

Date:	28 June 2018	Pages: 1 of 2
To:	Primary Care Teams, Health Professionals	
From:	Jane Chambers, Acting Manager, Immunisation	
Subject:	<b>Childhood immunisation rates, influenza vaccine, shingles vaccine, Immunisation Benefit payments, BCG availability, 2018 Immunisation Workshop, cold chain audit.</b>	

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to protecting the health of our community during this busy time of the year.

### Childhood immunisation rates

With a busier than usual influenza immunisation season, we recognise that this may have had an impact on practices' ability to follow up with babies and young children who are late for their scheduled immunisations. As of 31 May 2018, childhood immunisation rates at age eight months, two years and five years respectively were 91.5 percent, 92 percent, and 88 percent. Most concerning is that coverage for Māori infants at age eight months has dropped to 87 percent, the lowest coverage rate since 2014. This increased inequity has been an ongoing pattern for the last year, and is putting Māori infants in particular at risk of vaccine-preventable disease.

Given that we are seeing an increase in pertussis cases, keeping coverage high for pregnant mothers and young babies is more important than ever. If you are aware any of your patients are pregnant, please ensure they are recalled for pertussis immunisation at 28 to 38 weeks' gestation, as the vaccine is recommended and funded for each pregnancy. Please make sure babies who are late for their scheduled immunisations are quickly referred to outreach, particularly Māori infants within your practice. Children with mild winter illnesses including colds can still be vaccinated providing their temperature is lower than 38°C and they are not acutely unwell.

### Influenza vaccine

Stocks of Fluarix Tetra, the funded quadrivalent influenza vaccine approved for children younger than 3 years of age, have run out – Influvac (trivalent) vaccine is now funded for eligible children in this age group. **The Influvac (trivalent) dose for children aged under 3 years is 0.25mls (ie a half dose).** This vaccine contains the WHO approved strains for the 2018 season - the same strains of influenza A as the quadrivalent vaccine, and one strain of influenza B.

Children under 3 years of age who have not received influenza vaccine in previous years, and have received one dose of Fluarix Tetra this year, may be given Influvac (trivalent) for their second dose.

### Shingles vaccine

Further to our notice last month, PHARMAC advises that a brief shortage of Zostavax shingles vaccine stock is expected to last until July. This follows the uptake of the vaccine exceeding expectations. New supply is on track for delivery into New Zealand in early July. We apologise for any inconvenience that this brief shortage may cause.

### Immunisation benefit payments

The PHO Services Agreement Amendment Protocol group has agreed that an additional payment of \$15 can be given for administering influenza and shingles vaccine at the same visit from 4 June 2018. Please contact your PHO on how to claim for these events.

## **BCG vaccine availability**

BCG vaccine supplies are not yet available in New Zealand. However, BCG vaccine production has resumed in Denmark and we are working with PHARMAC to plan for its reintroduction in New Zealand, and will make an announcement once the vaccine is available locally. BCG clinics should not be scheduled until we advise that the vaccine is available.

## **2018 Immunisation Workshop**

IMAC will be holding their annual Immunisation Workshop on Thursday 13 September at Naumi Auckland Airport Hotel. Registration is open at [www.immune.org.nz/2018-immunisation-workshop](http://www.immune.org.nz/2018-immunisation-workshop)

## **National Cold Chain Audit**

The National Cold Chain Audit (NCCA) monitoring National Immunisation Schedule vaccines has now been completed. We would like to thank you for your commitment to the NCCA - we had a logger return rate of over 90%. IMAC are providing the Ministry with a final report and recommendations, and a summary of the key findings will be available in September.

If you still have a NCCA logger in your practice refrigerator, please return it to IMAC in its attached courier bag.

***If you have any queries about anything in this update, please email [immunisation@moh.govt.nz](mailto:immunisation@moh.govt.nz)***