

**Facsimile Cover Sheet**  
**Wharangi Nama Waea**

Date/Te Ra: **17 October 2014**

<b>To/Kia: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres, ID Physicians and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa region</b>	<b>From/Na: Dr Craig Thornley</b>
<b>Name of Agency/Wahi Mahi:</b>	<b>Fax Number&gt;Nama Waea:</b>

## Public Health Alert

### **Yersinia pseudotuberculosis outbreak investigation: update**

I would be grateful if you could distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

If you would also like to receive this by email for ease of distribution, storage and retrieval please advise RPH of your email on [rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz](mailto:rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz).

Kind regards,



Dr Craig Thornley  
Medical Officer of Health [designation forthcoming]  
Regional Public Health

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He ture no nga korero katoa kei roto o tenei karere, no reira, kia tupato. Mehemea kaore matau kaua e mau. Me whakamohiotia atu ki to Tari, me te mea nana I tono mai. E Tika Hoki.

## Public Health Alert

Regional Public Health  
Better Health For The Greater Wellington Region



**Date:** 17 October 2014

**To:** General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Paediatricians, ID Physicians, Pharmacists, After-hours Centers and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions

**From:** Dr Craig Thornley

### ***Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* outbreak investigation: update**

As you will be aware from media reports, the investigation into the large nationwide outbreak of *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* is continuing. This update provides information on the current outbreak situation both from the regional and national perspectives.

#### **Outbreak update for the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions**

From 1 September 2014 until 16 October there have been 37 cases of yersiniosis notified in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions. 22 of these were culture-confirmed as *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis*, 14 were *Y. enterocolitica*, and one was notified following a diagnosis based on serology only therefore does not yet have a *Yersinia* species identified. Seven patients have been hospitalised. The most recent date of illness onset among cases notified to RPH was 28 September.

#### **National update from the Ministry of Health**

From 1 September until 15 October there have been 186 reported cases of *Y. pseudotuberculosis*. Cases have mainly been notified from the Auckland, Canterbury, Wellington, Waikato, Bay of Plenty/Lakes, and Southern regions. Of these cases, 58 have required hospital assessment or treatment. Some patients have undergone surgery for suspected appendicitis. This is the biggest outbreak of *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* to date in New Zealand.

*Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* typically causes abdominal pain and/or diarrhoea. Fever and vomiting, usually in children, and post-infection sequelae of reactive arthritis and erythema nodosum may also occur.

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Epidemiological investigations into this outbreak have indicated a foodborne source and have highlighted lettuce and carrots as products for further investigation. MPI is leading the further investigations and information is available on the MPI website (see Further Information, below)

### **Request for assistance from clinical colleagues**

Regional Public Health has retained investigation of yersiniosis cases as a high priority to support the national outbreak investigation. **We are requesting your assistance** to enable the public health interview of ill people to occur as soon as possible after yersiniosis is identified from laboratory testing. We would be grateful if you could prioritise advising ill people of their positive yersiniosis result and for the person to expect a telephone call from Public Health. RPH staff will do a telephone interview that day to identify where they have been, where and what they have eaten and other possible risk factors during their incubation period.

### **Returning to work, school and child care centres**

Food handlers, staff of health care or early child care centres, children <5years who attend early childcare must not return until they have been free of symptoms for at least 48 hours. Anyone else can go back to work as long as they do not have symptoms

### **Additional information for adult blood donors following Yersiniosis**

Please remind people recovering from Yersiniosis not to donate blood for 3 months after recovering due to the concern of asymptomatic bacteremia leading to infection in collected blood. Yersinia organisms can continue to multiply slowly at refrigerator temperatures. In addition contacts of people with yersiniosis shouldn't donate blood for 4 weeks from last contact.

### **Further information:**

- The report on the case control study undertaken by the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) as part of the investigation has been released by MPI: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food/food-safety/yersinia-pseudotuberculosis>
- The latest MPI press release: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-resources/news.aspx>
- Yersinia information for the public: <http://www.health.govt.nz/yersinia>
- Information on minimising the risks of foodborne infections can be found at: <http://www.foodsmart.govt.nz/food-safety/foodborne-illnesses/>

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