

Health Protection Newsletter – Spring Edition



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With days gradually getting longer and winter behind us now, welcome to the first newsletter for the year. As always, we at Health Protection have got some useful tips and information on keeping you safe during this time of year.

Measles

Measles

Many of you will have seen reports in the news of the first confirmed measles cases recorded in Grampian in over a decade. There has also been an extensive increase in cases seen across Europe and Africa. The WHO advised in November 2025 that during 2024 there were an estimated 95 000 measles deaths globally, mostly among unvaccinated or under vaccinated children under the age of 5 years. Measles cases in Scotland remain comparatively low; in 2025 there were 28 laboratory confirmed cases reported. This is in comparison to 24 laboratory confirmed cases in 2024. In England there were 959 cases in 2025, compared to 2,911 in 2024.

Spring Farm Visits

Annual infectious Disease Data 2025

Dead or Sick Wild Birds

World Hand Hygiene Day

Water and Hydration



Pictures above left to right, measles rash on various skin tones, kopliks spots in mouth

The best protection is vaccination before any contact with a case even happens. You should check that all members of your family, parents and children, have had two doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) or measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine. Children born on or after Jan 1st 2025 will be offered the MMRV vaccination which includes protection against chickenpox at 12 and 18 months, these 2 doses will provide 99% immunity. If you are an adult who may be unvaccinated or have only been offered one dose, your immunity may have waned. It is not too late to be vaccinated, regardless of your age. Importantly - toddlers who have had one dose, appropriate to their age, are very highly protected - but they need the second dose to give lifelong protection.

Your GP practice can advise on the vaccination history of your family if you are unsure if you have had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine.

To arrange a vaccination appointment:

- Aberdeen City residents: gram.immsservices@nhs.uk
- Aberdeenshire and Moray residents : 01224 555333

For more information on measles, and how to check your child is fully protected visit

[MMR against measles | NHS inform](#)

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Measles is one of the most highly infectious diseases in humans. In an unvaccinated population, one person with measles can infect between 12 and 18 more (people with Covid-19 can infect between 2 and 6 more). 15 minutes or more in the same room as the case, or had any face to face contact (i.e. within 1 metre) can be enough to transmit the infection to others. If the contact is immunocompromised, even entering a room which has recently been vacated by the case may constitute a significant exposure.

Measles starts with a prodromal illness fever with or without conjunctivitis, cold symptoms and/or cough. After about 3 or 4 days, a red rash starts to appear on the face at the hairline and behind the ears, spreading downwards over the rest of the body and lasts for 4 to 7 days. People with measles are infectious to others from 4 days before to 4 days after the rash appears. Immunocompromised cases can present in a different way e.g. pneumonia and no rash and may be infectious for longer. Having measles can have serious complications including ear infections, pneumonia, encephalitis and even death.

There is no treatment for measles. Timely administration of vaccine and/or immunoglobulin may help to prevent those in contact with a case developing measles or at least reduce the severity of the infection. This is dependent on knowing that contact has occurred and given how infectious it is, this may not always be known.

Spring Farm Visits

In Grampian, the farming community are seeking new and innovative ways of diversifying to continue to make their farms sustainable. This is reflected in the increasing popularity of seasonal pop-up and permanent farm animal attractions available to the public, such as animal petting, lamb bottle feeding and pumpkin picking. Lamb feeding and cuddling around the Easter holidays is very popular.



Don't forget to wash your hands after removing shoes!

Thinking of having a snack? Wash your hands beforehand.

These attractions are well documented to provide educational value and can have a positive impact on people's wellbeing. However, direct contact with animals and their environment poses a risk to human health and can result in gastrointestinal illnesses such as Cryptosporidium, E Coli O157, Salmonella and Campylobacter. Symptoms

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can range from no symptoms, to diarrhoea/vomiting and in very rare cases more severe symptoms such as renal failure.

Please continue to enjoy these attractions and follow the handy tips overleaf that can be taken to minimise the risk.

Handy Tips when visiting a farm animal attraction

- Wash hands with warm running water, liquid soap and dry hands with paper towels **after** touching/feeding animals and their environment such as gates/fences, **before** eating, **before** leaving the premises and **after** handling/removing footwear.
- Alcohol hand gel/hand sanitiser is **NOT** effective against pathogens found in farm animals and their environment, such as E-Coli O157 and Cryptosporidium.
- Read carefully the information detailed on the owners website before booking.
- Don't eat or drink while touching animals or in their environment and only eat and drink in designated picnic areas or cafes.
- Don't kiss animals or allow children to put their faces close to animals.
- It is recommended to take an extra pair of footwear and extra outer clothing to change into after visiting the animal area.
- Consider taking a bag/box to transport used footwear and clothing in when leaving the premises.
- Clean wheels of prams, scooters, bikes etc. before bringing back indoors.
- When home, place outer clothing into the washing machine and thoroughly clean footwear that would have been in contact with animals and their environment, immediately wash hands after handling.

