

*Bay of Plenty District Health Board is committed to improving and protecting the health of the communities in the Bay of Plenty district.*

## **Position Statement – Immunisation**

Immunisation is a highly effective means of preventing a number of infectious diseases and some cancers.

Toi Te Ora Public Health recommends that all children and adults are immunised according to the National Immunisation Schedule.

Immunisation is a highly effective way to reduce the transmission of a number of infectious diseases, as well as prevent some cancers, at both individual and population levels.

Inequities in immunisation rates between population groups contribute to disparities in health outcomes. Universal programmes like immunisation reduce health inequities.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the inclusion of vaccinations in national immunisation schedules based on their efficacy and safety.<sup>1</sup>

The New Zealand National Immunisation Schedule<sup>2</sup> sets out the publicly funded vaccines and the ages at which vaccines are to be administered. The Schedule is supplemented by a selection of vaccines which may be administered in certain clinical situations. The data on safety, effectiveness, and clinical contraindications for each of the approved vaccines is detailed in the Ministry of Health *Immunisation Handbook 2017*.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Bay of Plenty District Health Board advocates and supports:**

- Promoting the immunisation of children and adults according to the National Immunisation Schedule<sup>2</sup> to achieve the high coverage rates required to prevent outbreaks, eradicate disease, and provide personal protection.
- Achieving immunisation coverage rates for Maori, Pacific and other population groups at the same or better coverage rate as for the New Zealand European population.
- Immunisation of susceptible close contacts in outbreak control of communicable infectious diseases.
- Reducing the impact of communicable diseases in vulnerable age groups, such as vaccination against measles and mumps among 12 to 29 year olds.
- The recommendation that healthcare workers receive appropriate immunisations, for example, against influenza, measles, and pertussis, not only for their own protection, but also to reduce the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases to vulnerable patients including the unborn children of pregnant women.<sup>3</sup>
- The important and influential role of health professionals in providing accurate and evidence-based information, proactively advocating for the benefits of vaccination and addressing misinformation.



Immunisation rates in New Zealand have significantly improved in the past few years. However, there remain areas and groups where the immunisation rates are below recommended levels (or targets). Improving and maintaining immunisation rates continues to be a public health priority.

## References and further information

1. World Health Organization. *Vaccine Position Statements*. Geneva. <http://www.who.int/immunization/documents/positionpapers/en/index.html>
2. PHARMAC. NZ Pharmaceutical Schedule: National Immunisation Schedule. Wellington: PHARMAC, 2017. <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/2017/07/01/Schedule.pdf>  
<http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/patients/PharmaceuticalSchedule/Schedule?code=A45>  
<http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/patients/PharmaceuticalSchedule/Schedule?code=A452501>
3. New Zealand Ministry of Health. *Immunisation Handbook 2017*. Wellington: Ministry of Health, 2017.  
<http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/immunisation-handbook-2017-may17-v2.pdf>
4. The Immunisation Advisory Centre: [www.immune.org.nz](http://www.immune.org.nz)
5. Ministry of Health: [www.moh.govt.nz/immunisation](http://www.moh.govt.nz/immunisation)
6. Toi Te Ora Public Health. *Public Health Perspectives – Immunisation*, 2017. (Add link)
7. New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine. *Immunisation Policy Statement*, 2017  
[https://www.nzcphm.org.nz/media/31220/2017\\_11\\_15\\_nzcphm\\_immunisation\\_policy\\_statement\\_reviewed\\_2017\\_.pdf](https://www.nzcphm.org.nz/media/31220/2017_11_15_nzcphm_immunisation_policy_statement_reviewed_2017_.pdf)

<b>Adopted by:</b> the Bay of Plenty District Health Board at its 19 September 2018 Board Meeting.
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