Ross River virus

Ross River virus infection (RRV) is a mosquito-borne disease endemic at low levels in Tasmania, with locally acquired cases notified during the warmer months.

In 2017, there have been 15 notifications of RRV in Tasmania – 10 locally acquired – compared to two during the same period last year.

Infections in 2017 have been most commonly acquired in the areas of Coles Bay, Freycinet, Dodges Ferry and Seven Mile Beach.

Symptoms include fever, headache, arthralgia, myalgia, joint swelling or stiffness, and rash. The incubation period is usually 7–10 days.

Many people infected with RRV will not develop symptoms – most people recover completely in a few weeks. Others may experience symptoms such as arthralgia and tiredness for many months.

Diagnosis requires serology IgG seroconversion or a significant increase in IgG antibody level (e.g. fourfold or greater rise in titre) to RRV.

GPs can access more information on RRV, including patient information sheets, at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/communicable_diseases_prevention_unit/infectious_diseases/ross_river

EOI for diabetes-related foot care working party

The National Association of Diabetes Centres is calling for expressions of interest from suitably qualified health professionals to join the Foot Network working party.

The working party aims to establish and maintain reduced morbidity and mortality caused by diabetes-related foot disease. It will also lead a national coordinated communication network related to foot care in diabetes.

The working party will include representatives from the Australia Diabetes Society, the RACGP, the Australasian Podiatry Council, Wounds Australia, PHNs and more.

The EOI deadline is 23 April.

For more information or to apply visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/FNWP_EOI or contact Nicki Wallis at comms@diabetesociety.com.au

Public Health Urgent poster

All general practices should have received a Public Health Urgent poster, which includes the Public Health Hotline number (1800 671 738), a list of diseases to notify immediately on clinical suspicion, and a link to the complete list of diseases notifiable by medical practitioners.

Please consider hanging the poster in your consultation and treatment rooms as a visual reminder.

If you require more copies, email immunisation@dhhs.tas.gov.au

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Click on the links above to go directly to the sections.
Zostavax® update

Around 12,000 doses of Zostavax® have been distributed to providers in Tasmania.

There is now an ongoing supply, enabling you to order larger amounts. However, if you are planning to run clinics, please call 1800 671 738 to discuss your requirements.

Zostavax® is contraindicated in patients who are immunocompromised. Please check for contraindications before administration. If you have any doubt, defer vaccination and seek specialist advice.

If you inadvertently administer Zostavax® to an immunocompromised person, urgently contact the treating specialist or an infectious disease specialist to determine the severity of immunocompromise. The patient will need close monitoring for adverse effects, particularly vaccine virus-associated disease, and may require antiviral therapy.


Gonorrhoea trends, tests and treatment

There has been a significant increase in notifications of gonorrhoea in Tasmania – 82 notifications in 2016 up from 56 in 2015 – with higher rates in males.

Many present with symptoms including urethritis, purulent discharge, PV discharge or proctitis.

GPs are advised to test and treat on the day a patient presents. Standard treatment is 500mg IM ceftriaxone (given in 2ml 1% lignocaine) and 1g oral azithromycin stat.

GPs should consider testing for syphilis and HIV, Hep B s AB, s AG and cAB serology at the same time with informed consent, and ensure patients return for results, contact tracing and follow-up STI testing.

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Additional information can be found on the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre website at www.mshc.org.au and in the Australasian Contact Tracing Manual at http://ctm.ashm.org.au

For more information, contact the DHHS Sexual Health Service in Launceston, Devonport or Hobart at 1800 675 859. Please call the service if you have trouble locating ceftriaxone as not all pharmacies carry it.

My Health Record mobile apps for patients now available

There are now two free apps available for patients, their families and carers to access their My Health Record on a mobile device.

Healthi allow patients to access their full My Health Record via Apple and Android devices.

My Child’s eHealth Record allows parents to view and manage their child’s eHealth record via Apple and Android devices.

For patients who have a My Health Record, apps are an easy way for them to share key health information with health providers.

