

# Information for pathology and laboratory services

Infectious diseases, conditions and micro-organisms notifiable in Victoria

## Your requirement to notify

Infectious diseases and other conditions of public health concern still occur frequently throughout the world, so constant vigilance is required to minimise their spread.

Notification is a vital step in efforts to prevent or control the spread of infection and to prevent further harmful exposures. Health authorities depend on pathology and laboratory services (laboratories) for information on the incidence of these conditions.

## Public Health and Wellbeing legislation

Section 128 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (the act) sets out the requirements for notification by laboratories in Victoria. The Act requires pathology services to implement processes to ensure that the person in charge of the pathology service complies with section 128.

Section 128 requires that laboratories situated in Victoria and those situated outside Victoria must notify the department of the result of any test conducted on a person who is indicated as permanently or temporarily residing in Victoria where the result of the test indicates the person has, or may have, a condition notifiable in Victoria.

Section 130 prescribes the notification of micro-organisms by laboratory services and proprietors of food premises and food vending machines.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (the regulations) set timing and details for notifying. For laboratories:

- notifiable conditions and details of their reporting are specified in Schedule 4 of the regulations.
- notifiable micro-organisms and details of their reporting are specified in Schedule 5 of the regulations.

The following is a summary of changes to the regulations which apply from 14 December 2019:

- Newly listed conditions -
  - *Candida auris* (urgent)
  - Carbapenemase-producing *Acinetobacter* spp. (routine)
  - Carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacterales* (routine)
  - Carbapenemase-producing *Pseudomonas* spp. (routine)
  - VanA-type vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE) (routine).
- Medicare number and/or other healthcare identifier must be provided for the patient for identified conditions.
- Infringements may be issued to a person or a corporate body for failing to notify or failing to provide the required information to the department.
- Aboriginality and Torres Strait Islander status must be provided for the patient.
- Require reporting of nucleic acid testing (if performed) upon diagnosis of hepatitis B and C.
- Require reporting of antimicrobial susceptibility test results (including minimum inhibitory concentration values)
- Change the timing of the written notice for a notifiable micro-organism from five days to one day.

- Expand the information in a written notice for a notifiable micro-organism to provide additional details about the food sample and submitter.
- Prescribe Shigatoxin producing *Escherichia coli* as a notifiable micro-organism.
- At the request of the Secretary, require laboratories to transfer food or water samples and isolates (where a notifiable micro-organism has been notified) to a Public Health Laboratory for the purpose of sub-typing.
- Require Public Health Laboratory to report sub-typing information to the Secretary as set out in Schedule 5.

Further details are available at the [department's website](#)

<<http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/information-medical-practitioners-changes-to-conditions>>. Copies of Victorian legislation are available at the [Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents](#) website <<http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au>>.

In addition to the above, novel coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV) was scheduled as a notifiable condition on 29 January 2019.

## Notifiable conditions for pathology services

### When and how to notify patient results

As described earlier, laboratories situated in Victoria and those situated outside Victoria must notify the department of the result of any test conducted on a person who is indicated as permanently or temporarily residing in Victoria where the result of the test indicates the person has, or may have, a condition notifiable in Victoria.

Timing of the notification is:

• **URGENT** conditions require notification to the department by telephone on 1300 651160 (24/7) when the test result indicates the person has, or may have, the notifiable condition as soon as practicable and within 24 hours.

• **ROUTINE** conditions require written notification to the department when the test result indicates the person has, or may have, the notifiable condition within five days. Written notification can be made by either–

- Faxing a copy of the lab report to 1300 651170.
- Posting a copy of the lab report to 'Department of Health and Human Services, Reply Paid 65937, Melbourne VIC 8060' (no stamp required).
- an established electronic reporting channel.

### Information you need to notify

The information pathology services are required to notify under regulation 95 is listed in schedule 4 of the regulations. The information notified to the department must include:

- Case information
  - Family name (for †, first 2 letters only)
  - Given name(s) (for †, first 2 letters only)
  - Medicare number or other healthcare identifier (for †, not required)
  - Date of birth
  - Sex
  - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status
  - Residential address (for †, postcode only)

† Applies to Chlamydia trachomatis infection, Donovanosis (*Klebsiella granulomatis* infection), Gonococcal infection, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection, and Syphilis. Full details must be provided for all other conditions.

