

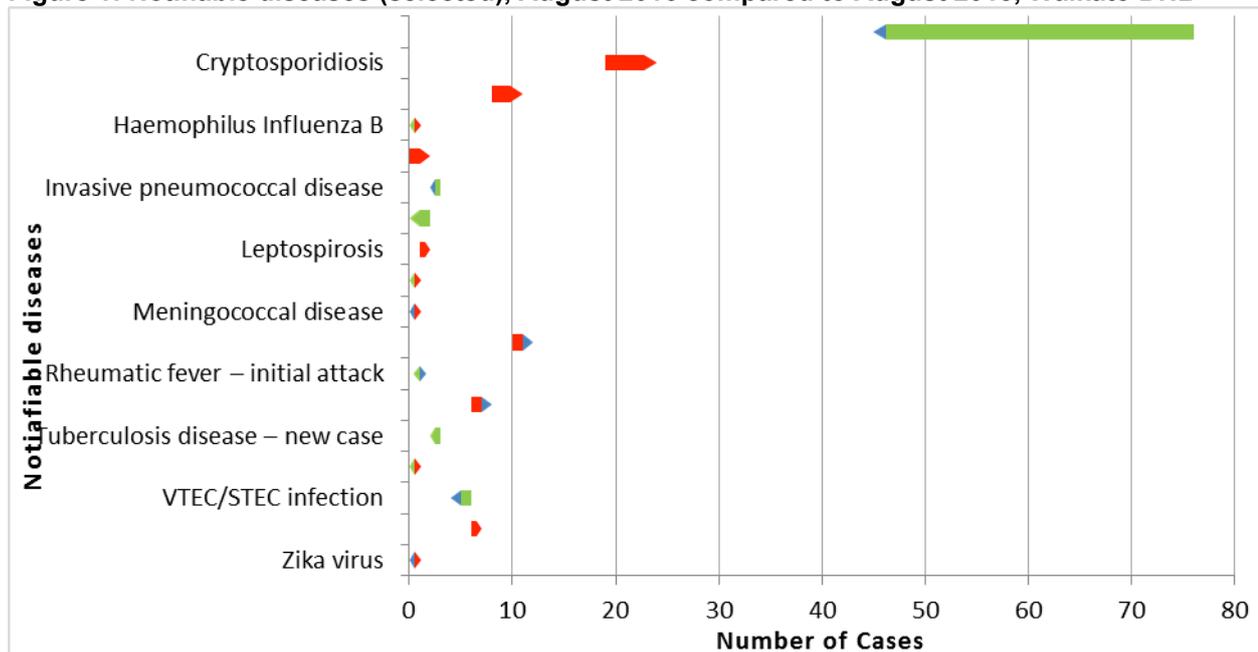


PUBLIC HEALTH BULLETIN

Communicable diseases notified Month/Year

Disease name	August 2015	August 2016	YTD	Disease name	August 2015	August 2016	YTD
Campylobacteriosis	76	45	313	Mumps	0	0	0
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	1	Murine Typhus	0	0	1
Cryptosporidiosis	19	24	52	Paratyphoid fever	0	0	0
Dengue fever	2	1	10	Pertussis	10	12	86
Giardiasis	8	11	79	Poliomyelitis	0	0	0
Haemophilus Influenza B	0	0	0	Q fever	0	0	0
Hepatitis A	0	0	0	Rheumatic fever - initial attack	1	1	3
Hepatitis B	0	2	3	Rheumatic fever – recurrent attack	0	0	1
Hepatitis C	0	0	0	Ross River virus infection	0	0	0
Invasive pneumococcal disease	3	2	21	Salmonellosis	6	8	64
Lead absorption	2	0	13	Shigellosis	0	4	12
Legionellosis	1	1	10	Tetanus	0	0	0
Leptospirosis	1	2	12	Toxic Shellfish Poisoning	0	0	0
Listeriosis	0	0	1	Tuberculosis disease - new case	3	2	15
Listeriosis – Perinatal	0	0	1	Typhoid fever	0	0	3
Malaria	0	0	1	VTEC/STEC infection	6	4	32
Measles	0	0	56	Yersiniosis	6	7	24
Meningococcal disease	0	0	5	Zika virus	0	0	7

Figure 1: Notifiable diseases (selected), August 2016 compared to August 2015, Waikato DHB

