

## Fact Sheet

### Adult cases of vaccine preventable diseases in Australia

**Number of adult cases (persons aged 20 years and over) reported to date (14 Nov 06) in 2006<sup>1</sup>:**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Number of Adult cases</b>	<b>% of all cases</b>	<b>Total cases</b>
Measles	42 cases	34%	122
Mumps	194 cases	83%	233
Rubella	42 cases	86%	49
Whooping cough	8804 cases	90%	9780
Invasive pneumococcal	970 cases	79%	1233
Influenza (laboratory confirmed)	1142 cases	60%	1901
Hepatitis A	139 cases	58%	241
Hepatitis B	4760 cases (unspecified) 202 cases (incident)	93% 92%	5102 220

**Cases reported in each State/Territory to date (14 Nov 06) in 2006<sup>2</sup>:**

<b>Diseases</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>NT</b>	<b>TAS</b>	<b>ACT</b>
Hepatitis A	90	25	8	50	34	30	2	2
Hepatitis B (Incident)	37	35	5	44	81	7	6	5
Hepatitis B (Unspecified)	2148	703	241	436	1285	181	41	67
Influenza (laboratory confirmed)	494	632	82	196	391	29	44	33
Measles	58	2	11	26	13	0	11	1
Mumps	139	37	18	16	15	7	0	1
Whooping cough	4703	1443	2056	215	993	88	28	254
Invasive pneumococcal	489	231	87	108	225	49	30	14
Rubella	30	10	2	1	6	0	0	0

#### **Measles**

The symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose and sore eyes followed by a rash.<sup>3</sup> Frequent complications include ear inflammation (inside the ear) which can cause pain and temporarily affect hearing, bronchopneumonia (about 1 to 6% of cases).<sup>3,4</sup> Measles also rarely causes inflammation of the brain. Complications are more common and severe in the long term ill or in very young children.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Mumps**

The most common symptom is swelling of the salivary gland(s).<sup>3</sup> About 15% of reported cases are in adolescents and adults.<sup>3</sup> Signs of inflammation of the brain and spinal cord coverings occur in about 1-10% of cases although the symptoms are usually mild.<sup>3,4</sup> It can cause nerve deafness - which is usually temporary, but can be permanent.<sup>3</sup>

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### **Rubella**

Rubella can be very serious if caught in early pregnancy (up to 10 weeks) as it results in damage in up to 90% of developing babies.<sup>3</sup> The risk of damage declines to about 10 to 20% by the 16th week of pregnancy.<sup>3</sup> This damage can cause multiple defects including deafness, mental handicap, cataracts (eye defect), reduced growth and abnormalities of certain organs.<sup>3</sup>

### **Whooping Cough**

The main symptom of whooping cough in adults is a long-lasting cough.<sup>3</sup> The cough can last for up to three months and often causes vomiting, which can result in sleep disruption.<sup>3,5</sup> Although the symptoms of whooping cough are usually milder in adults than they are in children, adults can experience problems such as urinary incontinence, pneumonia, fractured ribs and weight loss.<sup>5</sup> Some adults may require hospitalisation.<sup>5</sup>

In 2005 over 10,000 cases of whooping cough were reported in Australia.<sup>6</sup> The majority (83%) of these cases occurred in people over 20 years of age.<sup>1</sup>

### **Diphtheria**

This serious illness can cause symptoms ranging from a severe sore throat to life threatening breathing difficulties.<sup>3</sup> Toxins released by the bacteria can damage the nerves and heart.<sup>3</sup> The overall risk of death is high - about one in every 10 people who gets diphtheria will die despite treatment.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hepatitis A**

Hepatitis A, which is caused by a virus, can be severe – affecting the liver causing jaundice (yellowing of the skin), nausea/vomiting and flu-like illness.<sup>3</sup> Hepatitis A is not just a risk to consider when travelling overseas, it is also present in Australia.<sup>3,6</sup>

### **Hepatitis B**

Hepatitis B can be a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver.<sup>3</sup> The hepatitis B virus can be a lifelong infection and cause scarring of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure and even death.<sup>3</sup>

### **Influenza**

The flu virus can cause a variety of symptoms from no symptoms at all to viral or bacterial pneumonia, which can be deadly.<sup>3</sup> Flu is a risk for many people in particular, those who have long standing medical conditions, are elderly or have weakened immunity.<sup>3</sup>

### **Pneumococcal**

Pneumococcal infection most commonly affects the middle ear in children – however it can infect the lungs, blood, the brain and spinal cord coverings (meningitis) in both adults and children.<sup>3,4</sup> About 10 to 30% of people who get pneumococcal meningitis die.<sup>3</sup>

### **Tetanus**

The tetanus bacteria releases a toxin which affects nerves causing muscle stiffness (lockjaw) and painful spasms which can prevent a person breathing.<sup>3</sup> The overall risk of death is high - about one in every 10 people who gets tetanus will die.<sup>3</sup> The tetanus bacteria, which live in manured soil, can infect small, even unnoticed wounds.<sup>3</sup>

### **Chickenpox and shingles**

Chickenpox and shingles (which is caused by the same virus as chickenpox) can have severe effects in adults and people with weakened immunity.<sup>3</sup> Complications can include prolonged nerve pain (shingles only), pneumonia, inflammation of the brain or the coverings of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).<sup>3</sup> Chickenpox can also be serious in the first half of pregnancy as it may result in defects in the developing baby.<sup>3</sup>