

Health Protection Newsletter – Autumn Edition

Volume 4 | Issue 3 | Autumn 2025

Pumpkin Patches

Winter Vaccination

HPT ID Data

IPC in Winter

World Antimicrobial
Awareness Day

IPC Roadshow
Flyer

Visiting Pumpkin Patches

It's pumpkin time.....



We are now at the start of autumn with the October holidays approaching fast. Outdoor settings such as pumpkin patches are opening up their doors all over the North East for families to enjoy. There will be lots of activities being offered, from pumpkin picking to animal experiences such as feeding and cuddling. There is no doubt they are fun to visit and create lovely memories. However, it is important to be mindful that there are health risks associated with visiting such settings. Animals and the environments they live in, can harbour parasites and bacteria that can cause illness in people such as diarrhoea, vomiting, and abdominal pain, and although rare, can lead to serious complications. These parasites and bacteria can live in animals' gut, on their body and in their environment. Examples of these organisms include Cryptosporidium, Giardia, Salmonella and E. coli O157. They are transmitted through the faecal-oral route, which means that they can be passed to a person by putting contaminated fingers in mouths or by putting hands on faces after touching animals, animal droppings or contaminated surfaces around the environment, such as fences and gates.

Hand washing is one of the most simple and effective control measures that can be used to combat harmful parasites and bacteria. Hands should be washed with warm running water and liquid soap and dried with paper towels or air hand dryer. Alcohol gel/hand rub is not effective against parasites and bacteria found in animals and their environment.

We have some helpful tips below to help reduce transmission when you and your family visit an outdoor setting.

Wash hands before:

- Eating and drinking
- Leaving outdoor settings (If no access to hand washing facilities use wet wipes, but wash hands thoroughly as soon as hand washing facilities become available)



Contact:

You can contact the Health Protection Team at: NHS Grampian Health Protection Team.

Address: Summerfield House, 2 Eday Road, Aberdeen.

Phone: 01224 558520 Email: gram.healthprotection@nhs.scot

Wash Hands After

- Going to the toilet
- Touching or feeding animals or contact with surfaces in animal areas such as fences and gates
- Picking pumpkins
- Playing on play equipment
- Changing/cleaning footwear
- Cleaning pram/buggy/bike/wheelchair wheels



Key points

- Supervise children at all times and especially around handwashing
- Only eat in designated picnic/café areas after washing hands
- Only drink from designated drinking water taps.
- Do not eat and drink while touching animals or walking around animal areas
- Try to avoid kissing animals
- Do not eat food that has fallen to the ground
- Avoid contact with farm animals if pregnant
- Clean pram/buggy/bike/wheelchair wheels / outdoor shoes after leaving an outdoor setting and prior to taking indoors then wash hands.

Checklist of items to take on a Visit

- Wet Wipes
- Wellington boots/outdoor shoes
- Snow/puddle suits for children
- Change of shoes for after visit and suitable storage for dirty shoes/wellingtons in waterproof bag/container
- Change of outer clothing for after visit

If anyone becomes unwell after a visit

If you or a family member become unwell or have symptoms of abdominal pain, sickness and/or diarrhoea (sometimes bloody) within two weeks of visiting an outdoor setting, please get in touch with your local GP or 111 out of hours for advice and inform them that there has been a recent visit to an outdoor setting.

Useful links for further information

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/outdoor-health/bugs-and-germs/avoiding-bugs-and-germs-outdoors>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/escherichia-coli-e-coli-O157>

Educational Resources to learn about microbes for children <https://www.e-bug.eu/>

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Stay Protected this Winter – NHS Grampian Winter Vaccination Programme

Influenza (Flu) and Covid-19 can be very serious for some people.

Current flu vaccines provide good protection against severe disease and hospitalisation, and provide the best possible protection against the flu viruses likely to be circulating this year. The free national flu vaccine programme has been in place in Scotland for decades with tens of millions of people having taken up the opportunity to protect themselves by being vaccinated. Vaccination also continues to help protect against severe illness, hospitalisations and deaths arising from COVID-19. UKHSA surveillance data relating to last autumn's programme shows that [those who received a vaccine were around 43% less likely to be admitted to hospital with COVID-19](#) compared to those who remained unvaccinated.

These winter vaccines are being offered from September 2025. If eligible, you will be contacted by letter, email or text message with details of your appointment or information on how you can book one, including your username for the self-booking portal should you need to book an appointment.

