

19 June/Pipiri 2024

**To:** Wairarapa Schools and Early Childhood providers  
**From:** Dr Craig Thornley, Medical Officer of Health

*Please distribute the following information to staff, parents and caregivers in your school community*

## Important Health Notice – Whooping Cough (Pertussis) in Wairarapa

There has been a significant increase in whooping cough in Wairarapa over recent weeks, affecting babies, children and adults.

Whooping cough is a serious infection that spreads easily between people. It causes breathing difficulties and severe coughing fits. If not treated early it can be life threatening for those most vulnerable, such as pēpi and people with low immunity.

**Immunisation provides the best protection against Whooping Cough.** The information sheet accompanying this notice has important information to help keep you and your whānau safe. It also explains whooping cough symptoms and what to do if you or someone in your whānau becomes unwell.

### Protect yourself, your whānau, and your community. Immunise.

- Check that your pēpi/tamariki/children are up-to-date with their whooping cough immunisations. Vaccine is given at **six weeks, three months and five months** of age, with boosters at age **4 years** and **11 years**.
- Adults have booster vaccination against whooping cough at **age 45** and **age 65**.
- **Pregnant people / hapū māmā are strongly recommended to have a free whooping cough vaccine.** This is available and free from 13 weeks of pregnancy, and is best given between **16 and 26 weeks**. The vaccine helps to protect the newborn baby for their first 6 weeks until they can be vaccinated themselves.
- Early childhood workers and health professionals who have contact with babies, pregnant women and people with low immunity are recommended to have a whooping cough booster vaccine every 10 years.

### Free drop-in clinics

In collaboration with Whaiora, Health New Zealand is currently holding **FREE Winter Wellness** drop-in clinics in Masterton.

- No appointment or enrolment necessary
- Get up-to-date with your vaccinations at these clinics free-of-charge!
- If you are not sure of your vaccination status, come on down and we will check

More information is available online at [www.rph.org.nz/news-and-events/events](http://www.rph.org.nz/news-and-events/events) or on the flyer accompanying this notice.

### Contact

For more information, please contact our public health nurses in the Communicable Disease Team on (04) 570 9002.

### Useful links for more information

- Whooping Cough here: <https://www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/illness-and-disease/whooping-cough-pertussis/>
- For all you need to know about immunisations, go to: [www.info.health.nz/immunisations](http://www.info.health.nz/immunisations)  
Vaccines listed on the [National Immunisation Schedule](#) are free.