Patients can download apps through the app store or view the available apps at www.myhealthrecord.gov.au

For more information visit www.myhealthrecord.gov.au
Service commissioning update from Primary Health Tasmania

Mental health – people with mild mental illness
A tender for the delivery of services for people with, or at risk of, mild mental illness opened on 5 April and will close on 2 May.
Services are expected to commence as soon as possible before July 1.
Consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken across the state and via an online survey in March. Feedback from consultation is informing the approach to commissioning these services.
Tender documents, including the Commissioning Intentions Document and assessment criteria are available following registration on Primary Health Tasmania’s eTender portal at www.tenderlink.com/primaryhealthtas
More information on commissioning services for mild mental illness can be found at www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/commissioning/mental-health-services-commissioning

Alcohol and other drugs
Primary Health Tasmania has commissioned three organisations around the state to deliver new services to treat alcohol and other drug misuse.
• Anglicare Tasmania (statewide) – screening, brief intervention, counselling, case management, and aftercare services
• South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (Huon Valley and Channel regions in southern Tasmania) – screening, brief intervention, counselling, case management, and aftercare services for Aboriginal people, plus workforce education and training to support the sector to provide safe and appropriate care for Aboriginal people
• Youth, Family and Community Connections (Circular Head, King Island and Waratah-Wynyard municipalities in north west Tasmania) – screening, brief intervention, counselling, case management, and aftercare services.
Services are expected to commence in these communities this month. Negotiations are also underway with a fourth provider to deliver statewide training to the treatment sector on safe and appropriate care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
People who have experienced negative impact (including harm or impairment) from the misuse of alcohol and other drugs are eligible for services.
Referrals to services can be made by GPs and health services, via self-referral, referrals from families and carers, and from schools and community services.
Services will be funded until June 2019.
More information can be found at www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/commissioning/alcohol-other-drug-services-commissioning

Mental health – young people with severe and complex mental illness
Primary Health Tasmania has commissioned Cornerstone Youth Services (north and north west) and Life Without Barriers (south) to support young Tasmanians with, or at risk of, complex and severe mental illness.
Young people who are eligible for this new program will be provided with tailored clinical care and support to access other services they may require.
The services are available to people aged 12 to 25 with or at risk of:
• anxiety disorders
• depression
• schizophrenia
• schizo-affective disorder
• early onset psychosis
• bipolar disorder
• eating disorders
• conduct disorders
• suicidal intent.
Young people with complex conditions that are linked with substance use will also be eligible.
Referrals to the services can be made by GPs and health services, via self-referral, referrals from families and carers, and from schools and community services. A mental health care plan is not required, though it is encouraged.
More information can be found at www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/services-young-people-severe-complex-mental-illness
Aboriginal mental health  
A number of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services have been invited to be involved in the co-design and commissioning process for the delivery of mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 
Primary Health Tasmania is considering a range of proposals for implementation in partnership with the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services. 
Services will be funded until June 2018, with further contracts subject to ongoing Australian Government funding and proof that program objectives are being met. 
Details of the new services will be available shortly.

Upcoming commissioning activity  
We expect to approach the market in the third quarter of 2017 for the delivery of: 
- services for people with severe and complex mental illness 
- suicide prevention services 
- refugee health services. 

More information about Primary Health Tasmania’s commissioning activity is available on our website at www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/commissioning

General practice involvement  
General practices are encouraged to consider taking part in current and upcoming tenders. 
This could be as part of a consortium – you could contact other service providers in your area to explore options for working together to deliver services designed specifically for your community’s needs. 

Register on Primary Health Tasmania’s eTender portal at www.tenderlink.com/primaryhealthtas to receive tender notifications. 

Primary Health Tasmania welcomes ongoing general practice input on issues, needs and priorities relating to Aboriginal health, rural health, mental health, refugee health, and alcohol and other drug services. 

Please email info@primaryhealthtas.com.au or call 1300 653 169.
Health Care Homes update

The Australian Government Department of Health is finalising the assessment of applications for stage one of the Health Care Homes program.

The 200 selected general practices and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations will be notified this month.

In Tasmania, it is expected that around 20 practices and Aboriginal services – supporting up to 6500 enrolled patients – will be selected to participate.

In other updates:

• The Department of Health is working with Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited to develop a training and education package for stage one. The package will include 11 learning modules explaining the key Health Care Home concepts that need to be adopted, and will incorporate evidence-based material from overseas. These training resources will be designed around plan-do-study-act cycles.

• Practice facilitators – the Department has indicated that these positions will be funded through Primary Health Networks to support participating practices. Information provided by the Department indicates facilitators will undertake an intensive train-the-trainer program on the 11 modules, then work with practices to implement the module lessons. Throughout stage one, PHN practice facilitators will provide support through one-on-one, small group, and telephone advice. Primary Health Tasmania is currently recruiting the facilitator positions.

• The Department is also developing a handbook for practices outlining the Health Care Homes concept, as well as resources for patients and the care team.