- Clinical information
  - Notifiable condition

- If the notifiable condition is blood lead greater than 5µg/dL, whether or not the test was requested as part of routine biological monitoring as prescribed by regulation 196, 197 or 198 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017)
- Specimen details
- Clinical notes
- Testing information
  - Test details (including details of any nucleic acid test performed)
  - Result details (including results of any nucleic acid test performed)
  - Results of all antimicrobial susceptibility testing (including minimum inhibitory concentration values)
- Requesting medical practitioner information
  - Medical practitioner name
  - Health service/clinic/practice name
  - Health service/clinic/practice address
  - Contact details
  - Medicare provider number or AHPRA registration number
  - Request date
- Pathology service information
  - Name of person authorising results
  - Pathology service name
  - Pathology service address
  - Contact telephone number
  - NATA accreditation number
  - Report date

## Conditions notifiable by pathology services

### URGENT notifiable conditions

The conditions listed below require notification to the department by telephone on 1300 651160 (24/7) when the test result indicates the person has, or may have, the notifiable condition as soon as practicable and within 24 hours.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| • Anthrax  | • Legionellosis   | • Plague                                   |
| • Botulism   | • Listeriosis   | • Poliovirus infection                     |
| • Candida auris  | • Measles   | • Rabies                                   |
| • Cholera  | • Meningococcal infection (invasive)                      | • Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) |
| • Diphtheria   | • Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) | • Smallpox                                 |
| • Food-borne and water-borne illness (two or more related cases)                       | • Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) virus infection        | • Tularaemia                               |
| • Haemophilus influenzae, type B (meningitis, epiglottitis, other invasive infections) | • Novel coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV)                      | • Typhoid                                  |
| • Hepatitis A  | • Paratyphoid   | • Viral haemorrhagic fevers                |
| • Japanese encephalitis  |   | • Yellow fever                             |

## Routine notifiable conditions

The conditions listed below require written notification to the department when the test result indicates the person has, or may have, the notifiable condition within 5 days. All written notifications should be sent to either:

- Department of Health and Human Services, Reply Paid 65937, Melbourne VIC 8060
- Fax 1300 651170

- Arbovirus infections – other arbovirus infections
- Barmah Forest virus infection
- Blood lead > 5µg/dL
- Brucellosis
- Campylobacteriosis
- Carbapenemase-producing *Acinetobacter* spp.
- Carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriales*
- Carbapenemase-producing *Pseudomonas* spp.
- Chikungunya virus infection
- Chlamydia trachomatis infection\*
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) and variant CJD
- Cryptosporidiosis
- Dengue virus infection
- Donovanosis (*Klebsiella granulomatis* infection)\*
- Gonococcal infection\*
- Hepatitis B (newly acquired)
- Hepatitis B (unspecified)
- Hepatitis C (newly acquired)
- Hepatitis C (unspecified)
- Hepatitis D
- Hepatitis E
- Hepatitis (other viral)
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection\*
- Influenza
- Kunjin virus infection
- Leprosy
- Leptospirosis
- Lyssavirus – Australian bat lyssavirus
- Lyssavirus – other (specify)
- Malaria
- Mumps
- Mycobacterium ulcerans (Buruli ulcer)
- Pertussis
- Pneumococcal infection (invasive)
- Psittacosis (ornithosis)
- Q Fever
- Ross River virus infection
- Rotavirus infection
- Rubella
- Rubella—Congenital Rubella
- Salmonellosis
- Shiga toxin and Verotoxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC/VTEC)
- Shigellosis
- Syphilis (2 years or more duration or unspecified)\*
- Syphilis (less than 2 years duration)\*
- Syphilis—Congenital Syphilis\*
- Tetanus
- Tuberculosis
- VanA-type vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE)
- Varicella zoster infection

\* Sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and HIV infection are notified using coded patient details.

## Notifiable micro-organisms for laboratory services

### When and how to notify food or water results

Laboratories situated within Victoria must notify when a notifiable micro-organism is:

- isolated or detected by that laboratory from or within food or from or within samples taken from food, regardless of where the sample was taken; or
- isolated or detected on behalf of that laboratory by another laboratory situated outside Victoria from or within food or from or within samples taken from food, regardless of where the sample was taken.

#### Isolations/detections in food:

• **URGENT** notification by telephone to the department's Food Safety Unit on 1300 364 352 when a notifiable micro-organism is isolated or detected as soon as practicable and within 24 hours.

• written notification must follow within 1 day to the Food Safety Unit at <[notifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:notifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au)>.

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### Isolations/detections in water:

• **URGENT** notification by telephone to the department's Water Unit on 1300 761 874 when a notifiable micro-organism is isolated or detected as soon as practicable and within 24 hours.

• written notification must follow within 1 day to the Water Unit at <[water@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:water@dhhs.vic.gov.au)>.

