

April/Āperira 2021

## Public Health Bulletin

### COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 immunisation for group 1 (border workers and MIQ workers and the people they live with) and group 2 (high-risk frontline healthcare workers and people living in high risk places) is now well underway. As of April 27, 232,588 doses of the vaccine have been administered nationwide and 15,732 doses have been given in the Waikato. Earlier this month the first Waikato COVID-19 vaccination centres outside of Hamilton were opened, marking the expansion of our local immunisation programme throughout the wider Waikato rohe.

#### About the Pfizer vaccine

In New Zealand we are currently vaccinating using the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. At this stage, the Pfizer vaccine is approved for people aged 16 years or older. Two doses of the Pfizer vaccine are required, at least 21 days apart to provide the best protection. Research has shown that immunity following natural infection remains for at least eight months and we have every expectation that vaccine immunity will be even longer.

The Pfizer vaccine contains nucleoside modified messenger RNA (mRNA) encoding the spike (S) glycoprotein of SARS-CoV-2. The Pfizer vaccine also contains fats, salts and sugar to support transportation into the body and for vaccine stability. It does not contain any live virus, or dead or deactivated virus.

The vaccine works by triggering your immune system to produce antibodies and blood cells that work against the COVID-19 virus should you be exposed in the future.

The clinical trials performed on the Pfizer vaccine show it reaches 95% efficacy against confirmed COVID-19, seven days after receiving two doses. This means that for every 20 people vaccinated, 19 will develop immunity that prevents them from becoming unwell when exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

The Pfizer vaccine has also demonstrated 94% effectiveness against symptomatic COVID-19 in a real world study from [Israel](#).

See more on what's been happening to daily cases of COVID-19 internationally [here](#).

#### Vaccine safety

The safety profile of the Pfizer vaccine is excellent. We know this because it has gone through months of clinical testing with more than 40,000 people. Since then, millions of people around the world of all different ages, gender and ethnicities have received the vaccine. Some side effects should be expected, as your body builds immunity against COVID-19,

especially after the second dose. Pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache and muscle and joint pain and fever are common.

We are monitoring the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine and encourage you to report any adverse reactions to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring ([CARM](#)).

#### When can people expect their COVID-19 vaccine?

There is an online tool available on [The Unite Against COVID-19](#) website which can give people an idea about when they will get their COVID-19 vaccine. The tool asks people a series of questions about their health, location, occupation and life situation and then tells them which of the four main vaccination groups they fall in to. Those currently eligible for vaccination are being contacted directly.

More information on COVID-19 vaccine delivery in the Waikato can be found on the DHB [website](#).

#### COVID-19 vaccine resources

There are great video resources on how the vaccine works available from the [Immunisation Advisory Centre \(IMAC\)](#).

Ministry of Health information on [vaccine side effects](#) and reactions is available on their webpage and safety reports are being produced by [Medsafe](#).

Information sheets on COVID-19 vaccine and the rollout programme are available in multiple languages and can be found at [health.govt.nz](#).

Or stay up to date by downloading the Ministry of Health [Āwhina](#) app.

### Rheumatic Fever

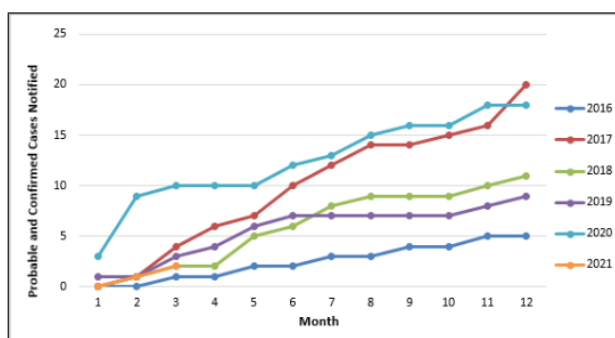
In 2020, Waikato had 18 new cases of acute Rheumatic Fever, a notable increase when compared to the previous two years. Just a reminder that even a mild sore throat can cause Rheumatic Fever, so treat all sore throats in high risk children with urgency.

High risk includes anyone with a personal, family/whānau or household history of Rheumatic Fever or with two or more of the following criteria:

1. Māori or Pacific
2. Aged 3-35 years with emphasis on tamariki and rangatahi aged between 4 and 19 years
3. Living in crowded or lower socioeconomic circumstances

An algorithm for managing sore throat in these groups can be found in health pathways or at [heartfoundation.org.nz](http://heartfoundation.org.nz).

### Rheumatic Fever – initial attack by month. Waikato. (Jan 2016-March 2021)



### Managing Rheumatic Fever

When a person is diagnosed with Rheumatic Fever, or when a person joins a new Medical Centre in the Waikato region our Clinical Nurse Specialist, Kelly Reddington, will be in touch to offer support. Kelly can support with guidance on some of the important things to consider when caring for an individual with Rheumatic Fever. These include:

1. Penicillin prophylaxis – which is administered every 21-28 days and requires annual authorisation by the person's GP
2. Specialist review - Medium/high risk cases are generally seen every six months to two years until discharge
3. Dental care- Those patients with cardiac involvement require six monthly dental review and appropriate antibiotic prophylaxis to prevent infective endocarditis. See the [Heart Foundation website](http://heartfoundation.org.nz)
4. Consideration of appropriate contraception
5. Recurrence - when a patient who has a history of Rheumatic Fever has sore, swollen joints, it's very important to treat them as having a recurrence of Rheumatic Fever, until proven otherwise.
6. Flu vaccination - It is recommended that all patients with Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) receive the annual flu vaccination. This is funded see section 11.5 of the [immunisation handbook](#).

