

Give Quitting a Go for World Smokefree Day

The theme for World Smokefree Day 2013 is Quit Now, Its About Whanau. Te Awakairangi Health Network staff will be pushing this message throughout May with activities in the practices, the PHO and the community.

May 31 is World Smokefree Day and Te Awakairangi Health and Regional Public Health is encouraging smokers to make the most of the occasion and quit for good by setting up a 'Quit Stall' all day long at Westfield Queensgate Shopping Centre. The stall will have free Quit information, advice and inspiration as well smokefree giveaways. Staff will be on site to discuss and explain quitting options and will be able to issue patches, gum or lozenges for those who wish to give quitting a go.

Throughout the Hutt Valley several general practices will also be using May as an opportunity to encourage smokers to Give Quitting a Go. Te Awakairangi Health Network staff will be phoning smokers enrolled in their practices to ensure that they are aware of the Quit support available. For those who decide the time is right to quit, there's more help available than ever.

Aukati KaiPaipa offers a free 12 month face to face smoking cessation support programme. Additionally, services like Quitline provide support over the phone, online and by text and there is an increasing range of medical products and nicotine therapies available, from as little as \$3 for an 8-week supply.

"It's about freedom. It's about whānau and being there for those you love. Take up the challenge and take a step towards a smokefree Aotearoa and quit smoking on 31 May, World Smokefree Day."

For help and support to quit smoking, contact your local health provider, Aukati KaiPaipa service 0800 926257 or Quitline (0800 778 778 or www.quit.org.nz). **For more information please contact Tanya Radford, Te Awakairangi Health Network 04 5768602**



Falls Prevention Trial at Hutt Hospital

Thousands of people have a fall each year and many of these cause considerable harm and distress. Most falls happen in the community but a significant number also occur in rest-homes and hospitals.

We know that between 2009 and 2010 there were 47,000 falls-related discharges from public hospitals in New Zealand, at a cost of \$205 million, with more than half of these made up of people aged over 65.

A fall can really knock a person's confidence, create a fear of falling with patients restricting their own mobility as well as causing injury, increased length of stay and additional costs.

Hutt Valley DHB is committed to assessing our patients falls risk and ensuring falls prevention strategies are in place to minimise the harm from falls and help prevent them occurring in the first place. Some of these things are as simple as knowing what an individual's risk of falling is, asking for help when it's needed or making sure an area is well-lit and uncluttered.

The Health Quality & Safety Commission is supporting district health boards to highlight the harm from falls in a month-long promotion called April Falls 2013. This trial is a central DHB region initiative and in the last two weeks of April a number of our wards will be trialling a new falls awareness system that aims to reduce the number of falls occurring in hospitals.

This trial enables all of the DHBs in the central region (Hawkes Bay, MidCentral, Wairarapa, Hutt Valley and Capital & Coast) to work together to find solutions to a problem that is common to all hospitals.

Infuenza update

Hutt Valley DHB is monitoring the national and international information regarding the incidence of H7N9, through the Ministry of Health's advisory service and on their website.

"Hutt Valley DHB is well prepared should the H7N9 virus reach New Zealand," says Peter Gush, Manager of Regional Public Health. "However, it's important to note that this virus has not yet shown the ability to transmit from human to human and the Ministry advises us that the risk of international spread is considered low. Nevertheless, our experience with the swine flu pandemic in 2009 is still fresh in the minds of many, and our local contingency plans are updated on a regular basis. This includes making sure we have a rotating stock of Personal Protective Equipment for healthcare workers available, sufficient anti-viral medication, and that locations and contacts for community based assessment centres are current."

In 2009, the DHB responded to the pandemic by opening an Emergency Operations Centre. This ensured appropriate staff and services were available, and set up regular liaison with local health service providers.

"Should a case present in the Hutt Valley, the Public Health Service immediately starts contact tracing on anyone identified as having come into contact with that person," says Peter. "Whether the affected person is treated at hospital or at home, strict hygiene measures like social distancing, masks and gloves are put in place to help prevent spread. We would be part of a national response that is described in national Pandemic Plan."

"Internationally there is work to develop a vaccine for H7N9. In the meantime we know that soon NZ will experience our usual pattern of winter flu. There is a vaccine to protect against our usual winter flu. If you haven't already been vaccinated against flu now is a good time to get vaccinated. The winter flu vaccine is free for many people, including pregnant women, children under 5 years with significant respiratory illness and people with certain health conditions – please check with your family doctor," says Peter.

Your best protection against influenza is to be immunised now before influenza is widely circulating in the community.

Who should be immunised?

For adults and children with long-term health conditions, pregnant women and people aged 65 years and older, influenza can be an especially serious illness. For this reason the influenza immunisation is provided FREE to these groups. Healthy adults and children can be immunised for a fee at their medical centre and healthy adults can also be immunized at some pharmacies in the region.

Board & committee meetings

Hospital Advisory Committee
9am Friday 24 March 2013
Hutt Valley DHB Boardroom

Community & Public Health Advisory Cmte
9.00am Monday 20 May 2013
Capital & Coast DHB Boardroom

Members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings. Meeting agendas are available on our website www.huttvalleydhb.org.nz

Cryptosporidium illness rates continue to rise

Cryptosporidium illness continues to be reported at over twice the usual rate in the Greater Wellington Region. There have been 73 cases notified to Regional Public Health so far this year,

with over half the cases reporting swimming in a swimming pool during the incubation period. A third of the cases are in children under the age of five years.

With the School holidays arriving, swimming pools will be busier than usual, Regional Public Health would like to remind people not to swim for two weeks after any illness with diarrhoea. "Many people are not aware that swimming too soon after being sick with diarrhoea is a risk for passing infection onto other pool users" says Dr Margot McLean Medical Officer of Health. "People can still pass cryptosporidium onto others for many days after no longer feeling ill."

The best way to prevent cryptosporidiosis infection is to wash and dry hands after using the toilet, changing nappies and before preparing or eating food. And remember not to share bugs by avoiding swimming pools while sick and for two weeks after symptoms stop.