

Waikato Public Health Bulletin

Tēnā koutou katoa. We hope you enjoy this edition of the Waikato Public Health Bulletin and we welcome your feedback.

Get winter ready!

With the winter season around the corner, it is important we are getting our communities prepared and protected from getting sick with illnesses including influenza and COVID-19. An increase in COVID-19 cases was reported nationally after Easter weekend and we observed a spike in our hospital inpatient numbers testing positive. Please remind everyone to report their RAT results online through [My Covid Record](#) so that we can continue to have an accurate reflection of case numbers in our communities.

Having COVID-19 does not provide the same level of immunity as getting vaccinated. We also know that protection from the primary course of the vaccine decreases over time. It is important to keep immunity levels high, please encourage everyone to stay up to date with their vaccinations, including boosters. This will lower the chances of people getting very sick from COVID-19 and ending up in hospital.

Yearly flu vaccines are important as each year the flu is caused by different strains, which may not be included in the previous year's vaccine. Although getting the flu vaccine does not guarantee you won't catch the flu, it will provide more protection and best defence against the flu. This means people are less likely to experience complications from a flu infection.

Flu vaccinations are now available at local pharmacies and GP practices, we encourage everyone who is eligible to get both their COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination to

ensure that they are well protected ahead of winter.

The flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time. Both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be booked online through [Book My Vaccine](#). Alternatively, people can call COVID-19 Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 29 26 (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week) to book a COVID-19 vaccine. Interpreters are available upon request.

New COVID-19 booster eligibility (Pfizer BA.4/5 bivalent vaccine)

The Pfizer BA.4/5 bivalent vaccine is an updated vaccine targeting Omicron. The bivalent vaccine has replaced the existing Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for boosters and causes the immune system to create antibodies to both the original SARS-CoV-2 and Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants. Current evidence indicates the bivalent vaccine is more effective against Omicron sub-variants than earlier vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccines are free. As of 1 April 2023 (regardless of how many boosters you have had) the bivalent booster is available for people who have completed a primary vaccination course and are:

- aged 30 years and over
- at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19

It will need to be at least 6 months since the last COVID-19 vaccine or positive COVID-19 test. The bivalent booster is recommended for eligible pregnant people at any stage of pregnancy or during breastfeeding.

Flu vaccine eligibility

The 2023 flu vaccine is also now available. It is recommended that everyone over 6 months old gets an annual flu vaccine.

The Flu vaccine is free for:

- Pregnant people (any trimester)
- People aged 65 years older
- Tamariki aged 6 months to 12 years old
- Māori and Pacific peoples aged 55 to 64 years
- Anyone with underlying health conditions including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and serious asthma
- Anyone with schizophrenia, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizoaffective disorder
- Anyone currently accessing mental health and addiction services

New BCG eligibility assessment and referral form

Please send BCG referrals to the Community Referral Centre (CRC)

crc@waikatodhb.health.nz for the Public Health Nurse Service. Please view the new referral form on the last page of the bulletin.

Please answer all the questions on this form before submitting. The referrals are triaged to ensure that the baby/neonate/infant meets the criteria to have the vaccination. The appointments are allocated in order of referral dates. There is currently about a 3-4 week wait time. If you have questions around BCG vaccination please leave a message on 021 247 8964.

Vaccinations for year 7 and 8 students (Boostrix & HPV)

This is a reminder that these vaccinations are administered through the annual school based vaccination programme here in the

Waikato. To avoid duplication and confusion, the public health nurses who run this programme are requesting that GPs only recall their patients who have missed these vaccinations at school (and are now overdue for their year 7 and 8 vaccinations) once they have turned 14 years of age.

Staff news

We farewell our House Officer Dr Leah Porima as she ends her time with us at the Public Health Unit.

We warmly welcome Dr Mohammed Dragh who is coming into the House Officer role for the next 3 months. Haere mai!



Thank you

To all of our administrative kaimahi.
We appreciate you all!



It was Administrative Professionals Day on 26 April. We would like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of our administrative kaimahi at Waikato Public Health Service. Big thank you to Simon Shanley, Karolina Kaczor, Stephen Stirling, Morz Mackie and Kharma Tipene - our hardworking staff who always go above and beyond to support everyone's mahi in the office and ensuring all things run smoothly. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe!

