

Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) Newsletter

Public Health Nursing Service

Autumn/Winter 2024

Public health nurses are Registered Nurses who work with children/tamariki (and their families/whānau) on any health-related concerns. Public health nurses have access to health resources, information and provide a free, mobile and confidential service.

This newsletter is available on our website via this link: www.cdhb.health.nz/phns

Influenza vaccine for children

Information for parents and caregivers

Everyone from 6 months of age is advised to get a flu vaccination EACH year to protect themselves and to reduce the spread of flu.

- It's best to give your child the flu vaccine as soon as you can.
- Winter is the time when your child is most likely to come into contact with the flu and it takes about two weeks for the flu vaccination to be most effective.
- Everyone over 3 years old can get flu immunisations at many pharmacies.
- Tamariki can get a flu vaccine at the same time as any other vaccine on the [National Immunisation Schedule](#).
- If your child is 12 years of age or older and severely immunocompromised, or has a medical condition that puts them at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, they can get a COVID-19 booster vaccine at the same time as the flu vaccine.

The flu vaccine is free for some tamariki.

From 1 April 2024, tamariki can get a free flu vaccine from their healthcare provider if:

- they are aged 4 years and under and have a serious respiratory condition.

- they are 6 months or older with underlying health conditions, including:
 - » asthma that requires taking a preventer inhaler regularly
 - » an autoimmune disease
 - » heart or kidney disease
 - » cancer
 - » diabetes
 - » mental illness (eg, schizophrenia) or they're currently accessing mental health services
 - » a cochlear implant.

healthinfo.org.nz

[Healthify He Puna Waiora](#)

[Immunise NZ](#)



oral health

Our oral health is very important for our day to day lives and for our tamariki, their teeth help them speak, chew and smile! The baby teeth of our tamariki are also super important to their growth and development, as they help guide in their adult teeth.

Want to send some oral health related messages home in a newsletter? Try the five key messages!

Brush teeth for two minutes, twice a day:

using a soft bristled brush with a half-pea sized (under 5) or pea sized (6 plus) amount of fluoride toothpaste. Tamariki need assistance with brushing by an adult until they are 8-9 years old.

Spit, don't rinse: after brushing spit the excess toothpaste and foam out, this allows the fluoride to keep working at protecting teeth throughout the night.

Drink plain water and plain milk: water is a great option to protect your teeth and reduced or low-fat milk can help provide tamariki with nutrients.

Choose tooth friendly foods: choose healthy snacks and limit food with added sugars. It is also encouraged to snack at regular mealtimes (e.g. morning tea) and avoid snacking or grazing throughout the day.

Get teeth regularly checked: dental care is free until their 18th birthday and tamariki should have their teeth checked every 12 months. Whānau can contact the Community Dental Service to ask any questions, enrol or book appointments on 0800 846 983.

You can find out further information by visiting [Caring for your child's first teeth | Health Information and Services](#).

Wanting resources to use within your service? Check out the resources we have available!

Menemene Mai

A resource consisting of online activities and a physical tool kit that can allow tamariki to explore teeth, how to care for them and how to brush. You can loan this kit out at any time for free, simply email Laura Brown at laura.brown@cdhb.health.nz and she can organise this with you.

To check out the resource and all the available activities head to <https://www.cdhb.health.nz/health-services/menemene-mai/>

Toothbrushing programme

Looking at starting a programme where tamariki brush their teeth each day? Well, we can help you with all the information you need to get started.

These programmes are a great way to help tamariki learn self-care skills, prompt the discussion of oral health in the home and help improve a child's oral health.

Reach out to laura.brown@cdhb.health.nz for more information.



What are the most common childhood illnesses?

Croup

Croup is a fairly common childhood complaint and is caused when a virus causes swelling in the trachea (windpipe) and larynx (voice box). Croup is easily recognised due to the distinctive cough that it causes; it has been likened to the bark of a seal. This cough is caused by air passing through the swollen vocal cords.

Ear infection

An ear infection is one of the most common of childhood diseases. Around one in six children will suffer from an ear infection in their first year of life. Such infections are particularly common in children because the tube that connects the middle ear to the throat is narrow, which can cause blockage and, in turn, infection.

Fever

A fever is a raised body temperature (it's medical name is pyrexia). Normal temperature is 36–37°C so fever is a temperature above this range, although it is significant when it is higher than 38°C and dangerous when it is above 40°C.

Gastroenteritis

Children have an amazing ability to become sick very suddenly and then, after appropriate treatment, make an amazingly fast recovery to full health. Gastroenteritis – or gastro – is one of these 'get sick quick, get well quick' conditions. Gastroenteritis means an inflammation of the lining of the stomach and intestines and it presents in children primarily as vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

Hand, foot and mouth

This is a relatively common virus infection that is not related to the hand, foot and mouth disease that occurs in cattle.

Hand, foot and mouth disease is usually caused by the coxsackie A16 virus and generally infects

children under 10 and especially preschool children.

Flu

Influenza, or the flu, is common and often nasty. Influenza makes you feel generally unwell, miserable and want to stay in bed. The flu can also cause upper respiratory symptoms such as coughs and a blocked nose as well as sore throats, sore ears and sore sinuses, along with fever and chills.

Roseola

Roseola, otherwise known as sixth disease, is a very common infection caused by the herpes group of viruses (the same group that causes cold sores and chickenpox). It most often affects children between 6 months and 2 years old, and begins with a high fever followed by a rash after 3–5 days.

