

Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) Newsletter *Public Health Nursing Service* Autumn/Winter 2023

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

Childhood vaccinations

Free meningococcal B vaccine for tamariki aged under 5 years old.

On 1 March the meningococcal B vaccine became free for all babies aged 12 months and under. It's administered as part of the National Immunisation Schedule alongside the other infant immunisations. A free catch-up programme is available until 31 August 2025 for all other tamariki aged under 5 years old.

MMR vaccination is now offered at 12 months and again at 15 months. Please ask your GP if you have a child who has only received one dose as two are required.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/immunisation/new-zealand-immunisation-schedule>



Support your tamariki to stay active and healthy this winter

Winter is fast approaching and with this we tend to see a rise in coughs, colds and flu so below is some information that you can use for your centre and within newsletters to help yourself, your tamariki and whānau stay healthy this winter.

Sleep is a great way to promote both mental and physical wellbeing, positive learning, energy restoration as well as positive development and growth so it is important to ensure tamariki are getting enough. The Ministry of Health recommends that tamariki aged 3-5-year-olds get 10-13 total hours of sleep (including naps). You can check more information out on how to support tamariki at [Helping young children sleep better | Ministry of Health NZ](#).

With Autumn and Winter comes leaf pile jumping, rain puddle stomping and a reminder that physical activity is still important. Being active has many benefits ranging from your physical health to your mental health and wellbeing.

Remember, it is okay to get those tamariki dressed up nice and warm and encourage outside play. Whānau could head to their local indoor pool or hunt around their local park for some leaf piles! For more ideas that are both ECE and whānau friendly check out the ECE friendly sparklers activities at <https://sparklers.org.nz/activities/?activity=ECE-friendly> or Healthy Kids winter activities on <https://www.healthykids.org.nz/move/articles/winter-activities-to-keep-children-active>. You may decide to try one of these ideas in your centre or send some home in a newsletter.

Don't forget Sparklers love to see how you use their activities! You can send them to Sparklers at <https://sparklers.org.nz/contact/> or send them to myself at laura.brown@cdhb.health.nz and I will pass them along.

One of our friendly Health Protection Officers here at Te Mana Ora, Angela Sheat, has passed on some advice about how you can help protect your tamariki and kaiako this season with updated immunisation registers;

“One of the primary important tasks to undertake in the prevention of the spread of vaccine preventable diseases is to keep an up to date record of tamariki immunisation status. It is important for Centres to sight immunisation records and to record what immunisations tamariki have had in the register. This will assist Te Mana Ora staff in any decision that will need to be made to contain an outbreak of a disease. This will usually involve those tamariki that have not been immunised for a certain disease, for example measles, to not attend the early learning centre during the outbreak so as to protect them from acquiring the disease. Kaiako at centres face increased risk of exposure to some diseases and some diseases pose a more serious risk to adults. It is recommended that kaiako ensure they are immunised against measles, mumps, rubella, polio, chicken pox and flu.”

And don't forget yourself and your whānau can access health line 24/7 by calling 0800 611 116 for free health advice.



Colds in children

Wharowharo ki ngā tamariki

Colds are caused by germs (viruses) infecting the nose, sinuses, mouth, throat and voice box (upper airways).

There are hundreds of different cold viruses, which spread through the air when a person sneezes or coughs. Droplets from sneezes or coughs also settle on surfaces. On average, tamariki (children) catch a cold three to eight times a year. Colds tend to happen more frequently in the colder months.

Symptoms of colds in children

Cold symptoms usually last one to two weeks, though they're worse in the first two or three days. The cough that goes with a cold can last up to four weeks.

Symptoms include:

- watery eyes
- sneezing
- an itchy or [sore throat](#)
- a [cough](#)
- a hoarse voice
- a mild [fever](#).

A tamaiti with a cold might also have mild body aches, mild headaches and less energy than usual.

The best ways to treat your tamaiti for a cold are:

- Ensure they get plenty of rest.
- Make sure they drink lots of fluids such as water.

- Give them [paracetamol](#) to help relieve pain or discomfort. Saline nasal drops or spray can help relieve a stuffy nose. Traditional vapour rubs to relieve congestion shouldn't be used in pēpi (babies) under 2 years as they can cause airway irritation and breathing distress.

You can help your tamariki avoid colds by teaching them to avoid sharing cups, drink bottles or anything they eat or drink with, and to wash their hands before eating or preparing food. They should also [wash their hands](#) after they've touched their face.

Teach them to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their arm (but not their hand) when they sneeze or cough and then to wash their hands afterwards.

Keeping your home [warm and dry](#) and being smokefree also help to stop your tamariki from getting colds.

Healthinfo.org.nz



Lock out winter cold and mould without breaking the bank with these easy tips

The World Health Organization recommends a minimum indoor temperature of 18°C. A cold and damp home can increase the risk of respiratory illnesses and can also be difficult to heat.