Due to the risk of gastrointestinal illness, it is advisable that agricultural animals do not visit care home settings.

If animals do come to the care home here are some tips to minimise risk to residents and staff

- Preferably have one area where the animals are, and for the residents to visit. Ideally the area should have a hard floor covering and no soft furnishings. This makes cleaning the environment after the visit easier.
- Have easily accessible hand washing facilities near to where the animals are for all residents and staff to wash their hands after handling/touching the animals.
- Hand washing must be carried out using liquid soap and running warm water following contact with the animal. If required supervise/support residents to wash their hands thoroughly.
- Alcohol hand gels are **not effective** against the pathogens carried by animals.
- Staff or residents holding lambs should wear an apron to prevent contamination of their clothing/uniform, and dispose of appropriately afterwards.

- Contact between any person and the animal must not be allowed if either are displaying symptoms of sickness and/or diarrhoea.
- Keep animals away from any person who has wound sites.
- If bites or scratches occur staff must carry out a first aid procedure ensuring the wound is cleaned and dressed. Medical advice should be sought where necessary and the incident reported.
- Discourage the animal from licking any person. If this occurs, the affected area should be washed with liquid soap and water as soon as possible.
- Animals must not be permitted access to any clinical areas, kitchens, dining areas or staff area.
- Animals must be supervised at all times within the care setting e.g. dogs must be kept on a leash.
- The area used for visiting animals should be thoroughly cleaned after the animals have left your care home. This should be a 2 stage clean of floors and hard surfaces with detergent, followed by wipe down with a chlorine based solution (1,000 parts per million available chlorine).

Dead or sick wild birds or animals: what to do

Advice for members of the public, farmers and landowners

Do not touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds that you find. Wild birds can carry several diseases that are infectious to people.

In Great Britain, if you find at the same time:

- a single dead bird of prey, swan, goose, duck or gull or
- five or more dead wild birds of any other species

You can phone the helpline: 03459 33 55 77, or alternatively you can find advice on the report dead wild birds government webpage [Report dead wild birds - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/report-dead-wild-birds).



Contact:

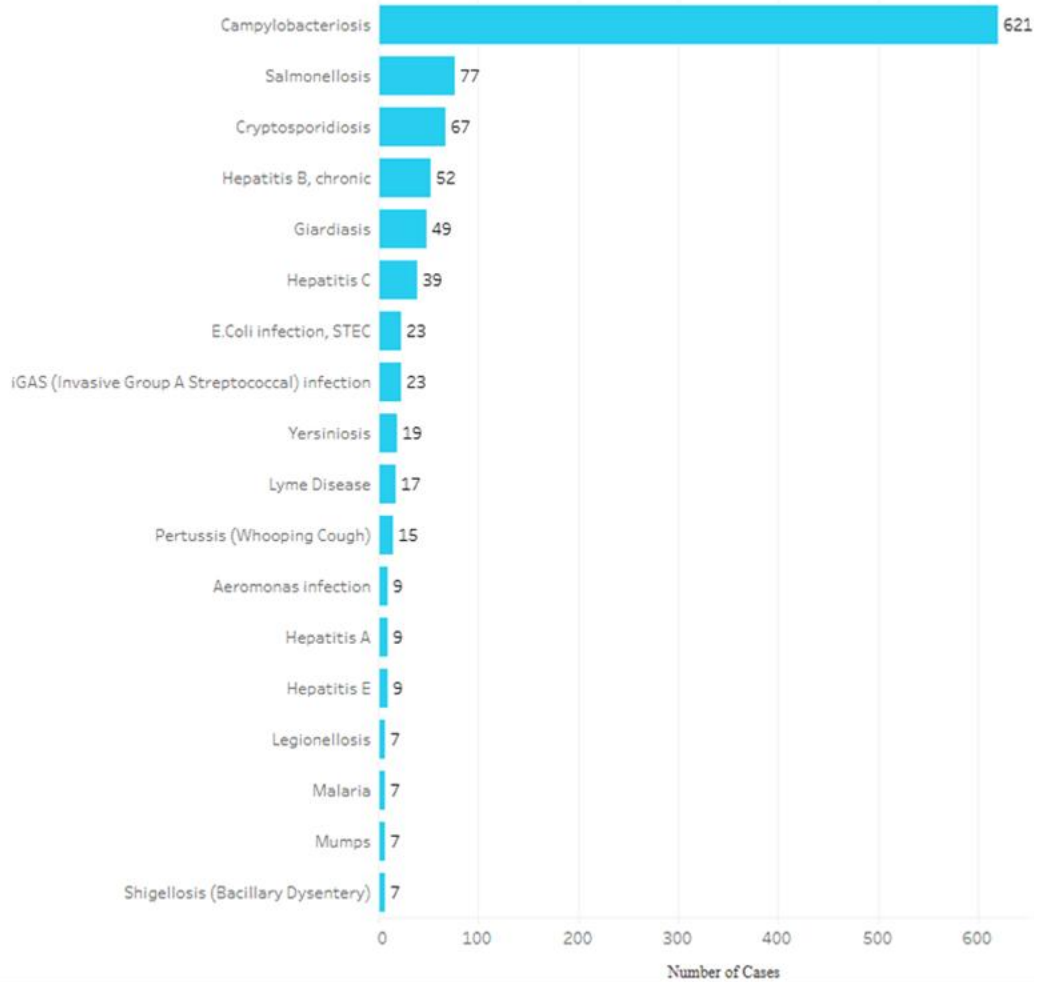
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Annual Infectious Disease Data 2025

