

Pitopito kōrero

Quarterly newsletter from Regional Public Health - Wairarapa
April 2016

Issue 14

Public health: Working with you in our community



Pre-Shears



The health teams from Whaiora, RPH, Compass Health and the Heart Foundation.



Clare competing in the Whaiora lunchtime round!

Regional Public Health Wairarapa recently supported the annual Pre-Shears wool handling event, alongside the Heart Foundation, Compass Health and Whaiora. Preceding the annual Golden Shears event, Pre-Shears focuses on how the wool is processed once shorn. It takes place at Riverside farm, just north of Masterton. This event is organized locally by the Pre-Shears committee of women and competitors participate from across the region, Aotearoa and the world.

The Pre-Shears is an Auahi Kore/Smokefree event and is supported by the Wairarapa Smokefree Network. For the last two years Pre-Shears has taken a stance, and will continue to do so, in making a designated area around Riverside woolshed a smokefree zone, citing that competitive sport and tobacco do not mix.

Gardeners – Take care with composts and potting mixes

Legionellosis or Legionnaires' disease is caused by common Legionella bacteria, which live in the environment.

Compost, potting mix and garden soils often contain the bacteria. Infection can occur when dust or small water droplets are inhaled from the compost and potting mix.

The disease can be very serious especially in people who already have poor immune systems. Often people with legionellosis are hospitalised. Most people recover fully but sometimes there are complications which affect the intestinal system, nervous system and kidneys.

Gardeners can take simple steps when using compost and potting mixes, to reduce the risk of Legionnaires' disease.

For example:

- Open potting mix and compost bags carefully with scissors, rather than ripping the bag open.
- Always dampen the potting mix or compost before use.
- Supervise children if you are undertaking gardening activities as a part of your curriculum.
- Wear a disposable face mask and gloves when working with potting mix and/or compost, and avoid putting your hands near your face. You can often pick up a pack from the hardware store when purchasing potting mix.
- Thoroughly wash hands after working with soil, potting mix or compost.
- Water the garden and potted plants using a gentle spray, if gardening in glasshouses ensure they are well ventilated.
- Ensure your hot water cylinder is set to at least 60°C.

Sugar sweetened drinks

Sugar sweetened drinks and their impact on obesity, diabetes and oral health have been widely discussed via the media and academics. Sugar sweetened drinks include soft drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, flavoured milk and other beverages that contain added sweeteners.

New Zealand and Pacific Island countries are in the midst of an obesity epidemic. New Zealanders are the third most overweight and obese population in the OECD and ranks 12th globally. "More than a third of all New Zealanders over the age of 15 are overweight, and just over a quarter (27%) are obese. One in 5 children aged between 2 -14 years are overweight and 1 in 12 are obese."¹ This can have a big impact on health, with an increased risk for diabetes. Because sugary drinks often contain caffeine, their consumption has also been linked to other health issues such as headaches, anxiety and loss of sleep.

Oral health is affected by a diet high in sugar. Tooth decay occurs when bacteria present in plaque breaks down the sugar, producing acid. The acid dissolves the enamel layer of teeth, causing decay. Some decay becomes so advanced that dental extraction is the only option.

So what can you do to stem the tide of the consumption of these sugary drinks?

There are many options...

You could think about establishing a workplace policy regarding healthy drink options, or consider becoming a water-only school.

Regional Public Health has resources available to spread the word about the benefits of healthy beverages. Give us a call on (06) 377 9111.

Healthy skin training

Healthy skin training for health, support workers and teachers:

When: Wednesday 25th May

Time: 9 - 1pm

Venue: Waiata House

This half day training session is designed to give participants an overview of skin conditions and treatment options.

New Zealand has one of the highest rates for childhood skin infections in the western world. This Massey University course, facilitated by Thomas Gorte, is designed to facilitate the roll out of the 'Protocols for the Management of Children with Skin Infections and Infestations' for those working with children in the community and in the primary health sector.

To register, email kathryn.tomlinson@compasshealth.org.nz



Interesting facts:

- Soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit juice and energy drinks can contain 5-7 teaspoons of sugar per 250ml glass.
- If you drink a 600ml bottle of soft drink every day you will drink 480 teaspoons of sugar a month. That's 2kg of sugar!
- You could save \$60 per month if you switch your daily can of soft drink for tap water.
- Sugary drinks are also a main source of sugar for New Zealand adults, and contribute to weight gain and health problems. Encouraging staff to choose zero sugar and low-sugar drinks is an easy way to improve the health of your staff and reduce absenteeism due to illness.

For more information and resources:

Health Promotion Agency - www.hpa.org.nz/npa-resources

Heart Foundation - www.heartfoundation.org.nz/programmes-resources

¹ Beaglehole, R. (2014) Sugar sweetened beverages, obesity, diabetes and oral health: a preventable crisis. *Pacific Health Dialog*: 20 (1), 39-42.

Baby sleep

Sleep tips



I need a bedtime routine:

- Routine tells me it's sleep time.

Help me to feel sleepy by....

- Having screen free time.
- Having quiet play before bed.
- Having a bath.
- Reading me a story.
- A quiet, dark bedroom.
- A baby massage.

Safety



If I fall asleep in my car seat, take me out when home and put me somewhere safe. My head could fall forward and make it hard for me to breathe.

Don't sleep with me if you smoke, are very tired, take sleeping pills, or have had alcohol or drugs – you could roll on top of me.

Keep my sleep area clear of toys and pillows – make it easy for me to breathe.

And please, lie me on my back for sleep.

How much sleep?