Some families may be able to get financial help for home insulation through the Healthy Homes Initiative. Or the Winter Energy Payment Insulation is also now compulsory in all rental homes.

Window film kits have a clear plastic film that sticks to your window framing and acts like double-glazing.

- Having snug-fitting floor length curtains helps keep your house warm.
- There are curtain banks who can help with free curtains.
- A draught stopper across the bottom of a door (or a rolled up dry towel) helps keep the cold out.

Air your home out wherever and whenever possible.



If possible dry your clothes outside (or in a garage or carport). A dehumidifier can also help dry out your home.

- Wipe condensation off each morning with a towel.
- Electric heaters or heat pumps with thermostats are efficient to run in winter.
- Mould loves to grow in damp and wet places and can cause health problems. If you see mould you can use a bleach solution (2 teaspoons of bleach to 1 litre of water) or white vinegar (without any added water) to remove it.

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/>



12 general child safety tips

- Never leave a young child alone while he/she is awake. Check on the child occasionally while they are sleeping.
- Never leave a baby unattended on a changing table, in a high chair, bath or walker. Use safety straps whenever they are available.
- Stay awake so you'll hear the children if they need you.
- Children will likely try you out to see how far you let them go. Be firm in insisting that they play where they will be safe.
- Wardrobes, medicine chests, drawers and storage locations are not proper places for children to play. Also, keep them away from stairways, hot objects, (such as iron, stoves, microwaves and electrical outlets).
- Keep scissors or knives out of sight.
- Keep buttons, pins, cigarette stubs, money, small toy pieces, matches and any other small particles off the floor and out of sight.
- If playing outside, know where their parents allow them to play. Watch for traffic and fire hazards, garden sprays, tools and unfriendly animals.
- Cut food into bite-size pieces for toddlers and

preschoolers. Make sure that children remain seated while eating. Avoid foods that are likely to cause a young child to choke such as popcorn, hot dogs, hard candy and grapes.

- Make sure that doors to rooms such as bathrooms, basement and garage are closed.
- Remove plastic bags, bean bags or pillows from cots. These could cover a child's face and cut off breathing.
- Remove any strings or straps that might pose a strangulation hazard to a young child.

www.safekids.org.nz

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT STORING MEDICINE

JUST ONE MINUTE

In ER visits for medicine poisonings, parents often say that they only turned their back for a minute.



CURIOUS CLIMBERS

Research indicates in about half of over-the-counter poisonings cases, the child climbed on a chair, toy or other object to reach medicine.



CHILD-RESISTANT ≠ CHILDPROOF

Research suggests about half of accidental poisonings involved child-resistant packaging.



PUT

ALL

MEDICINE

UP AND AWAY

AND

OUT OF SIGHT

EVERY 9 MINUTES,

a young child (under age 6) goes to the ER because he/she got into medicine, and



EVERY HOUR,

a young child is hospitalized, and



EVERY 12 DAYS

a young child dies.



THE RISK IS REAL: HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP PROTECT KIDS

- Put all medicine up and away, out of children's reach and sight. Remember to keep visitors' purses, bags and coats out of reach, as they may contain medicine.
- Remember child-resistant packaging is not childproof. So put medicine away immediately after every use, even if you need to give another dose in a few hours.

Sleep

Sleep Hygiene for Children Preschoolers (ages 3-5 years) generally need between 10-13 hours of sleep per night, and school-age children (ages 6-13 years) need between 9-11 hours of sleep per night.

1. Stick to the same bedtime and wake time every day, even on weekends. Children sleep better when they have the same bedtime and wake time every day. Staying up late during the weekend and then trying to catch up on sleep by sleeping in can throw off a child's sleep schedule for several days.

2. Try to use your bed only for sleeping. Lying on a bed and doing other activities (e.g., watching TV, using a tablet or computer) makes it hard for your brain to associate your bed with sleep.

3. A child's bedroom environment should be cool, quiet, and comfortable.

4. A predictable series of events should lead up to bedtime. This can include brushing teeth, putting on pyjamas, and reading a story from a book.

5. Before bedtime is a great time to relax by listening to soft, calming music or reading a story.

Avoid screen time like watching television, using a tablet or computer, and playing video games, as well as physical exercise.

6. If a child needs help relaxing, they can use techniques such as taking deep and slow breaths. They can also think of positive images like being on a beach.

7. Exercising earlier in the day can help children feel more energetic and awake during the day. It can also help with an easier time focusing, and even help with falling asleep and staying asleep later on that evening.

8. Giving a child a security object can be a good transition to help them feel safe when their parent(s) isn't/aren't there.

Try to incorporate a doll, toy, or a blanket to comfort them when it's time for bed.



9. When checking up on a child, the main purpose is to let them know you are there and that they are all right. The briefer and less stimulating, the better.

www.choc.org

