

SCHOOL HEALTH E-NEWSLETTER

Te Kura Hauora Rorohiko Panui

Term 2 2017

Regional Public Health's School Health & Immunisation Group
Hutt Valley, Wellington and Porirua region. Please forward to all school staff.



Our aim is to support students with their health and improve their learning outcomes.
We will inform you of 'hot health topics' and how to recognise evidence versus sensationalism!

> Influenza

As the winter term approaches it is time to start thinking about winter illnesses and how they can affect us all. Influenza, commonly called the flu, can be a serious illness that is sometimes fatal. Infection with the influenza virus may lead to a stay in hospital for any age group, but particularly for the elderly or people who have an ongoing medical condition. Influenza can make an existing medical condition, such as asthma or diabetes, a lot worse.

Your best protection against the influenza virus is to get immunised. Protect yourself and the people around you by getting your annual influenza immunisation, just like a million other kiwis do each year.

Immunisation is FREE for many people, including pregnant women and the elderly. Ask your doctor or nurse today about the influenza immunisation. The influenza immunisation may also be available at your local pharmacy.



For more information on influenza and links to other useful websites click [HERE](#).

> Sneeze safe

During the winter term the number of coughs and colds increase, therefore so does the absenteeism for both staff and children.

[HERE](#) is some useful information on how to teach nose blowing to your junior syndicates. If children do not know how to blow their nose properly this can impact on their hearing and therefore their learning.



> Gender identity

There seems to be an increase in the number of children who question their gender. As a school, you may be unsure on how to work with and support a child who is struggling with gender identity. You can contact InsideOut through their [WEBSITE](#) - they are happy to come and talk to school staff about this topic.



> Whooping cough

Whooping cough is a bacterial infection which affects the respiratory system. It is very contagious and spreads from person to person when someone with the illness coughs or sneezes, spraying droplets of fluid from their nose or throat.

Whooping cough starts out like a cold with a dry cough, sneezing, runny nose and possibly a slight fever. After one to two weeks the coughing gets worse and a person has coughing fits which often end in vomiting or difficulty breathing.

Babies and small children who are not yet immunised or who are only partially immunised, are most at risk. The best protection against whooping cough is immunisation. If there is a new baby in the house it can be a good idea for the people who have regular contact with the baby to make sure they are up to date with the whooping cough immunisation. This can provide a 'cocoon' effect for the new baby.

Immunisation is given at 6 weeks of age, 3 months, 5 months and a booster vaccine at 4 and 11 years of age.



Immunisation to protect against whooping cough is also recommended and FREE for pregnant women between weeks 28-38 of pregnancy.

If you think a child in your class may have whooping cough, encourage parents to keep their child at home and see their doctor or nurse as soon as possible. You can also call **Healthline on 0800 611 116** for free advice from a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

> Healthy eating

The Heart Foundation has excellent posters you can put up around your school to reinforce healthy eating messages. Posters are available by visiting their [WEBSITE](#).

The Heart Foundation also offer free programmes for schools. Have a look at the programmes [HERE](#), and see if you think your school would benefit.

> Vision and Hearing Technicians (VHTs)

There has been a change in the way VHTs will be responding to requests from schools to screen children for vision and hearing. If you would like a child screened for vision and/or hearing concerns, please ensure you contact the child's parent/caregiver to gain consent. Ask your school VHT if you would like a copy of this consent form.

We have also provided schools with a non-consent pamphlet as part of the enrolment pack for new children starting school. If you need more forms, let your school VHT know. It is important that parents receive this information as it highlights the screening programme, and allows parents to 'opt off' should they wish.

If you have any further queries about this contact Rocky Ali Team Leader and Portfolio Lead for Vision and Hearing Technicians at Rukhsana.Ali@huttvalleydhb.org.nz



We encourage you to continue sharing this newsletter with as many people at your school as possible.