The following links may be helpful:

- How to book your appointment online - <https://youtu.be/fpPfHQ3zGU>
- How to recover your user name and/ or password - <https://youtu.be/cL54EVVa0p4>
- NHS Grampian staff clinic information - NHS Grampian intranet is updated and the link to the page is here - [UPDATED - 2025 staff 'flu clinics](#)

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has updated its [advice for the autumn 2025 COVID-19 vaccination programme](#), and the focus of the programme is shifting towards targeted vaccination of those at highest risk of serious disease. From autumn 2025, COVID-19 vaccination will be offered to:

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in care homes for older adults
- individuals who are immunosuppressed aged 6 months and over

This represents a change from the autumn 2024 programme, which also included adults aged 65 to 74 and all those aged 6 months and over in a clinical risk group. The eligibility is the same across the 4 nations of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

Eligibility for the immunosuppressed

The definition of a “weakened immune system (immunosuppression)” can cause confusion for people who *do* have a weakened immune system but may not fit the immunosuppression criteria for vaccination.

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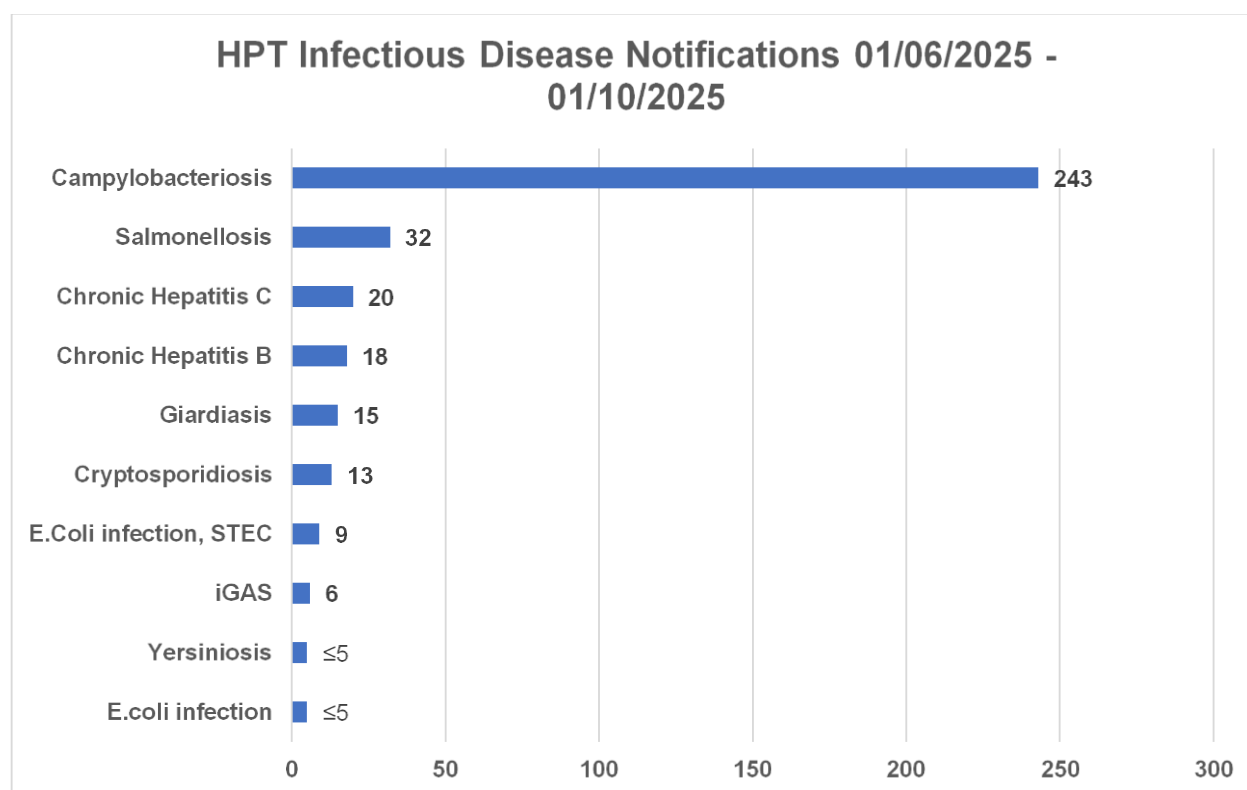
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Eligibility for immunosuppressed individuals includes the following:

- Organ, bone marrow or stem cell transplant patients
- Those being treated with systemic steroids for more than a month
- Those living with HIV
- Those receiving immunosuppressive or immunomodulating biological therapy, including children who are about to receive therapy
- Those undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- Those requiring long-term treatment for immunosuppression
- Those with a history of haematological malignancy including chronic leukaemia, lymphomas, and leukaemia
- Those with genetic disorders affecting the immune system

While this list summarises some major groups, it does not cover everything and you can further check your eligibility at [COVID-19 vaccine - NHS](#)



Various other organisms were notified during this period including: Shigella, Malaria, Aeromonas, Varicella-Zoster, Lyme disease, Legionella, Cyclospora, Pneumococcal infection, Hepatitis E, Brucellosis.