• The Department has engaged Health Policy Analysis (HPA) to conduct the evaluation of stage one. HPA will lead a consortium with the University of New South Wales’s Centre for Big Data Research in Health and the University of Technology’s Centre for Health Economics Research and Evaluation. The evaluation will assess the suitability of the model for different practices operating in a range of contexts, and will inform decisions on broader rollout of the program.

• The risk stratification tool for assigning complexity tiers to patients will be provided free to all participating practices before services commence. Practices will be trained in the use of the tool to ensure complexity assignment is consistent across all Health Care Homes.

• You can join the email list to receive regular eNewsletters about Health Care Homes by clicking on the subscribe button at www.health.gov.au/healthcarehomes

More information is available at www.health.gov.au/healthcarehomes

Applications for the Heart Foundation clinical ambassador program open now

This year the Heart Foundation Tasmania will take part in the Heart Care Education Program, which trains health practitioners in early detection and improved management of cardiovascular disease.

Nursing and allied health professionals working in acute and primary care are invited to participate as clinical ambassadors. Clinical ambassadors will undergo training on cardiovascular disease and risk factors, issues facing cardiovascular health professionals and patients, and Heart Foundation programs. They will then develop activity plans in their workplace to improve the cardiovascular health of patients.

Ambassadors must be able to attend three day-long workshops in Hobart on 26 May, 18 August and 3 November, and will receive a certificate of attendance for CPD recording.

Applications are due by 14 April and successful ambassadors will be notified by 28 April.

For more information or to request an application form, contact Sue Sanderson at sue.sanderson@heartfoundation.org.au or on 6220 2232.
Diabetes Tasmania clinical and education services

Diabetes Tasmania provides an integrated service model of education for people with, or at high risk of, type 2 diabetes and pre-diabetes (IGT/IFG).

Education programs include DESMOND, The COACH Program, and Smart programs, including ShopSmart (replacing Shop Well Eat Well).

Individual appointments are available for people requiring more specific education and support, such as for medication changes or commencing injectables.

These services are free and available across the state, including in 21 rural local government areas through Primary Health Tasmania’s rural primary health funding program. See page four.

GP management plan, team care arrangement and allied health professional referral is required in Launceston and Hobart as usual.


For further information about referring or programs, contact Diabetes Tasmania at 6215 9000.

New Tasmanian HealthPathways available

Tasmanian HealthPathways for dentistry and maxillofacial surgery and early childhood caries and oral checks are now available.

There are now over 500 Tasmanian HealthPathways, including cardiology, diabetes, gastroenterology, dermatology, burns, wound care, immunisation, respiratory disease, neurological/neurodegenerative, palliative care, ear, nose and throat, orthopaedic/musculoskeletal conditions, gastroenterology, allergy, and child health.

Dentistry and maxillofacial surgery for adults and children pathway

This pathway includes information on:

- bleeding gum
- oral lesions
- oral ulceration
- toothache
- medication and dentistry
- trauma to teeth
- wisdom teeth.

Referral pathways can be found under ‘dental requests’ and are available for acute and non-acute referrals.

Early childhood caries and oral checks in children pathway

This pathway provides guidance for clinicians and printable resources for parents with children of all ages.

Remember that all children and young adults (under 18 years) are eligible for free oral health check-ups and treatment at Oral Health Services Tasmania.

Clinical work groups

Expressions of interest are open for clinicians to join clinical work groups to develop and review pathways over the next six months.

Clinical work groups comprise clinicians across primary and hospital sectors who work together to identify, agree and implement opportunities to standardise and improve patient management, and tailor pathways to Tasmanian needs.

If you are interested in contributing, email HealthPathways@primaryhealthtas.com.au and tell us your area of interest.

To access Tasmanian HealthPathways visit tasmania.healthpathways.org.au and create a login.

For more information, contact Catherine Spiller on 6213 8200 or at cspiller@primaryhealthtas.com.au

Survey on lung disease support

Lung Foundation Australia is seeking feedback from health professionals to understand how it can better support the provision of information and care to people living with a lung disease.

You can complete a five-minute survey online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/lfahpsurvey

The survey closes at 5pm on 13 April.

Survey participants will go into the draw to win one of two prizes – two Lung Foundation Australia Gala Dinner Tickets, or one registration for the Australian Rare Lung Disease Short Course.

For more information, contact Lung Foundation Australia on 1800 654 301 or email marketing@lungfoundation.com.au
Input into Tasmanian carer action plan


Carers Tasmania will be facilitating consultation around the state to hear input. Feedback on the action plan can also be emailed to csr@dpac.tas.gov.au or can be submitted online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/TasmanianCarerActionPlan](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TasmanianCarerActionPlan)

Feedback will be accepted until 17 April.

