

Townsville Public Health Unit
Phone 44336900
13 November 2023

Dear Doctor

**Public Health alerts: APSGN, measles, pertussis
Shortage of Bicillin LA®**

There have been several recent cases of **acute post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis (APSGN) in North Queensland**, mainly in Indigenous communities. APSGN can occur in outbreaks following circulation of 'nephritogenic' strains in Group A strep skin and throat infections.

APSGN has recently become a **Notifiable Condition** on suspected diagnosis. This means **doctors** must tell Public Health without relying on lab notification processes.

Most APSGN cases are between one and 16 years of age. Look for at least two of:

- Facial and / or peripheral oedema
- Microscopic or macroscopic haematuria
- Hypertension, according to age / sex / height percentiles

Take bacterial swabs of the throat and any skin sores. Work-up includes urgent **Paediatric referral** with GAS serology and complement levels.

There is a national **shortage of long-acting Benzathine Benzylpenicillin**. Most stock is reserved for RHD patients and infectious syphilis, making control of APSGN clusters and GAS skin infections difficult. Information about Bicillin alternatives is at:

<https://bit.ly/3FZjMGp> or contact QLD Antimicrobial Stewardship Hotline on 1300 753 229.

There have been recent North Queensland notifications of:

- **Measles** (with extensive community exposures in Cairns during the infectious period)
- **Pertussis** (expected to be a national surge in cases)

Make sure all your patients have at least two recorded doses of a **measles vaccine** and catch-up infants and older persons who are behind with their **primary pertussis course or boosters**.

Please notify your local public health unit of any suspected cases.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Steven Donohue
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