



Immunisation

New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine Policy Statement

Policy statement

The New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine recognises that immunisation is a highly effective means of preventing a number of infectious diseases and some cancers.

The New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine (NZCPHM) advocates and supports the following:

- Promoting the immunisation of children and adults according to the National Immunisation Schedule, to achieve the high coverage rates required to prevent outbreaks, eradicate disease, and provide personal protection.
- The influential role of health professionals in providing accurate and evidence-based information on immunisation.
- Achieving immunisation coverage rates for Māori, Pacific and other population groups at the same or better coverage rate as for the New Zealand European population.

Background

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.

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

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

The New Zealand National Immunisation Schedule sets out the publically 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 2011*.

Immunisation rates in New Zealand have been low by international standards. National targets to improve childhood immunisation coverage at milestone ages have been set, and rates are improving.

Links with other NZCPHM policies

Health Equity

References and further information

WHO, UNICEF, World Bank. State of the world's vaccines and immunisation, 3rd ed. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2009. (<http://www.who.int/immunization/sowvi/en/>)

World Health Organization. Vaccine Position Statements. Geneva. (Various dates)
(<http://www.who.int/immunization/documents/positionpapers/en/index.html>)

New Zealand Ministry of Health. Immunisation Handbook 2011. Wellington: Ministry of Health, 2011. (<http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/immunisation-handbook-2011>)

The Immunisation Advisory Centre: www.immune.org.nz

Ministry of Health: www.moh.govt.nz/immunisation

Acknowledgement

This Policy Statement is based on Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service's Immunisation Position Statement 2012 (Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs).

Adopted by Council: June 2012

Year for Review: 2017