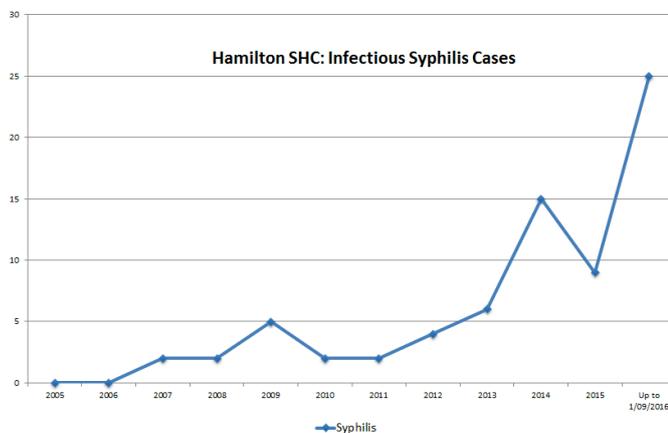


## Infectious syphilis cases are on the rise again

Historically, Hamilton Sexual Health Clinic sees about five cases of primary or secondary syphilis cases each year. An increase in cases among men who have sex with men in 2014 led to targeted health promotion to raise awareness among those most at risk. This was effective with a drop in new cases last year. However, numbers are on the rise again, with 25 confirmed primary or secondary syphilis cases seen this year so far, including a number of young women. Clinics around NZ report similar increases.

Syphilis has long been called 'the great imitator' because it has so many possible symptoms, many of which mimic presentations of other diseases. The first sign, a painless sore, can go unnoticed and heal without treatment. The secondary rash is easily overlooked as being due to more common skin conditions.

Health providers are encouraged to consider syphilis testing for anyone with a slow-healing or atypical genital ulcer (or ulcers), a persistent rash or lymphadenopathy and for anyone requesting HIV or hepatitis testing. It is also important to note, that with an increasing incidence of infectious syphilis, reactive screening tests will likely reflect true infection, rather than false positives.



## Pertussis vaccination in pregnancy

Pertussis notifications have been rising this year. There have been 102 cases in the Waikato DHB region from 1 January 2016 to 20 September 2016, compared to 91 cases for the entire year in 2015. A recent report from the Child and Youth Mortality Committee has highlighted the impact of pertussis on infants too young to have gained protection from their own vaccinations<sup>1</sup>. Both mortality and morbidity rates are highest for those aged less than 3 months with seven of the eight deaths reported occurring in this age range.

This reinforces the importance of maternal booster doses of Boostrix vaccine (Tdap) in the third trimester of pregnancy to protect both mother and child. Pertussis vaccine is both safe and effective, and now funded, for women at 28-38 weeks gestation<sup>2</sup>. It is important that all health professionals are aware of this and support and enable pregnant women to receive this free vaccine. This is particularly important for Maori and Pacific women as the mortality and morbidity rates are highest among Maori and Pacific infants.

1. Mortality and morbidity of pertussis in children and young people in New Zealand. Child and Youth Mortality Review Committee, 2015
2. Immunisation Handbook 2014, Ministry of Health, 2014

## Virtual Health: New Service and Trial

A new six month trial is currently underway which allows anyone who is registered with the Virtual DHB to contact a doctor, Monday to Friday from 6pm to 11pm and Saturday, Sunday and public holidays from 8am to 8pm. It's for people who can't get to see a doctor easily in the evening and weekends. Many of these people end up in our Emergency Departments or Accident & Medical Centres as there is no easy alternative for them due their regular general practice being closed. This trial is to confirm how many of their queries and concerns could have been answered easily by a virtual doctor.

Users will be able to message the doctor through their home computer, smart phone or tablet wherever they are and initiate a video or text consultation. The virtual doctors will be able to write prescriptions in certain situations that can be faxed to the patient's local pharmacy to collect. The consultation notes will be sent to the patient's regular general practice and will be available to view by the patient in HealthTap.

This service will not replace out of hours services already offered by some GPs and Accident and Medical Centres, but will be ideal for people who find it difficult to travel or who cannot afford after hours care. The Virtual DHB after hours doctors will refer patients to these facilities should they need to be examined or are seriously ill.

This service will also not replace regular general practice and these patients will also be referred back to their GP for follow up. For example, the service will not be providing repeat prescriptions unless there is an emergency situation.

The service will be continuously evaluated during the six month trial.

For further information:

<http://www.waikatodhb.health.nz/for-patients-and-visitors/virtual-dhb/online-out-of-hours-doctors/>

### Gastroenteritis

With spring and warmer weather, it is likely Waikato will again see a seasonal rise in gastroenteritis cases associated with farming activities and later on with barbequing. Please remember to sample and notify cases or

outbreaks of gastroenteritis as required, and please see this link for exclusion criteria for cases and contacts.

<http://www.waikatodhb.health.nz/assets/public-health-advice/public-health-topics/Campylobacter-exclusions.pdf>

### Medical Officers of Health

Felicity Dumble -- Richard Wall – Richard Vipond – Richard Hoskins

<b>After hours</b>	
MOoH	021 359 650
HPO	021 999 521
If there is no answer, please contact Waikato Hospital's switchboard 07 839 8899 and ask for the on-call MOoH.	

<b>During office hours</b>	
Population Health (MOoH or HPO)	(07) 838 2569
Notifications	07 838 2569 extn 22065 or 22020
Notifications outside Hamilton	0800 800 977
Fax	07 838 2382
Email	<a href="mailto:notifiablediseases@waikatodhb.health.nz">notifiablediseases@waikatodhb.health.nz</a>