To find out how to participate in consultation, or for more information, contact Carers Tasmania on 6231 5507.

Nominations for HESTA Primary Health Care Awards now open

Nominations are open to recognise the work of GPs, health educators, medical practice managers and allied health professionals through the 2017 HESTA Primary Health Care Awards.

Awards will be given in three categories – young leader, individual distinction and team excellence – with $10,000 awarded per category to be used for further education or team development.

Employers, colleagues, patients and individuals can nominate online until 2 June.

To find out more or to nominate an individual or a team for an award, visit [www.hestaawards.com.au](http://www.hestaawards.com.au)

Correction – Dr Maxine Manifold phone number

Dr Maxine Manifold is now focusing on mental health and will accept referrals for GP-level mental health consultations.

Please note that the phone number printed in the March issue of General Practice Matters is incorrect.

To reach Dr Manifold call 6380 8982.

St Vincent’s Hospital private rehabilitation unit

A reminder to all GPs that the St Vincent’s Hospital private rehabilitation unit will accept suitable patients directly from the community.

The service is suitable for patients who need reconditioning due to a recent illness or event, or need a ‘tune-up’ to allow them to remain independent in their home environment.

The rehabilitation program is supervised by rehabilitation consultants with services from physicians, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, nursing, social work and other allied health as required.

Suitable patients may include those with:

- post-operative or post-illness deconditioning
- chronic disease such as, but not limited to, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, respiratory disease, musculoskeletal disease/dysfunction, chronic pain, chronic stroke
- post-period of non-weight bearing.

Suitable patients need:

- private insurance for a hospital stay, including DVA
- a set discharge destination and support
- set rehabilitation goals and ability to actively participate in rehabilitation
- to be medically stable.


For more information, contact the rehabilitation unit on 6332 4820.
Resources

Haemochromatosis resource for GPs

A number of resources to support GPs in the identification and management of haemochromatosis are now available.

The RACGP Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice (Red Book) 9th edition contains updated advice on genetic testing and identifying risk for haemochromatosis. This includes identifying who is at risk, what should be done, and how often testing should be done.


A Tasmanian HealthPathway on haemochromatosis is available. The pathway contains information on the condition and select patient resources.

The pathway can be accessed at tasmania.healthpathways.org.au

Launceston GP Dr Jan Radford’s case study on Hereditary Haemochromatosis is included in Unit 535 – Preventive Activities Unit. This is accessible online via GPLEarning, with hard copy to be available later this month.

For more information or to obtain copies of additional patient resources, contact Haemochromatosis Australia on 1300 019 028 or at www.ha.org.au

Immunisation update presentations

Primary Health Tasmania recently hosted immunisation update seminars in Launceston and Hobart on influenza, pertussis, zoster, and vaccination post-splenectomy.

Speaker presentations and slides are now available at www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/resources/immunisation

For more information, contact Maxine Williams at 6341 8700 or at mwilliams@primaryhealthtas.com.au

ADS foot care resources

The Australian Diabetes Society (ADS) has launched a package of foot care resources to assist healthcare professionals prevent and manage diabetes-related foot complications.

Developed with funding from the National Diabetes Services Scheme, the package includes audio-visual resources based on national and international guidelines, and three learning modules – The foot examination, Preventive foot care, and Managing basic diabetes-related foot complications (the latter will be available from June).

For more information, visit the ADS website at https://diabetessociety.com.au/diabetesfoot/ or contact Nicki Wallis at comms@diabetessociety.com.au

NDIS resources for GPs

Over the next three years, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will significantly expand.

To help health professionals navigate the change, the NDIS is hosting events and has created a number of resources for GPs and their patients.

To view nearby events, visit www.ndis.gov.au/news/events/all

The NDIS factsheet for GPs and health professionals is available at www.ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/hee/h6b/8798600822814/Factsheet-HealthProfessionals.pdf

An NDIS resource pack containing information about the NDIS changes and information for patients can be accessed by filling out the request form at www.surveymonkey.com/r/ndisinfopack

GPs can also sign up for the fortnightly newsletter for updates from the NDIS at www.ndis.gov.au/news/subscribe.html

Referral templates

The following new template is available at www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/templates/new

- Diabetes Tasmania clinical services referral form

Remember to save templates from the website by right-clicking only, and MD users remember to shrink the margins when you import the template.
Events

Allied Health Professionals Network meetings

Hobart
26 April 5pm – 8pm

GPs, practice nurses and practice staff are invited to the upcoming Allied Health Professionals Network meetings to discuss how to work together to provide coordinated care for patients with chronic disease.

