral for treatment by simply completing an online self risk assessment and downloading a PathWest pathology request form.

5. Bali is no longer rabies free. If Wheatbelt residents returning from holidays in Bali, report monkey/dog bites and scratches, please recommend rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for all persons with risky animal bites or scratches sustained anywhere in Bali.

For advice and for arranging rabies PEP, please contact the Wheatbelt Public Health Unit (9622 4320 during working hours) or CDCD (9328 0553 a/h).

6. The 2010 seasonal influenza vaccine contains the pandemic 09 strain and it is free for the people at increased risk of complications for influenza infection (pages 190-192 in the Australian Immunisation Handbook, 2008).

Children nine years old or younger who have received less than two doses of seasonal influenza vaccine ever in their lives should receive two doses of seasonal vaccine this year with the doses given at least one month apart.

All persons aged 3 years or older should receive the full 0.5 ml of seasonal influenza vaccine. Children 6 months to less than 3 years of age should receive 0.25 ml of influenza vaccine; if you do not have a 0.25 ml dose, you can use half of a 0.5 ml dose, provided the prefilled syringe barrel has a half-dose indicator line. Simply expel half the dose prior to injection.

(PLEASE NOTE: Seasonal influenza vaccine for children aged 5 years and under is currently suspended until further notice due to an increase in adverse events).

7. The 9th Edition Australian Immunisation Handbook is being continuously updated online. Registering to receive free electronic handbook updates is an excellent way to ensure you always have the latest advice about immunisation practice in Australia. To register visit:
www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/Handbook-subscribe.
8. **The [Guidelines for Managing Sexually Transmitted Infections](#) (more affectionately known as the “Silver Book”) have recently undergone a major overhaul. We encourage you to make the switch from the static printed silver book to the newly updated online guidelines. Stay on top of the latest changes by visiting silverbook.health.wa.gov.au**

For further information on this update or any notifiable diseases please contact Wheatbelt Public Health staff:

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