



# Centre for Disease Control

NT HEALTH

## Surveillance Update

Issued: February 2024

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### Melioidosis season continues

- Melioidosis case numbers in the NT continue to be higher than expected at this point in the year.
- There were 18 cases of melioidosis in January. There have been 18 cases as of 29 February, with further cases expected over the coming weeks. Three people have died from melioidosis this year.
- Clinicians are reminded to be alert for melioidosis in patients who present with unexplained fever or community acquired pneumonia – particularly in those who may be immunocompromised by diabetes, heavy alcohol consumption, renal or lung disease, immunosuppressive therapy, cancer, or advanced age. Melioidosis can also present as non-healing ulcers, so ensure that non-healing ulcers are swabbed with culture and sensitivity (MCS) testing requested.
- All patients with confirmed melioidosis require hospital treatment and infectious diseases specialist consultation.
- Please advise your patients with risk factors to stay inside during windy and rainy conditions, to protect their skin from cuts and sores, and to wear gloves and waterproof footwear while working in the garden or with soil, and to wear a mask if high pressure hosing.
- Follow this link for more information about melioidosis: [Melioidosis](#)

### Rotavirus increasing

- There has been an increase in rotavirus notifications in February, particularly in the Darwin and Alice Springs regions. We are monitoring for further cases over the coming weeks.
- Most cases of rotavirus in the NT occur in children under 10 years old, and many are not up to date with vaccinations for their age. However, around 43% of rotavirus notifications in 2024 to date have been for adults (range 21 to 92 years old). Clinicians should consider rotavirus as a differential diagnosis for adults presenting with gastroenteritis.
- Rotavirus is highly infectious, and causes a moderate to severe gastroenteritis among infants and young children which is usually self-limiting. Children under the age of 6 months are more likely to develop severe, rapid dehydration. Follow this link for more information about rotavirus: [Rotavirus | NT.GOV.AU](#)
- The rotavirus vaccine (Rotarix®) should be given at 6 weeks and 4 months of age. Promoting the first dose is important as it must be given *before* 15 weeks of age, and the second dose given at least 4 weeks later and *before* 25 weeks of age.

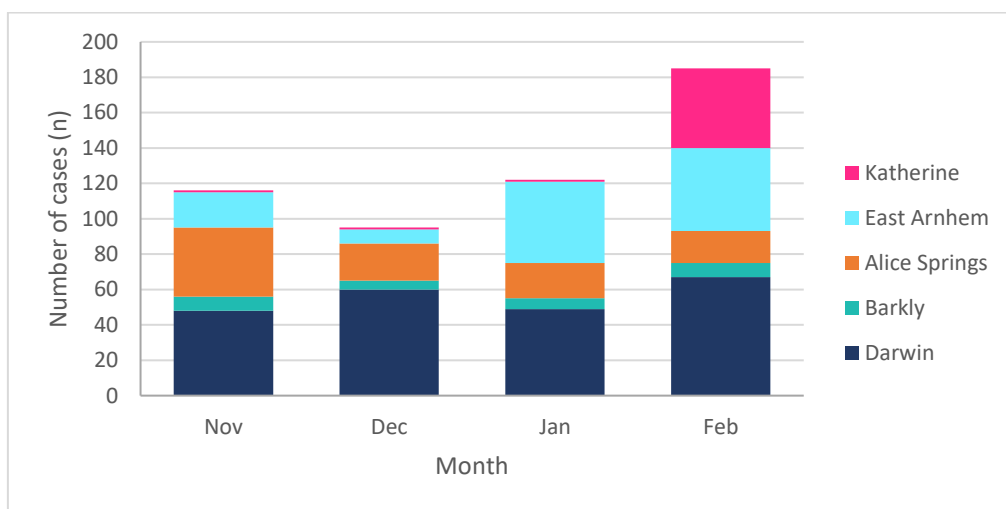
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- Collect stool samples for rotavirus testing (MCS) to confirm that rotavirus is in your community, and promote preventative measures for all those with diarrhoea which include handwashing, excluding children and adults from school, childcare, and work until they are diarrhoea-free for 24 hours, cleaning contaminated surfaces, and ensuring children are up to date with vaccinations. Additionally anyone with diarrhoea should not prepare or handle food for others or swim, wade or paddle in public pools.
- If you notice clusters of gastroenteritis in childcare facilities or schools in your community, you can contact your regional CDC unit for advice: [NT Health website](#)

## Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

- There has been an increase in cases of RSV reported in February. This is being driven by a significant increase from the East Arnhem region since January which is continuing, and from the Katherine region in February (see *Figure*).



*Figure: Total cases of RSV infection diagnosed monthly by NT region, November 2023 to February 2024*

- Around 40% of all cases of RSV reported in February were in children aged 4 years and younger, although the proportion in cases from the Katherine region has been about 70%.
- RSV became a nationally notifiable disease in 2021. It is a highly contagious disease most often affecting children. RSV usually causes a mild flu-like illness, lasting about 10 days.
- Some children (especially those under 6 months old) may become very unwell and require hospitalisation for complications such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia. Older people and people with chronic diseases and immunocompromising conditions may also be at risk for severe disease.
- All patients with flu-like illnesses should not attend childcare, school, or work until their symptoms have resolved. Encourage regular handwashing and cleaning of contaminated surfaces at home.
- For more information about RSV, visit the following link: [Respiratory syncytial virus | healthdirect](#)

This update was prepared by Dr Hayley Dyke (Head of the Surveillance Unit) and NT CDC staff. We encourage NT health staff to circulate this to their clinical colleagues.

**Contact:** View all CDC units NT wide at the [NT Health website](#).