Guidelines – varies with each baby:

- 1-4 wks old: 15-16 hrs a day in 2-4hr lengths.
- 1-4 mths old: 14-15hrs a day.
- 4-12 mths old: 14-15 hrs a day is ideal but may have only 12 hrs.
- 1-3 years: 12-14 hrs a day is ideal but may have only 10 hrs.
- 3-6 years old: 10-12 hrs a day. Usually in bed between 7 & 9pm and wake around 6 – 8am.

www.webmd.com/parenting/guide/sleep-children

Education and health – The link

Regional Public Health recently submitted on the review of the Education Act 1989. This is an excerpt from our submission.

Health is a prerequisite to achieving success in all areas of our lives; health begins where we live, learn, work and play.¹ There is an especially close and intertwined relationship between health and education; health and wellbeing are a resource for education. There are many individual health priorities that impact a child's learning and inhibit a child from reaching their potential. Education is also critical to health and wellbeing, by providing students with tools for a 'good life', which includes self-care, self-knowledge, and the motivation they will be empowered to learn how to stay well.

At Regional Public Health (RPH) we aspire to keep our population well and prevent ill health before it happens. Much of our work is centered around, and has implications for, educational settings. Our people working in these learning settings include: our public health advisors, public health nurses, immunisation nurses, health protection officers, communicable disease nurses and vision and hearing technicians.

Educational settings are a primary source of opportunity for health and wellbeing alongside educational success. Together with the education sector, RPH wants to see all children "grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued

contribution to society."² We work together to help primary schools and early childhood settings and their communities to embed health and wellbeing into the child's journey through education.

Prioritising health and wellbeing in our educational settings is a fundamental start to making a positive change towards educational success. Health and wellbeing can raise the achievement of learners and educational success can support an equitable increase in health and wellbeing.

If you would like to discuss how we can help and support your early childhood centre or primary school build a healthy environment and create a healthy culture, feel free to contact your local Public Health Nurse (Rosemary, Jenny, Danica or Judi) or Public Health Advisor for a chat.

For your local Primary School Public Health Advisor contact Amanda at amanda.taylor@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz

For your local Early Childhood Public Health Advisor contact Clare at clare.mclennan-kissel@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz

¹ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2010). Vulnerable Populations Portfolio. Retrieved on 30 March 2016 from: <http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/reports/2010/rwjf63023>

² Ministry of Education. (1996). Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum. Wellington: Learning Media Limited.

Influenza

Don't get it, don't give it – get immunised to protect against influenza

Influenza continues to be a major threat to public health worldwide because of its ability to spread rapidly through populations. Although people with underlying health conditions are most at risk from influenza associated complications, previously healthy people can still become seriously ill and even die. Influenza can infect up to 1 in 5 of us each year.

Influenza (or 'the flu') is caused by three types of influenza virus – A, B and C – that infect the respiratory system. It is contagious and is spread by coughing, sneezing and direct contact with an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces.

Anyone over the age of six months can be immunised against influenza. It is very important for children and adults who have underlying health conditions that may make them more susceptible to becoming sick, to be immunised. Immunisation is free for people with certain health conditions. **This includes pregnant women in any trimester of pregnancy.**

Everyone benefits from having the immunisation, not just those at higher risk. Being immunised against the flu helps to reduce the risk to our most vulnerable populations within our communities, provides protection for yourself, your family and your friends. If you do not have one of the eligible conditions, the immunisation is available at a small cost.

Encourage your staff to immunise against influenza and lessen the chance of it being spread around the workplace, which could lead to significant staff shortages. By taking advantage of this year's seasonal influenza vaccine you can reduce absenteeism and increase productivity in your workplace this winter. There's plenty of evidence that it saves money in the long run.

Influenza can spread quickly in schools, early childhood and community settings. Now is a good time to review your sickness policy. Influenza rates are generally highest in children, and healthy children are the major cause of the spread of influenza virus in the community.

For further information contact your local medical centre, visit www.fightflu.co.nz or www.immune.org.nz or phone **0800 IMMUNE** (0800 466 863).

Posters and other resources are available online at www.rph.org.nz

Influenza	A cold
Sudden onset of illness	Mild illness
Moderate to severe illness	
Fever (usually high)	Mild fever
Headache (may be severe)	Mild headache (congested sinuses)
Dry cough, may become moist	Sometimes a cough
Muscle aches	Muscle aches are uncommon
Shivering	A runny nose
Bed rest necessary	
Can suffer severe complications (e.g. pneumonia)	

Your school Public Health Nurse and Public Health Advisors are also well resourced to help assist you with information, education and reviewing and assisting you to update your sickness policy.

**"It takes a village to raise a child.
It takes a community to build a village."**

Igbo and Yoruba (Nigeria) Proverb

Snippets

World Smokefree Day – May 31 2016

If your school/classroom would like to participate in this day, please email linda.spence@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz for **FREE RESOURCES**



Breast Friends breastfeeding support café

- **Every Wednesday** in Masterton in the Wesley Room, opposite Countdown, entrance off Worksop Road, 10am-12pm.
- The **first Thursday** of every month in Featherston at the Plunket Rooms, 15 Wallace Street, 10am-12pm.

See www.facebook.com/breastfeedingwairarapa for more details.

Regional Public Health – Wairarapa works to keep the community healthy by providing services that promote good health practices and prevent disease.

We go where you work, learn, live and play to help you stay healthy; health begins before you need medical care. Our vision is health and well-being for the members of our community most at risk.

The team is available for advice and practical help. If you would like a public health nurse or advisor to come to see you or for more information about public health services in the Wairarapa call (06) 377 9111 or visit www.rph.org.nz