A case study will be used to explore how we can collaborate in the primary care space. A networking activity will follow.

Bring your business cards and brochures for display and distribution.

For more information and to register, visit www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/events or contact Angela Baker on 6213 8200 or at abaker@primaryhealthtas.com.au

Antimicrobial prescribing for GPs

Launceston
23 May 6pm – 9pm

Primary Health Tasmania is hosting an event for GPs on antimicrobial prescribing.

Management of skin and soft tissue infections, and respiratory, ear, nose and throat infections will be included, as well as feedback and learnings from community antimicrobial prescribing audits. Avoiding antibiotic prescribing and managing patient expectations will also be covered.

RACGP accreditation is pending. A similar event is planned for the south – details to be provided in the May issue of General Practice Matters.

For more information, contact Angela Baker on 6213 8200 or abaker@primaryhealthtas.com.au

Diabetes management in general care settings training

Burnie
1 May, 8 May and 15 May

The National Association of Diabetes Centres has developed a three-day training program for nurses and allied health professionals on diabetes management in general care settings.

The program consists of eight modules covering topics such as chronic diabetes complications, lifestyle issues, medication, self-management, and diabetes in specific populations.

Practice nurses and allied health professionals are invited to participate.

The program will be delivered by the North West Diabetes Centre in Burnie on 1 May, 8 May and 15 May.

For more information or to register, contact Gerlinda Ray on 6493 6100 or at gerlinda.ray@ths.tas.gov.au

Aortic stenosis session

Burnie
4 May 6:30pm – 9:30pm

Launceston
11 May 6:30pm – 9:30pm

Primary Health Tasmania is hosting evening workshops on aortic stenosis for GPs and practice nurses. The event will address understanding aortic stenosis, progression of severity, diagnostic tools, and insights into prognosis.

It will feature presentations from specialists across Tasmania.

For more information and to register, visit www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/events

Primary Health Tasmania’s events calendar is available online at www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/events
ACRRM eHealth-enabled management of chronic conditions

Online
Ongoing – fortnightly

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, with support from the Australian Government Digital Health Agency, has developed an education program to assist GPs and practice staff to integrate My Health Record summaries as a routine component of sustainable and quality management of chronic conditions.

The program consists of online modules and webinars, and will assist rural practices to build integrated care teams, use technology and share information through the My Health Record system. It has been tested in busy rural practices to:

• improve health outcomes for high-needs patients
• improve the care experience for patients and make it easier for clinicians to deliver care
• improve the practice bottom line, including meeting ePIP requirements.

ACCRM awards core CPD points and PRPD points for program completion.

For more information and to register, visit www.acrrm.org.au/ehealth-enabled

ACRRM ruralEM forum

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine is facilitating the fortnightly ruralEM forum to support rural clinicians with emergency medicine decisions.

Forums are facilitated by Dr Peter Arvier, rural generalist and emergency medicine doctor, and Dr Bill Nimo, emergency physician. Each fortnight will present rural emergency medicine case studies and summaries of key learning points.

The forum is designed for ACCRM members who are either:

• a registrar planning to sit the AST-EM StAMPS
• a medical student or junior doctor on a rural pathway considering AST in emergency medicine
• a rural FACRRM with a significant caseload of emergency medicine
• an urban doctor looking to refresh knowledge and skills before undertaking rural locums.

For more information or to enrol, visit www.acrrm.org.au/search/find-online-learning/details?id=5077&title=ruralEM+forum
General practice vacancies
In the past, Primary Health Tasmania has maintained a list of general practice vacancies on its website.
Health Recruitment PLUS (HR+) provides a tailored general practice recruitment service, which includes a searchable list of vacancies via its website.
To avoid duplication, Primary Health Tasmania will refer all future requests to list general practice vacancies to HR+.
HR+ can be contacted direct via recruitment@healthrecruitmentplus.com.au

Feedback? Suggestions?
If you would like to comment on any aspect of the General Practice Matters newsletter, or to submit an article, email comms@primaryhealthtas.com.au or call 1300 653 169.

Disclaimer: While the Australian Government helped fund this document, it has not reviewed the content and is not responsible for any injury, loss or damage however arising from the use of or reliance on the information provided herein.
Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this newsletter is accurate, however Primary Health Tasmania will not accept liability for any injury, loss or damage arising directly or indirectly from any use of or reliance on this information, which comes from a range of sources.

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