

13 March 2024

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Preparing for Winter Wellness

As we prepare for the winter months, I am reaching out to encourage you to review vaccination history for those presenting for a flu vaccine, so that other immunisations can be offered at the same time.

Last year we collectively administered 1.26 million doses of flu vaccine from April to September, an outstanding achievement. We are aware for many New Zealanders this may be the only time they visit a healthcare professional during the year. Please use this opportunity to offer other immunisations they may have missed. In particular, with the continued threat of a measles outbreak, please check that those born after January 1969 have two documented doses of MMR.

For the upcoming influenza season, I encourage everyone to focus on the following goals and objectives as a priority, alongside the [Pharmac funded eligibility criteria](#). This criteria includes those with serious mental health conditions / accessing secondary or tertiary mental health and addiction services, as well as children 4 years of age and under who have been hospitalised for a respiratory illness or have a history of a significant respiratory illness.

2024 Influenza Goals and Objectives

Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora (HNZ) is aiming to achieve the following goals through the 2024 influenza vaccination campaign:

1. 75% of people aged 65 years and over vaccinated against influenza in 2024
2. 80% of HNZ employed workers vaccinated against influenza in 2024
3. More non-HNZ health and disability workers vaccinated against influenza in 2024 than in 2023

In addition, our objectives for the 2024 campaign are to offer the influenza vaccine to

- all children aged between six months and four years upon hospital discharge following a respiratory illness
- all pregnant people
- any other eligible people on discharge from hospital.

Immunisations during pregnancy

Pregnancy wellbeing also remains a key focus. Please take the opportunity to check pregnant people in your care are up to date with COVID-19, Boostrix (Tdap), and have been offered the new season's influenza vaccine.

The Boostrix vaccine plays a crucial role in providing newborns with pertussis protection until they can start and complete their own immunisations. Evidence shows that pēpi are more likely to receive their six-week immunisations on-time if māmā have received their pregnancy vaccines. The conversations you have during pregnancy and encouraging enrolment in primary care, no doubt plays an important role in supporting on-time immunisation for our youngest and most vulnerable New Zealanders.

Enabling more immunisations through Pharmacies

In August 2023 community pharmacies were enabled to offer a wider range of adult immunisations (HPV, meningococcal and shingles, alongside Tdap, MMR) and like many other providers are now able to offer these at the same time as the flu vaccine.

I urge those pharmacies who have not yet added these vaccines to their portfolios to reach out for support in onboarding so that more vaccines can be offered to eligible consumers during the influenza season. You can find contact details for the the immunisation coordinator or pharmacy portfolio manager for your district in the attached FAQ document. Please get in touch if you have questions or need any help – HNZ staff are here to support the important work you do in our community.

Influenza Programme Preparation

As you prepare to implement the flu programme for your clinics, I ask that you review your service's recall processes and opportunistic vaccination plans and ensure these are set up to offer a whānau centred approach.

The following evaluation summary and learnings documents are well worth reading to help with your planning and review.

- [More Than Just a Jab: Evaluation of the Māori Influenza Vaccination Programme as part of the COVID-19 Māori Health Response | Ministry of Health NZ](#)
- [MIVP A3 \(health.govt.nz\)](https://www.health.govt.nz)

Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure our communities and whānau are kept protected.

Ngā mihi,



Dr Nick Chamberlain
National Director
National Public Health Service