

Cairns Public Health Unit

Monthly surveillance update – June 2026

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Increases in syphilis and gonorrhoea

- Notifications of [infectious syphilis](#) have increased in 2026, including the first case of congenital syphilis in the region since 2022.
- Syphilis is of particular concern in pregnancy and women of reproductive age. All pregnant women should be offered syphilis testing at first antenatal visit, 26-28 weeks and 36 weeks gestation as per [Guideline: Syphilis and pregnancy](#).
- Syphilis testing, prompt treatment and contact tracing can reduce spread. It is the responsibility of the diagnosing clinician to initiate contact tracing. The North Queensland Syphilis Surveillance Service (phone: 1800 032 238, email: nqsss@health.qld.gov.au) can assist with testing and treatment histories and clinical advice.

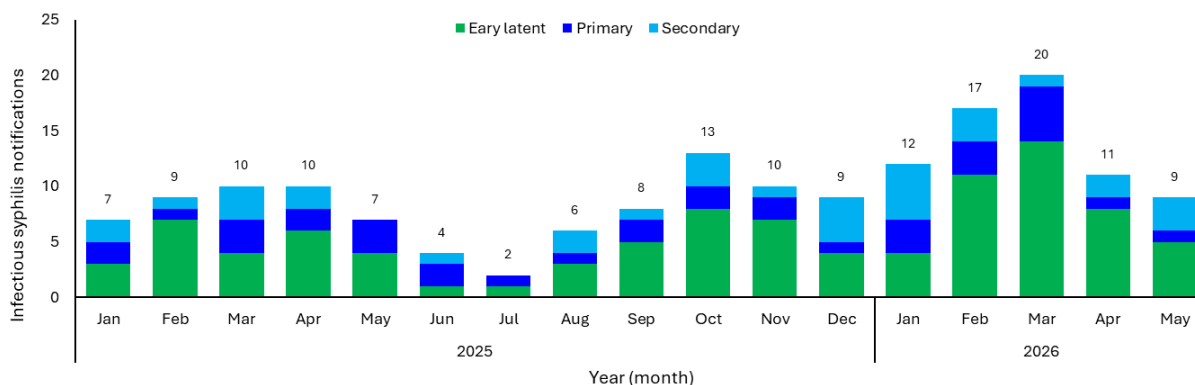


Figure: Number of infectious syphilis notifications in the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service region, by clinical classification status, year and month, January 2025 to May 2026.

- [Gonorrhoea](#) notifications are at their highest level on record, across all groups.
- Complications include pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility in women, and epididymitis in men.

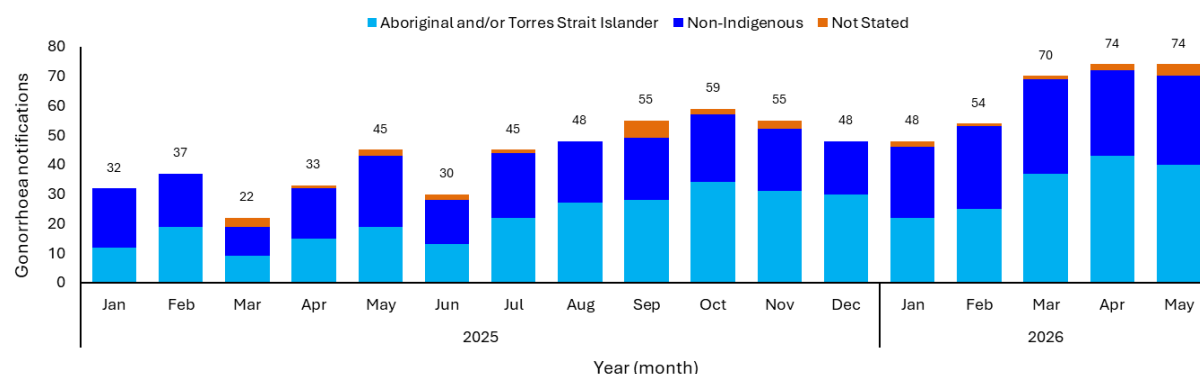


Figure: Number of gonorrhoea notifications in the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service region, by Indigenous status, year and month, January 2025 to May 2026.

