

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE USE



5 August 2010

Increase in seasonal influenza causing delays in non-emergency treatment at Tauranga Hospital

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board has received a sudden increase in the number of people including children coming to Tauranga Hospital with influenza symptoms. This sudden increase is causing delays for patients requiring non-emergency treatment.

Chief Operating Officer Phillip Balmer said the DHB had planned for an increase in the incidence of seasonal influenza and has now implemented plans for dealing with it.

“As per our plan we have set up a special influenza assessment unit in ED and a separate influenza area in the ED waiting room”.

Mr Balmer said these actions are to separate influenza patients from other ED patients.

He said anyone who thinks they may have influenza, but does not consider themselves to be in need of emergency care, should call the free Healthline 0800 611 116 for health advice, or their GP rather than coming to the hospital.

Mr Balmer said there are some simple measures people can take to help protect themselves from seasonal influenza. These include:

- Getting the seasonal influenza vaccine which is available from GPs and is free for many high risk groups including pregnant women in whom the vaccine is safe and recommended.
- Basic hygiene influenza prevention measures like regular hand washing; staying home if you are sick; covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing.

Contact

Diana Marriott

Communications Manager

Phone: 021 227 0452; Email: diana.marriott@bopdhb.govt.nz