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Infection Prevention and Control Measures in Winter

As we move into the winter months there are a number of things we can do to prevent the spread of routine winter infections.

It is really important that we adhere to the basic, common sense principles of infection prevention and control:

- **Do not** attend work, school, nursery etc. if you have developed any new symptoms. This includes “cold” and “flu” symptoms, respiratory illness, fever, diarrhoea, vomiting. However the main message is - **If you are not feeling well – don’t go in!** If you have had diarrhoea/vomiting – do not return until at least 48 hours with no symptoms.
- Wash hands regularly and thoroughly under running water using liquid soap.
- Follow cough and sneeze etiquette – Cough/sneeze into a tissue (or crook of elbow if no tissue available), dispose of tissue into bin and wash hands thoroughly
- Keep home and work environments clean, particularly high touch points such as hand rails, door handles, tap handles, toilet flush etc.
- Take up the offer of winter vaccinations such as Flu or Covid-19 if you are eligible

Support and information can be found at:

- www.nhsinform.scot
- www.nhsinform.scot/wintervaccines
- www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides
- www.know-who-to-turn-to.com/pharmacist
- NHS Grampian Healthpoint on 08085 202030

World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (WAAW)

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial agents. As a result of drug resistance, antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents become ineffective and infections become difficult or impossible to treat, increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death.

WAAW takes place from 18 to 24 November each year and is led globally by the World Health Organization (WHO). It aims to increase awareness of global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to encourage best practices among the public, health workers and policy makers to avoid the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections. This year’s theme is: Act Now: Protect Our Present, Secure Our Future.

For more information, including resources and patient stories, and to make a simple pledge on how you will play your part in the fight against this important public health risk please visit [Antibiotic Guardian – Pledge to be an Antibiotic Guardian](#). Together we can #keepantibioticsworking



Antibiotics
Antivirals
Antifungals
Antiparasitics



**BECOME AN
ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIAN**

Keep Antibiotics Working

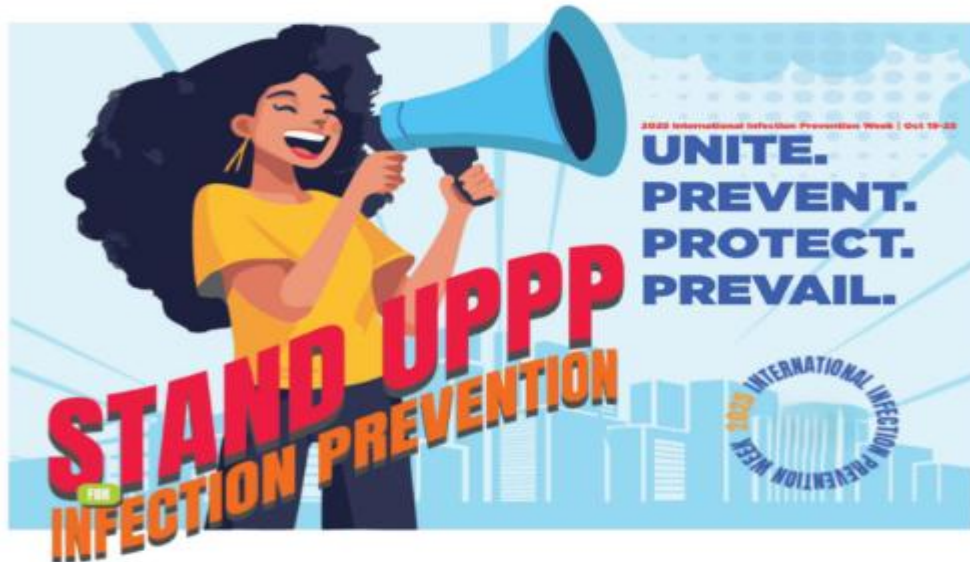
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SAVE THE DATE



The Infection Prevention & Control IIPW 2025 Roadshow

**Breakout Area 135, 1st Floor, Suttie Centre
Thursday 23 October 2025 10.00 - 15.00**

Join us and industry representatives in empowering staff and raising awareness about the importance of stopping the spread of infection.

Stalls will feature information / advice and educational materials
Representatives will be on hand to offer training / advice

So come along and join us for a complimentary tea or coffee and a slice of cake and enter your name into our free prize draw to win some great prizes!

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