2025 Grampian Annual ID Surveillance



As we go out more for hikes, camping and other outdoor activities, remember hand gel DOES NOT protect you from enteric pathogens. Always wash your hands with soap under running water.

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World Hand Hygiene Day – 5th May 2026

This May, we join the global celebration of World Hand Hygiene Day on 5th May, led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to highlight the vital role of clean hands in preventing infection in NHS Grampian. This year's theme, "[Action Saves Lives](#)," reminds us that every simple hand hygiene moment has a powerful impact on staff safety and the people we care for.

The Infection Prevention and Control Team is also celebrating the ongoing progress across NHSG through our Hand Hygiene Improvement Programme (HHIP). Colleagues across the organisation continue to strengthen awareness, improve practice, and embed safer habits every day. A link to the HHIP can be accessed here: [HH Improvement poster \(network system only\)](#)

Thank you to all NHSG colleagues — your continued commitment shows how every action truly saves lives.

Contact us: gram.infectionprevention@nhs.scot



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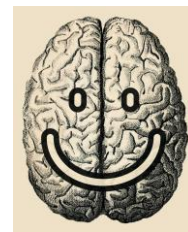
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The Importance of Water and Hydration

Did you know, the body is 65% water? That's why its important to stay hydrated, whether recovering from illness or maintaining general health.

Hydration plays a vital role in maintaining good health and supporting the body's everyday functions. Water makes up a significant proportion of the human body and is essential for processes such as regulating body temperature, transporting nutrients, and removing waste.

So how much water should we be drinking? It is suggested we drink around 8 glasses a day. Despite there being little scientific evidence to support this we know enough about the role water plays in the body to understand we would struggle without it.



Staying well hydrated supports brain function and mood, helping people to stay alert and focused. It also aids digestion by supporting saliva production and bowel movements, reducing the risk of constipation. For those who are physically active, hydration is particularly important, as fluids lost through sweat need to be replaced to maintain endurance and prevent fatigue. Water also helps lubricate joints and cushion tissues, supporting mobility and reducing discomfort during movement.

AND... the brain is made up largely of water, yes around 85%! Even mild dehydration can affect how clearly we think, how well we focus and how we feel emotionally. Staying well hydrated helps the brain stay alert and responsive, feelings of fatigue or mental fog. From early development through to older age, regular fluid intake plays a quiet but vital role in keeping the brain working at its best.

If you are not sure how much water you need, dehydration signs to look out for include headaches, dizziness, tiredness, thirst and dry mouth, dark coloured and strong smelling urine, dry skin and constipation.

In Scotland we are lucky to have fresh clean drinking water supplied to us. You can even access fresh water from over 130 Top Up Taps in Scotland [Find My Nearest Tap - Scottish Water](#) - Scottish Water. Developing regular hydration habits, like keeping a reusable water bottle nearby, can support long-term health and wellbeing.

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