Slap Cheek

This viral illness gets its name from the characteristic 'slap like' rash that appears on children's faces. Slap Cheek is now known as Parvovirus and is also called Fifth Disease (because it was the fifth childhood infection with rash-like symptoms children usually get). It may also be referred to by its Latin name Erythema Infectiosum, which means infectious rash.

Sore throat

Sore throats are part and parcel of life with children – they are normally a mild condition, caused by a virus, that passes in a few days. Sore throats can be part of a cold or flu, or be part of more serious conditions such as glandular fever. Approximately 1 in 5 sore throats are caused by the streptococcus bacteria, known as strep throat.

kiwifamilies.co.nz

B4 School Check

Turned 4? Your child's FREE B4 School Check is due as soon as they turn 4.

In New Zealand, your 4 year old child is entitled to a free health and development check, called the "B4 School Check", which is the eighth and final of the Well Child health checks.

Parents will be contacted by your local B4 School Check provider, who will deliver you some forms before booking you and your child in for the 40–60 minute consultation. Take your child's Well Child book with you to see the nurse.

A "behavioural questionnaire" and a "developmental" questionnaire must be completed by parents – with the child's ECE teacher contributing to part of the "behavioural" questionnaire.

With parental written consent, the B4 School Check is conducted with a specially trained registered nurse to help ensure that your child is healthy (including testing of vision and hearing, plus a check of immunisations) and can learn well at school. This represents an excellent opportunity for parents to clarify and

discuss their child's health and/or development with a nurse.

If you or the nurse perceives that your child has a problem or difficulty, then the nurse may recommend a referral to appropriate health, education or social services.



Fever

Fevers are common in tamariki (children). A fever by itself doesn't tell you if they're seriously sick. Even an ordinary cold can cause a high fever.

Your child's normal body temperature is around 37°C. Your tamaiti has a mild fever if their temperature is higher than 38°C. A high fever usually means more than 39°C.

If your tamaiti is miserable, seems unwell and feels hot, you can use a thermometer to take their temperature. You do not need to do this if they seem well.

The number on the thermometer cannot tell you:

- what is causing the fever
- how sick they are.

The most common cause of a fever in a tamaiti is a viral infection. A bacterial infection is a less common but more serious cause.

Other causes of high body temperature include:

- immunisation – this usually only causes a mild fever
- wrapping a pēpi in too many warm layers of clothing or bedding.

Fever is a normal way for a tamaiti to fight an infection. The body's natural reaction to infection with a virus or bacteria is to raise the temperature inside the body. This helps to kill the infection.

Being hot may make your tamaiti feel unhappy or uncomfortable, but the high temperature is very unlikely to cause any long-term problems.

Some tamariki have convulsions (called febrile convulsions) when

they have fevers. These look very worrying, but even these febrile seizures are very unlikely to cause long-term problems.

See a doctor urgently if the tamaiti with a fever:

- is under 3 months old
- looks unwell and you're concerned
- is very pale or feels cold to touch
- is floppy, sleepy or drowsy
- is becoming less responsive
- has an unusual high-pitched cry
- has trouble breathing, noisy breathing or is breathing fast
- complains of a stiff neck or light hurting their eyes
- has a severe headache
- refuses to drink, even small sips
- is not weeing
- vomits a lot and cannot keep sips of replacement drinks down
- vomits green fluid (bile)
- vomits blood – this may be red or brown or look like coffee grounds if it is not fresh
- is in severe pain
- is not interested in surroundings (lethargic).

healthinfo.org.nz



Burns prevention – practical tips

Children have thinner skin that burns faster, deeper and at lower temperatures compared to adults. Most childhood burn injuries happen in the home, especially in the kitchen. You can prevent burns by taking simple steps at home.

Keep kettles out of reach

Make sure you keep kettles and kettle cords where children can't reach them.

Take extra care when cooking on the stove

Cook on the back elements of the stove first. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove and block access to the stove. Never leave cooking unattended and keep hot drinks and food away from the edge of the counter. Ensure children are somewhere safe when cooking.

Get older children involved in cooking so you can teach them how to cook safely

Only let children use the microwave when they are tall enough to reach inside safely. Remind them to always use oven gloves when taking food off the stove and out of the oven.

Avoid heating baby drinks in the microwave

Try to avoid heating babies' drinks in microwaves. If you do use them, always shake the bottle well once it's heated and then test the temperature.

Keep an eye on young children at bath or shower time

Always supervise young children at bath or shower time and when they wash their hands. Check your child's bathwater with your wrist before letting them get in.

Check your appliances

Make sure all electrical appliances are in good working order. Don't overload power points or multi-boxes. Always turn electric blankets off before getting into bed. Make sure a qualified electrician checks your electric blankets each year.

Put hot appliances out of reach

Make sure you place hot appliances such as irons and hair straighteners out of reach after you have used them.

Put safety covers on all electrical outlets

Kids love to explore and can easily put forks or keys into wall sockets.

Install smoke alarms

You should install smoke alarms on every level and in each bedroom, living area and hallway - ideally long-life photoelectric ones. Check smoke alarms monthly and check the expiry date.

Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach

Teach them to take matches or lighters to an adult straightaway if they do find them.

Take extra care with candles

Put all candles out before going to sleep or leaving a room. Never use candles in bedrooms.

Use protective fire screens

Use protective firescreens to stop your children from getting too close to fireplaces. Firescreens will also prevent their clothes from accidentally catching on fire.

kidshealth.org.nz

