



# Community & Public Health

Te Mana Ora

## Public Health Update

### 8 December 2022

#### Legionnaire's disease

Ten cases of Legionnaire's diseases were notified in the Te Mana Ora region in October and November:

- eight in Canterbury; and
- one each in South Canterbury and the West Coast.

Nine cases were hospitalised.

*Legionella* bacteria thrive in commercial potting mix and compost, and Legionnaire's disease cases typically peak in the final months of the year with warmer weather and increased gardening activity. The illness is more common in older people, particularly if they smoke, have poor immunity, or a chronic illness.



HealthPathways advises asking patients with community-acquired pneumonia whether they have been exposed to potting mix or compost and treating with antibiotics for *Legionella* if the answer is "yes".

Sputum can be tested for *Legionella* by PCR on request.

[Te Mana Ora's Spring media release includes simple tips for gardeners](#) to avoid Legionnaire's disease.

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## Mpox

The World Health Organization has renamed the disease formerly known as monkeypox to mpox. Both names may be used simultaneously for one year while “monkeypox” is phased out.

One new case of mpox was reported in New Zealand over the last week, bringing the total number of New Zealand laboratory-confirmed cases to 40. Six cases (15.0%) have been admitted to hospital. Nine cases acquired their infection overseas and 31 acquired their infection locally.

Most cases (35, 87.5%) identify as men who have sex with men (MSM), with a median age of 35 years.

The third generation Bavarian Nordic smallpox vaccine will soon be available for targeted delivery in New Zealand, with the initial shipment expected in December. Delivery is likely to commence in the new year at specialised sites, with local sexual health staff involved in planning. Licensing, prescribing and storage issues are being worked through at national level, and documentation and IMAC training are being established.



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## Hepatitis A

Since 28 June 2022 there have been 32 cases linked to the current nationwide hepatitis A outbreak, including three new cases in the past week. Fourteen cases (44%) have been hospitalised.

The NZFS investigation has concluded that the source of the outbreak is highly likely to be frozen berries imported from Serbia. Although more than one maximum incubation period has passed since the October recall of Pam's brand frozen berries, there is ongoing risk due both to ongoing consumption of frozen berries and to secondary transmission.



The existing advice to heat all frozen berries regardless of brand remains.

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## Free health assessment for 2022 Special Ukraine Visa Holders

To encourage early engagement with the New Zealand health system, 2022 Special Ukraine Visa holders are eligible for a one-off fully funded health assessment. The initial health assessment can be delivered by either a general practice or Healthline.

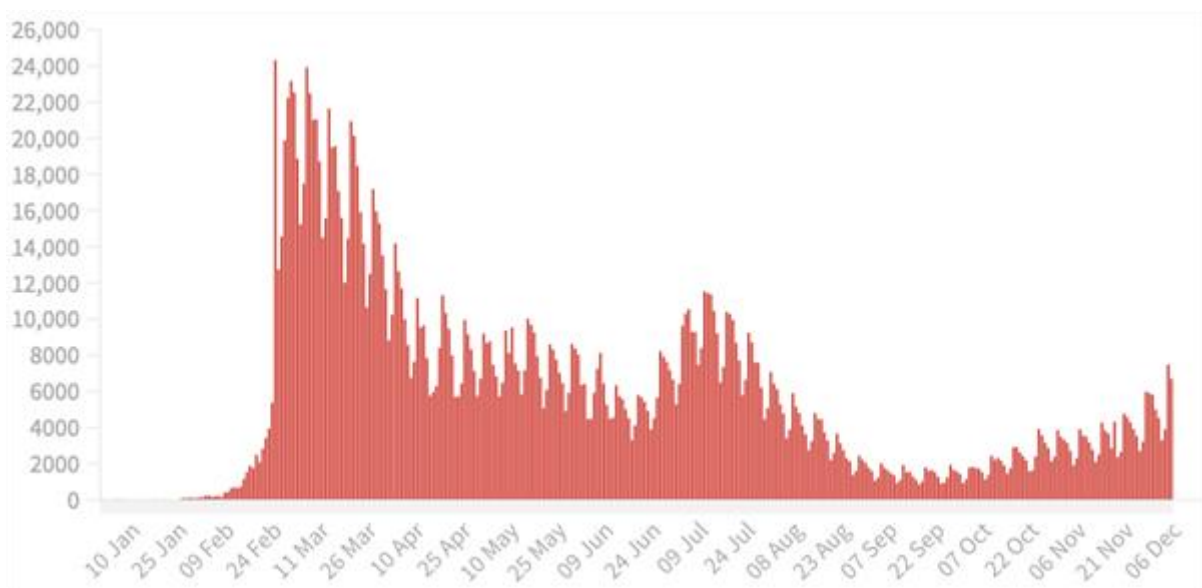
[Information for health professionals is available on the Te Whatu Ora website](#) and on HealthPathways.



If there are any abnormal results identified from the TB test, the client must be contacted and offered a second free consultation to discuss the test results and management options.

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## COVID-19



*NZ COVID-19 cases by date reported. Source: Ministry of Health / RNZ.*

Reported COVID-19 cases continue to increase, with a noticeable upswing in recent days.

[The Ministry of Health's weekly COVID-19 Trends and Insights Report](#) is now available online, and includes regional breakdowns of case numbers, as well as wastewater sampling results.

[Te Pūnaha Matatini has published advice on how to safely host a event over the festive season.](#)

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