If in doubt Kelly is happy to help and can be contacted by calling the Public Health Unit on 07 838 2569 or by emailing [kelly.reddington@waikatodhb.health.nz](mailto:kelly.reddington@waikatodhb.health.nz)

### Smokefree Action Plan consultation

The Government has developed an [action plan](#) to accelerate progress towards achieving the goal of

**Smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand** by 2025. The action plan outlines five key areas for focus including:

- Strengthening the tobacco control system
- Making smoked tobacco products less available
- Making smoked tobacco products less addictive and less appealing
- Making tobacco products less affordable
- Enhancing existing initiatives

Under each focus area there are a number of proposed actions such as reducing the number of retailers who can sell smoked tobacco, reducing nicotine in smoked tobacco products to very low levels, licensing all retailers of tobacco and vaping products and creating a Smokefree generation policy. These proposed actions are now open for public consultation. Your feedback is important and will help shape how we reduce smoking prevalence and tobacco availability to minimal levels, and make Aotearoa New Zealand smokefree by 2025.

Have your say by providing feedback on the proposed actions by May 31 2021.

[Join the online consultation here>](#)

### Drive Smokefree for Tamariki

From November 28 it will be illegal to smoke or vape in a vehicle that has children under the age of 18-years old in it (whether the vehicle is moving or not). There has been very high public support for this law change, with 95% of New Zealanders agreeing that cars carrying children should be Smokefree. Younger children are vulnerable to the effects of second-hand smoke which accumulates in vehicles even when the windows are open and reaches much higher levels than other settings. Children have little or no ability to influence smokers to avoid the situation.

The **Drive Smokefree For Tamariki** campaign was launched on Monday 26 April by Te Hiringa Hauora/Health Promotion Agency. The campaign is designed to deliver several key messages in the lead up to this legislation change including:

1. Go Smokefree in your car
2. Swap your smokes for chewing gum while in the car
3. Do it for your kids, do it for your whānau
4. It's about tamariki. Our tāonga. Protecting future generations
5. Put the smokes out of sight while tamariki are in the car

The campaign runs until December 2021. You can watch the [Drive Smokefree for Tamariki video here](#)

Additional resources are available for community organisations and others to promote the campaign from [Te Hiringa Hauora/Health Promotion Agency](#)

## Notifiable diseases – March 2021 compared to March 2020 (Waikato DHB)

Disease name	Waikato <sup>1</sup>				YTD		
	2020	2021	Change	2020-2021	Waikato	National	% <sup>2</sup>
Campylobacteriosis	34	35	1	▲	147	407	36
COVID-19	107	1	-106	▼	6	122	5
Cryptosporidiosis	0	4	4	▲	9	31	29
Dengue fever	1	0	-1	▼	1	1	100
Gastroenteritis - unknown cause	0	0	0	-	2	15	13
Gastroenteritis / foodborne intoxication	7	3	-4	▼	7	23	30
Giardiasis	22	13	-9	▼	32	115	28
Haemophilus influenzae type b	0	0	0	-	0	3	0
Hepatitis A	1	0	-1	▼	0	1	0
Hepatitis B	1	0	-1	▼	1	2	50
Hepatitis C	0	0	0	-	0	5	0
Hepatitis NOS	0	0	0	-	0	1	0
Invasive pneumococcal disease	6	2	-4	▼	9	33	27
Latent tuberculosis infection	0	1	1	▲	1	10	10
Lead Poisoning	1	2	1	▲	6	105	6
Legionellosis	1	1	0	-	1	23	4
Leptospirosis	0	2	2	▲	2	8	25
Listeriosis	0	0	0	-	0	4	0
Listeriosis - perinatal	0	0	0	-	1	1	100
Malaria	0	0	0	-	0	1	0
Meningococcal disease	0	0	0	-	0	3	0
Mumps	0	0	0	-	0	2	0
Pertussis	2	1	-1	▼	3	10	30
Rheumatic fever - initial attack	1	1	0	-	3	13	23
Rheumatic fever - recurrent attack	0	1	1	▲	1	2	50
Salmonellosis	3	4	1	▲	25	77	32
Shigellosis	1	0	-1	▼	0	3	0
Tuberculosis disease - new case	3	0	-3	▼	4	28	14
Tuberculosis disease - relapse or reactivation	0	0	0	-	0	1	0
VTEC/STEC infection	10	6	-4	▼	26	104	25
Yersiniosis	10	13	3	▲	25	135	19

<sup>1</sup>Number of cases. Source Waikato DHB.

<sup>2</sup>Waikato Year to Date (YTD) count as a proportion of national data.

1 case of COVID-19 in March 2021 deemed historical

**Medical Officers of Health:** Felicity Dumble – Richard Wall – Richard Vipond – Richard Hoskins – Geoff Cramp  
(COVID-19 support)

**After hours:**

**MOoH:** 021 359 650

**HPO:** 021 999 521

If there is no answer, please contact Waikato Hospital's switchboard 07 839 8899 and ask for the on-call MOoH.

**During office hours:**

**Population Health (MOoH or HPO):** (07) 838 2569

**Notifications:** 07 838 2569 ext. 22041 or 22020

**Notifications outside Hamilton:** 0800 800 977

**Fax:** 07 838 2382

**Email:** [notifiablediseases@waikatodhb.health.nz](mailto:notifiablediseases@waikatodhb.health.nz)

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