



Facsimile Cover Sheet

Wharangi Nama Waea

Date/Te Ra: 16 May 2014

To/Kia: : General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, After-hours Centers and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa region	From/Na: Regional Public Health
Name of Agency/Wahi Mahi:	Fax Number/Nama Waea:

Public Health Alert

WHO - International Concern Regarding the Spread of Wild Poliovirus

I would be grateful if you could distribute the following information from the Ministry of Health 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.

Kind regards,

Dr Annette Nesdale

Medical Officer of Health

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 kua e mau. Me whakamohiotia atu ki to Tari, me te mea nana I tono mai. E Tika Hoki.

Public Health Alert

16 May 2014



WHO Public Health Emergency of International Concern - Wild Poliovirus

The WHO Director General has declared the international spread of wild poliovirus in 2014 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). This decision was based on outcomes of an Emergency Committee convened under the International Health Regulations. The WHO statement is available here <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/polio-20140505/en/>

The WHO has issued temporary recommendations under the International Health Regulations for states that are currently exporting wild polioviruses and for states that are infected but not currently exporting wild polio viruses. These recommendations include declaring the interruption of poliovirus transmission as a national public health emergency and encouraging immunisation prior to international travel. The recommendations will be reassessed in three months.

States that are currently exporting wild poliovirus: Pakistan, Cameroon and the Syrian Arab Republic
States with wild poliovirus but not currently exporting: Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Israel, Somalia and Nigeria

The last case of wild poliovirus in New Zealand was in 1977, and the WHO Western Pacific Region has been declared polio-free since 2000. No cases of vaccine associated paralytic polio (VAPP) have occurred in New Zealand since the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) was introduced in 2002.

In New Zealand, in the 12 month period to the end of March 2014, 93% of children were fully immunised (including three doses of inactivated polio vaccine [IPV]) by one year of age). Vaccine coverage at one year of age has been over 85% since 2009, hence if poliovirus were introduced into New Zealand it is unlikely to spread significantly among young children but it could among other age groups.

As part of the WHO initiative to eradicate polio, New Zealand has a programme of surveillance and investigation of all cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) in children under the age of 15 years. **All cases of AFP should be notified as suspected polio to the local Medical Officer of Health and the New Zealand Paediatric Surveillance Unit (NZPSU).**

An updated Polio Response Plan which sets out the response in New Zealand to a case of imported wild poliovirus will be available on the Ministry website soon.

The Communicable Disease Control Manual chapter is available here:

<http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/cd-manual-poliomyelitis-may2012.pdf>

Advice to travellers from New Zealand concerning polio is available on the MFAT Safetravel website at: <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/news/polio>. **This advice encourages travellers, to affected countries, to ensure they are fully vaccinated against polio.** Information for the public is also available on the Ministry of Health website at: <http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/polio-poliomyelitis>

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