Notifiable diseases – Trends

Notifiable diseases (Waikato District) - period to: April 2023

*Stats NZ estimated 8.69% of the population resided in Waikato in 2021

Disease name	Waikato cases per month			Cases per month over the last year (mean)		
	February	March	Trend	Waikato	National	% Waikato*
Botulism	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Brucellosis	0	0	-	0.1	0.2	50
Campylobacteriosis	56	50	▼	53.0	521.8	10
COVID-19	2,822	3,262	▲	9,881.3	131,491.7	8
Cryptosporidiosis	2	2	-	7.5	56.0	13
Decompression sickness	0	0	-	0.0	0.2	0
Dengue fever	0	0	-	0.0	2.5	0
Diphtheria	0	0	-	0.0	0.3	0
Gastroenteritis - unknown cause	1	2	▲	0.9	17.3	5
Gastroenteritis / foodborne intoxication	5	7	▲	4.8	13.5	36
Giardiasis	9	16	▲	7.6	67.7	11
Haemophilus influenzae type b	0	0	-	0.0	0.2	0
Hepatitis A	0	0	-	0.5	6.0	8
Hepatitis B	0	0	-	0.0	1.2	0
Hepatitis C	0	0	-	0.0	2.7	0
Hepatitis NOS	0	0	-	0.0	0.3	0
Hydatid disease	0	0	-	0.0	0.4	0
Invasive pneumococcal disease	5	3	▼	6.1	56.0	11
Latent tuberculosis infection	0	1	▲	0.8	7.2	11
Lead Poisoning	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Legionellosis	2	1	▼	1.2	21.3	6
Leprosy	0	0	-	0.1	0.3	33
Leptospirosis	0	7	▲	2.2	14.3	15
Listeriosis	1	0	▼	0.3	3.3	9
Listeriosis - perinatal	0	0	-	0.0	0.5	0
Malaria	0	0	-	0.2	2.3	9
Measles	0	0	-	0.0	0.1	0
Meningococcal disease	0	0	-	0.3	6.2	5
Mumps	0	0	-	0.0	0.4	0
Murine Typhus	0	0	-	0.2	0.4	50
Pertussis	1	1	-	0.4	2.5	16
Q fever	0	0	-	0.0	0.0	-
Rheumatic fever - initial attack	0	2	▲	0.8	7.3	11
Rheumatic fever - recurrent attack	0	0	-	0.2	0.7	29
Salmonellosis	12	6	▼	6.5	71.3	9
Shigellosis	0	0	-	0.3	7.4	4
Taeniasis	0	0	-	0.0	0.2	0
Tetanus	0	0	-	0.0	0.1	0
Tuberculosis disease - new case	4	4	-	2.6	23.5	11
Tuberculosis disease - relapse or reactivation	0	0	-	0.0	0.6	0
Tuberculosis infection - on preventive treatment	0	0	-	0.0	0.1	0
Typhoid fever	0	1	▲	0.5	5.3	9
VTEC/STEC infection	6	6	-	8.3	85.9	10
Yersiniosis	10	16	▲	8.8	115.3	8

Medical Officers of Health:

Dr Felicity Dumble, Dr Richard Wall, Dr Richard Vipond, and Dr Richard Hoskins

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

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Name _____
 NHI _____ DOB _____
 Address _____ dd/mm/yy

BCG eligibility assessment and referral

Age: _____ Sex: M / F _____ GP: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Interpreter required? Yes No Language: _____

Guthrie test normal Yes No

Caregiver's details

Name: _____ Phone number: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Answer ALL questions and please tick (✓) either Yes or No to each

Babies or children less than five years of age are eligible for BCG vaccination if they meet the following criteria:

- Yes No They will be living in a house or family/whānau with a person with current tuberculosis (TB)
- Yes No They will be living in a house or family/whānau with a person with a history of TB
- Yes No They have one or both parents or household members or carers who, within the last 5 years, lived for a period of 6 months or longer in countries with a TB rate \geq 40 per 100,000
- Yes No During their first 5 years they will be **living for 3 months or longer** in a country with a TB rate \geq 40 per 100,000

As a general indication, the following global areas have rates \geq 40 per 100,000:

- most of Africa
 - much of South America
 - Russia and the former Soviet states
 - Indian subcontinent
 - China, including Hong Kong, Taiwan
 - South East Asia
 - Some parts of the Pacific (Kiribati and Papua New Guinea have consistently high rates;
- (ref: Immunisation Handbook 2020, <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/immunisation-handbook-2020/21-tuberculosis#:~:text=As%20a%20general%20indication%2C%20the,and%20the%20former%20Soviet%20states>)

If one or more YES answers are ticked, this baby is at High Risk of being exposed to TB. The BCG vaccination is therefore recommended for this baby/child.

Referrer comments: _____
 (i.e. travel plans)

To enable us to confirm receipt of your referral

Referrers name: _____

Organisation: _____

Phone contact: _____

Email: _____

Please **COMPLETE** this form and forward to:

Email: communityreferralcentre@waikatodhb.health.nz

Subject: **Public health nurse referral**