Influenza likely to start to increase in next month – now is the time to vaccinate!

- There has been little influenza around so far this year but forecasts for Queensland predict cases will increase over the next 3-4 weeks.
- Influenza vaccination coverage remains low in the Cairns and Hinterland region.
- Now is the time to encourage your patients to get vaccinated!

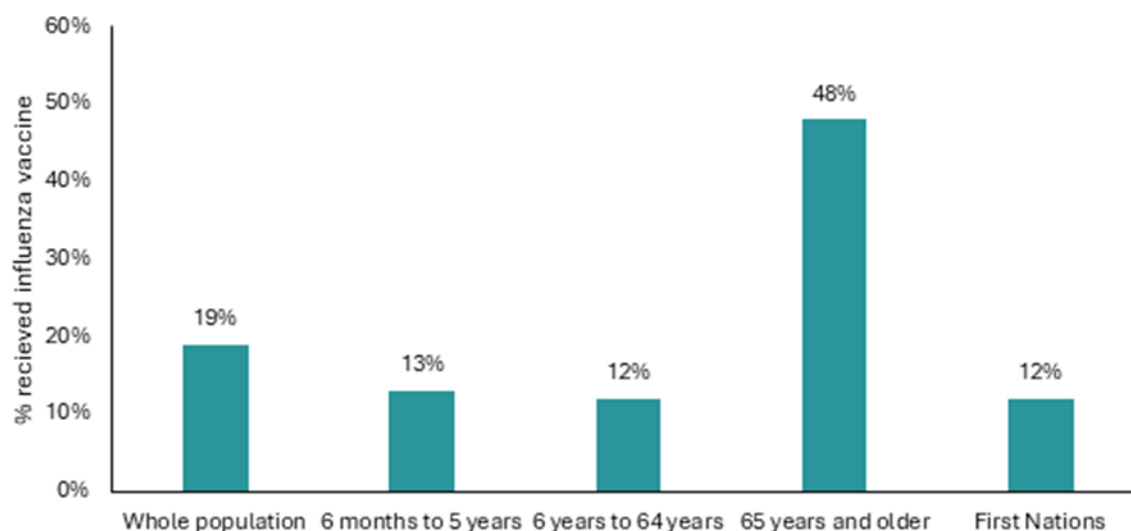


Figure. 2026 influenza vaccine coverage (%) as at 7 June 2026, for CHHHS residents by age group and First Nations status.

Measles case in Cairns

- A person with measles was [infectious in Cairns](#) from 29-31 May 2026.
- No onward transmission has been identified (as at 12 June 2026) but local cases may appear until 21 June 2026.
- Please call the Cairns Public Health Unit (CPHU) if measles is suspected, prior to ordering testing.

Diphtheria outbreak preparedness

- A large [diphtheria outbreak](#) primarily affecting Aboriginal people aged under 45 is occurring in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.
- There is no local transmission in North Queensland currently. There have been 2 cases imported from WA.
- Most cases involve mild symptoms (cutaneous or mild respiratory diphtheria) but there have been a small number of severe cases.
- Vaccination is the best defence. Please prioritise timely childhood vaccination.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults aged 20+ are eligible for a state-funded booster dose every 10 years.
- Healthy skin practices remain critical.
- Suspected cases of classic respiratory diphtheria should be urgently discussed with the infectious diseases team and Cairns Public Health Unit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Cairns Public Health Unit can be contacted on:
 - Phone: (07) 4226 5555
 - Fax: (07) 4226 3095
 - Email: CPHU@health.qld.gov.au
 - Website: <https://www.cairns-hinterland.health.qld.gov.au/for-health-professionals/cairns-public-health-unit>
- Dengue Hotline
 - Phone: 1800 DENGUE (1800 336 483)
- North Queensland Syphilis Surveillance Service
 - Phone: 1800 032 238
 - Fax: (07) 4226 3095
 - Email: North-Qld-Syphilis-Surveillance-Centre@health.qld.gov.au

