



Notifiable infectious diseases in Western Australia 2021



- Total notifications dropped by 27 per cent in 2021 compared to the previous 5 year average.
- Infectious syphilis notifications at record high levels.
- COVID-19 emerged in 2020 with 303 notifications in 2021.
- COVID-19 related public health measures resulted in a decrease of communicable diseases acquired overseas (e.g. measles, dengue virus infection) but also in other communicable respiratory diseases.

Key trends and notification rates* versus previous 5 year average

Blood-borne viruses 51.7 (2021) vs 62.9 (-17.8 %)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly acquired hepatitis B and C rates were 68 per cent and 34 per cent lower.
Sexually transmissible infections 562.0 (2021) vs 596.1 (-5.7 %)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gonococcal infection rate was 19 per cent lower. • Syphilis rate was 74 per cent higher due to an ongoing syphilis outbreak. • HIV rate was 33 per cent lower.
Enteric diseases 196.3 (2021) vs 248.5 (-21.0 %)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmonellosis rate was 57 per cent lower. • 21 foodborne outbreaks. • 262 non-foodborne outbreaks.
Vaccine-preventable diseases 215.2 (2021) vs 505.3 (-57.4 %)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenza rate was 99.6 per cent lower. • Pertussis notifications were 95.4 per cent lower.
Vector-borne diseases 28.5 (2021) vs 37.4 (-23.8 %)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross River virus infection rate was 13 per cent higher. • There were no dengue virus notifications, due to overseas travel restrictions.
COVID-19 11.4 (2021) vs 33.1 (2020)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic declared March 2020. In 2021, only 303 notifications with low levels due to public health measures. • In 2021, 69 per cent was acquired overseas, 19 per cent at sea and 10 per cent was acquired in Australia. • No COVID-19 related deaths.

Other diseases

- Legionellosis rate was 31 per cent higher than the 5 year average, mostly due to *L. longbeachae* associated with soil and potting mixes.
- RSV and iGAS infections became notifiable in WA.

Outbreaks in focus

- *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*: outbreak in multiple jurisdictions, with 33 cases in WA associated with eating SA oysters.
- Infectious syphilis: 46 per cent of notifications in Aboriginal people and 54 per cent in non-Aboriginal people. The increase in 2021 was attributed to an ongoing outbreak in Aboriginal people. In the metropolitan region, two thirds reported men who have sex with men exposure, one third reported heterosexual exposure.

*Rates: notifications per 100,000 population.