## Information you need to notify

### Isolations/detections in food or water

When notifying micro-organisms in food or water under regulation 96, the information notified to the department (immediately by telephone and within 1 day in writing) must include:

- Micro-organism isolated or detected
- Date of isolation or detection
- Sample reference number (if appropriate)
- Test reference number (if appropriate)
- Source (food or water)
  - If the source is food—
    - the type of food product
    - the brand of the food product
    - the name, postal address and telephone number of the food manufacturer
    - the batch number of the food product (if appropriate)
    - the use by or best before date of the food product (if known)
  - If the source is water—
    - information regarding where the sample was collected from
    - the type of water source
- Date the sample was submitted to the notifying laboratory service for testing
- Name, postal and email address and telephone number of notifying laboratory service
- Name, postal and email address and telephone number of person or company that submitted sample for testing

### Isolations/detections in food or water after sub-typing

When notifying micro-organisms in food or water after sub-typing under regulation 98, the information notified to the department must include:

- Micro-organism isolated or detected (including sub-type)
- Date of isolation or detection
- Public Health Laboratory specimen reference number (if appropriate)
- Public Health Laboratory test reference number (if appropriate)
- Source (food or water)
  - If the source is food—
    - the type of food product
    - the brand of the food product
    - the name, postal address and telephone number of the food manufacturer
    - the batch number of the food product (if appropriate)
    - the use by or best before date of the food product (if known)
  - If the source is water
    - information regarding where the sample was collected from

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- the type of water source
- Date the isolate or sample was submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for sub-typing
- Name, postal and email address and telephone number of the person or company that forwarded the isolate or sample for sub-typing
- Name, postal and email address and telephone number of the notifying laboratory service that forwarded the isolate or sample for sub-typing
- Name, postal and email address and telephone number of the Public Health Laboratory that performed the sub-typing

## Micro-organisms notifiable by laboratory services

Isolations/detections of the following micro-organisms in **food** require URGENT notification by telephone to the department's Food Safety Unit on 1300 364 352 when a notifiable micro-organism is isolated or detected as soon as practicable and within 24 hours. Written notification must follow within 1 day to the Food Safety Unit at <[notifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:notifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au)>.

Isolations/detections of the following micro-organisms in **water** required URGENT notification by telephone to the department's Water Unit on 1300 761 874 when a notifiable micro-organism is isolated or detected as soon as practicable and within 24 hours. Written notification must follow within 1 day to the Water Unit at <[water@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:water@dhhs.vic.gov.au)>.

- |                               |                                 |  |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| • <i>Campylobacter</i> spp.   | • Hepatitis A                   | • Shigatoxin and verotoxin producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> (STEC/VTEC) |
| • <i>Cryptosporidium</i> spp. | • <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> | • <i>Vibrio</i> spp.   |
| • <i>Cyclospora</i> spp.      | • Norovirus                     |  |
| • <i>Giardia</i> cysts        | • <i>Salmonella</i> spp.        |  |

## Privacy legislation

Commonwealth and State privacy legislation does not negate the requirement to notify the specified conditions or to provide the information requested by the department.

## Urgent and emerging public health concerns

Section 55 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* provides the general authority for laboratories to provide the department with any information that relates to an urgent or serious potential public health risk. Within this authority, laboratories are able to highlight cases with an importance to public health. Examples may include test requests for exotic or rare diseases, a cluster of severe unexplained illness, or illness from suspected exposure to a serious hazard.

The authority may also be utilised for emerging conditions (identified by the Chief Health Officer or nationally) and increases the sensitivity of the Victorian surveillance system in an era of increasing emerging infections.

## Investigations and enhanced surveillance

The department is authorised to capture additional information to assist investigations, prevent further cases and to inform prevention strategies (including those conditions not or no longer notifiable by medical practitioners). This additional information is often referred to as investigation data or enhanced surveillance data. These data are mandatory and must be provided by medical practitioners and laboratories when requested.

## Failure to notify

Notification is required by law and penalties exist for failing to notify.

Recent changes to the regulations include the introduction of an infringement penalty of 4 penalty units\* for failure to notify. This change allows a more graduated and proportionate means to address poor notification compliance.

Guidance and support will remain the primary means by which the department achieves compliance with the regulations. Infringements may be considered when there is repeated failure to notify or an unwillingness to comply.

\*In 2019-20, 1 penalty unit is \$165.22.

## Surveillance reports

The department publishes state wide and localised data on a daily basis. These reports are available at the from the department's [Interactive infectious disease reports](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/interactive-infectious-disease-reports) website <[www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases)>.

## Chief Health Officer alerts and advisories

Health alerts and advisories issued by the Chief Health Officer are available at <[www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer)>. Subscription to health alerts and advisories is also available from the web page.

**Health alerts**—advise the Victorian community of an issue that is urgent, poses an immediate threat to public health and requires an immediate response.

**Health advisories**—provide advice on existing threats to the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

## Further information

All notifications and related inquiries should be directed to:

Department of Health and Human Services

Reply Paid 65937, Melbourne VIC 8060

Telephone 1300 651160 (24/7) Facsimile 1300 651170

Secure web notification <[www.health.vic.gov.au/notify](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/notify)>

Web <[www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases)>

Email <[infectious.diseases@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:infectious.diseases@dhhs.vic.gov.au)>

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 651160, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email the [Communicable Diseases Section <infectious.diseases@dhhs.vic.gov.au>](mailto:infectious.diseases@dhhs.vic.gov.au).

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Available at [the Department of Health and Human Services website <www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases>](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases)