



report to the community

2016

Inside

**What's happening
with our facilities?**

**Staying connected
important**

Healthy West Coast
Te Hauora o Tatou – The Health of Us All





Perspective view – Looking north to main entrance

New facilities build underway!

The Government has approved an extra \$9.7 million to build what is now a \$77.8 million new Grey Base Hospital and Integrated Family Health Centre (IFHC).

The West Coast District Health Board is very excited that new facilities are now underway and the first evidence of this can be seen on the site of our new hospital and IFHC. There are trucks on site, a fence around the building site, and the start of two years of intense construction. With the start of construction, it also means that there will be impacts on patients, visitors and staff. Throughout the disruption of building, we need to focus on the reason it's all happening – so we can continue to deliver quality care in ways that are best for patients and best for our health system.

Our clinicians and board have been working hard with the Government and the Hospital Partnership Group, and I'd like to acknowledge the thousands of hours that so many people have committed to get us to this point.

You will notice the Fletchers Construction team, and sub-contractors including West Coast firms, out and about. Be aware of the construction zone and make sure you take care as there will be increased traffic in and out of the site as building proper gets underway. It has meant the closure of the roadway linking Waterwalk Rd and a reduction to car parks in the area to the north of the current hospital's Corporate building. Make sure you leave yourself enough time to find parks if you are coming to



David Meates

the hospital. Fletcher Construction has added a new temporary car park off Waterwalk Rd to mitigate the reduced parking at the northern end next to Corporate.

Board Chair Peter Ballantyne has publicly thanked everyone involved, appreciating that the facilities will proceed as planned, with no reduction in the size or finish of the facilities.

The 8,500 square metre facility is being constructed adjacent to the current Grey Base Hospital and includes 56 in-patient beds, three operating theatres, and an integrated family health centre to support the delivery of primary healthcare services. It will also house and support the delivery of other clinical services including a 24/7 emergency department, critical care unit, acute and planned medical and surgical services, assessment/treatment & rehabilitation services, maternity services, and outpatient care.

The new facilities are expected to open in the first quarter of 2018. The Minister of Health has also confirmed that the Hospitals Redevelopment Partnership Group will assume oversight of the Buller IFHC development.

Display boards have been installed in the main Grey Base Hospital foyer showing the plans and artist's impressions of the new buildings. The DHB public website Facilities pages will also be updated as progress occurs and to let you know what's next. If any members of the public have questions about the new facilities, please feel free to email newfacilities@westcoastdhb.health.nz.

Regards,

David Meates

Chief Executive

Canterbury & West Coast DHBs





Perspective view – Looking south from Waterwalk Road



Indicative layout of the first floor inpatient unit



10_Deptment Plan - 01_Lower Ground Floor
1:200

Indicative layout of the lower ground floor including surgery areas and support services



Indicative layout of the ground floor, incorporating the Integrated Family Health Centre areas

New Grey Base Hospital and Integrated Family Health Centre (IFHC)

The West Coast District Health Board is excited about the plans to build a new hospital and IFHC, expected to open in 2018. Our clinicians have spent more than 1300 hours working with the design team over the past three years to figure out how to best locate our essential hospital and IFHC services in our new facilities.

The West Coast is in the midst of significantly transforming the way health services are delivered, in order to improve both the clinical and financial sustainability of our system. This transformation is underpinned by modern, fit-for-purpose infrastructure, including new facilities, that support our model of care. The model of care is focused on ensuring people living on the Coast have access to the right services, in the right place, at the right time, to enable them to stay well and in their own homes and communities.



New 'virtual medical receptionist' service to help South Westland

A new service offering greater access to booking general practice appointments in South Westland has nearly completed a three month trial.

People sometimes struggle to contact services in South Westland to book appointments at a time convenient for them. South Westland area staff receive thousands of phone calls a year, and sometimes have to deal with multiple callouts at night and during the weekend, for health matters that are non-urgent.

The West Coast District Health Board has contracted tele-triage services provider Homecare Medical to support local staff and communities.

"It's important we look after both patients and staff," DHB General Manager Grey/Westland Mark Newsome says.

"The Homecare Medical virtual medical receptionist phone service will mean greater access for our community to book appointments, and reduce the after-hours burden on our staff," Mr Newsome says.

"How it works is that people will continue to ring their local clinic number or 0800 SWHealth (0800 7943 2584), which will now be answered by Homecare Medical receptionists who will be able to book appointments. This service will be offered Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 6pm.

Homecare Medical registered nurses will continue to provide support outside those hours and, when appropriate, transfer the call through to one of our South Westland nurses. During the trial we will be assessing the possibility of further extending the time when people can book appointments," he says.

"Of course people should ring 111 if they have a medical emergency."

Mr Newsome says a three month trial will assess whether the expected benefits for both staff and communities are achieved.

"We will also be listening to our staff and our community during this time about their experiences of the new service."

If people have queries about how the system works or want to provide feedback, they can contact swfeedback@wcdhb.health.nz.

Homecare Medical is a New Zealand company with hubs in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland.



New South Westland Rural Nurse Specialist Nurse Team Leader Tina Murphy recently started with the West Coast DHB and is based in Franz Josef.

New home for cervical screening clinic

A new joint venture means a new permanent clinic room for Cervical Cancer Screening Services within the Olsen's Pharmacy complex.

Mark Newsome, West Coast DHB General Manager Grey/Westland, says after the closure of the Well Women's centre in 2015, the West Coast regional office of the National Cervical Screening Programme struggled to find a replacement facility with a permanently set up room to use for their free women's smear clinics.

"The Cancer Society in Greymouth has been brilliant in filling the gap with the use of one of their offices in the interim," Mark says.

"But I'm really thrilled there's now a permanent home in the pharmacy complex. This will ensure the monthly Saturday smear clinics will continue."

Other health providers have also expressed interest in utilising this conveniently located clinic, Mr Newsome says.

Janet Hogan, Clinical Nurse Manager of the regional Cervical Screening service says she is excited about the opportunities resulting from this new clinic room.

"The service intends to offer an additional monthly week day clinic, with the ability to offer one off appointments to meet individual needs," Janet says.

"A holistic health assessment will be offered as part of the consultation."

"There's now a permanent home in the pharmacy complex. This will ensure the monthly Saturday smear clinics will continue."

She says Olsen's Pharmacy also intends to undertake pharmacy reviews for long term patients from this room.

"This will be a win – win situation for both services, but more importantly for the health consumers who will use the room."

The new facility has been set up to be health consumer friendly and is appropriate for all. As well as the clinic room, the waiting area is well stocked with information pamphlets on a broad variety of health subjects, Janet says.

Olsen's pharmacy owners Julie Kilkelly and Kerri Miedema are glad to be able to accommodate the service.

"We are very pleased to be able to assist in providing a space for these clinics to occur as we see it as an essential service for women and a great example of local integration and working together to best meet the needs of our residents," Julie and Kerri say.



The new Cervical Screening Clinic next to Olsen's Pharmacy in Greymouth.

Nurse Entry to Practice



Nurse Entry to Practice graduates in Greymouth recently:

- Georgie McInroe
- Sarah Ford
- Claire Judd
- Sarah Jayne Bellman
- Mandy Gardenbroek
- Jessie Gibbens
- Mary Fitzsimmons

Absent from the photo:

Nadine Fricker, Christina Gray, Stephanie Sanson, Joseph Machock.

And the Nurse Entry to Specialty Practice graduates were Dave Clark and Teniah Howell who were not able to be at the graduation ceremony.

SIGNS OF STROKE

F

FACE

DROOPING
ON ONE SIDE



A

ARM

WEAKNESS
ON ONE SIDE



S

SPEECH

JUMBLED,
SLURRED OR
LOST



T

TIME

TO **CALL 111**



THINK FAST

*If you see **ANY** of the signs,
call **111 immediately.***

strokewise.org.nz

Staying connected important for health

When spring chicken Lynette Forbes (73) wondered aloud whether we would be searched during a bus trip through the military base at Westport Airport, that was one of those moments.

You know the ones – the moments when you marvel at life, and the joy that people retain in living full lives into their 70s, 80s and 90s.

Lynette's question raises a real chuckle throughout the bus full of elderly Westport folk. Lynette and her Dunsford Ward compadres have been joined for the outing by several of Buller's finest older folk, emerging from the large homes that they continue to live in by themselves.

Organised by Diversional Therapist Danielle Durrant, the outing is the first time members of the community have been invited along, on what has traditionally been a road trip solely for DHB Dunsford Ward and former Kynnersley Home residents. In an effort to prevent social isolation that can lead to bigger health issues, Danielle has started receiving referrals from the community.

District nurses, doctors, home-based support services and other health professionals are referring people that might be



Ren and Lynette



Alistair Ellis

in need of a bit of a plan for getting out and about, for some company and fun with their peers.

"I heard about one lady who has hardly been out in the past 15 years, except very occasionally with family," Danielle says. That lady is later seen nattering for quite some time in Donald's Café at Carter's Beach as part of the bus trip.

"Another woman has been a bit down since she lost her husband. This has given her something to look forward to," she says of another passenger.

As well as the women on the outing, 90-year-old Senior Bus Driver Ellis Palmer is providing some useful tips to the day's driver, Carol Feast. In the past Ellis has regularly driven the bus, picking up people for the Monday Care and Craft group, the heart group on a Wednesday, and O'Connor Home's monthly outings.

"I've just given up driving. I decided it wasn't a good look, even though I've still got my licence. I can do the coordinating though," he says.

Lynette takes a moment to record her admiration for Danielle and Activities Coordinator Christine Sanderson, who are both busy helping people on to the bus.

"They're simply the best, they treat everyone equal and we love them to bits," she says.



Lynette and Danielle



Margaret and Dita

Being involved in diversional therapy requires base nursing skills, great organisational skills, and a load of patience.



Ellis

Former Kynnersley Activities Coordinator Bonnie Adank worked in the Buller Hospital for 40 years, including 15 at Kynnersley. She looks pretty sprightly as she steps off the bus at the military camp and sings a ditty about Australians to a bemused Nick Gurowski of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Molly Coleman (83) pops down the road from her home to Dunsford Ward every Tuesday and Thursday for lunch and to visit friends. Molly looks fit to bust when she gets to pose between two strapping Royal New Zealand Airforce lads, Josh Stone and Alister Kennedy.

Those who are less agile get their chance to experience the thrilling presence of a uniformed military man when Nick Gurowski fetches his attack dog Ninja and leads her on to the bus. Everyone gets a chance to pat the very placid Ninja, and ask Nick more questions.



Josh Stone and Alister Kennedy from the Royal New Zealand Airforce accompany Molly Coleman at their temporary base in Westport.



Bonnie Adank sings to Nick Gurowski of the Royal Australian Air Force.

At the same time, Ellis is outside bending the ear of the two New Zealand lads on guard duty at the entrance, regaling them with tales from his past. Being involved in diversional therapy requires base nursing skills, great organisational skills, and a load of patience.

Danielle points out that there are existing activities and services available in the community, but they're not always well-utilised.

"There's a Wednesday morning shoppers' bus that goes around Westport and picks people up to take them to the shops. There's a new get-together in the Ngakawau/Granity/Hector area. And there's a bus that goes once a week to and from Waimangaroa. People aren't taking advantage of these services and there's a danger they'll lose them," she says.

It's obvious Danielle is passionate about working with her patients/clients.

"Watching them set goals for themselves and then achieve them is amazing," she says.



Margaret Desley, Lorna Ninja, Nick and Molly Phyllis.



Smoking fizzling out

The 10% increase in tobacco tax introduced on January 1 2016 has prompted people to quit, Smokefree Services Coordinator John Caygill believes.

Others are making further cuts in their daily tobacco consumption, “hanging out” longer between smokes, and coming ever closer to the point where “someday I’ll give up” becomes “this is the last packet I’ll ever buy”.

“Many ex-smokers have quit ‘cold turkey’ without the help of medication or support, usually going through the cycle several times before finally being over it. Research shows that success is likely to come with fewer or no relapses if some medication is used for eight - 12 weeks, and particularly if this is combined with support from a quit smoking coach,” John says.

Coast health services provide face-to-face advice and support for stopping smoking through a range of programmes, at little or no cost, to give people the best chance of stopping and staying stopped.

The DHB has two hospital-based smoking cessation specialists, Ann McDonald in Greymouth/Hokitika, and Jeanette Thomas in Westport, providing advice about nicotine patches and gum or lozenges, plus follow-up support.

Similarly, Community and Public Health provides the Aukati Kaipapa programme, through Joe Mason in Greymouth/Hokitika and Diana Panapa in Westport (working out of the Poutini Waiora office). Another widely-available option is the Coast Quit programme, funded by the West Coast Primary Health Organisation and delivered through every medical centre and health clinic on the West Coast, as well as retail pharmacies in Greymouth and Hokitika.

Costing \$2.50 a session, for up to eight sessions, the programme provides nicotine patches and/or gum or lozenges, or other medications (e.g. varenicline/Champix) for up to 12 weeks, plus regular ‘check-ins’ with a practice nurse or pharmacist trained in cessation support.

“Every year for the past five years, 500 or 600 people have had the support of Coast Quit, with an average quit rate after three months of 30-35% - several times as good as the average quit rate for unsupported ‘cold turkey’ attempts. Smokers shouldn’t be embarrassed reaching out for help to give up their addiction, it works.”

Client feedback shows how these programmes are helping people to succeed.

“She showed me how to use the NRT properly, and it really helped me a lot”.

“Just knowing that you’ll be checking-in with the nurse helps to keep you on-track when you’re having a tough day”.

“I’d tried so many times before and it never lasted; this time I was better prepared. Now I’m really over it, and it just feels so good to be free at last.”

Contact details for stopping smoking programmes on the West Coast are as follows:

- **Coast Quit**, ring your medical centre/health clinic, or ask at pharmacies in Greymouth and Hokitika
- **DHB smoking cessation service**, ring 769 7488 Greymouth or 788 9238 Westport
- **Aukati Kaipapa (AKP)**, ring 768 1160 in Greymouth
- **Quit Line**, ring 0800 778 778, or go to www.quit.org.nz

When you
search for health
information,
which websites
can you trust?

Take a look at HealthInfo
healthinfo.org.nz

HealthInfo is a website just for you, the
people of the West Coast. It's written by
local health professionals, for local people.



West Coast District Health Board
Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini



Plunket providing free parenting and pregnancy education

First time parents are being encouraged to sign up for Plunket's free Pregnancy and Parenting Education as soon as their pregnancy is confirmed.

Since 1 January 2016 Plunket has been delivering free district health board-funded pregnancy and parenting education on the West Coast.



Baby James born 02/02/2016

Changes last year to the Ministry of Health specifications for providing free pregnancy and parenting education meant the West Coast DHB invited organisations to submit proposals to deliver new services.

Plunket won the contract for the West Coast to develop a range of course delivery options to meet the diverse needs of expectant parents. In line with the Ministry of Health specifications, they will be particularly focused on reaching first time parents, those living in remote areas, Māori, Pacific, Asian parents, parents under 24 years, and those with limited comprehension of the English language.

The new contract also places more emphasis on how parents can keep healthy during pregnancy and more support through to six weeks after the baby is born.

The Plunket contract replaces free services offered through the DHB and other organisations.

Canterbury and West Coast DHB General Manager Planning & Funding Carolyn Gullery says Plunket's involvement means consistent services delivered close to home for new parents and parents-to-be.

"Plunket has been involved with supporting new parents and their babies for years, and this contract extends on that," Ms Gullery says.

Plunket will continue to improve access to education for parents through the use of technology to provide online education programmes for more remote areas, which will help increase access to pregnancy and parenting education.

"We're looking forward to offering families free parenting education at an earlier stage in their parenting journey," Plunket Southern Operations Manager Sonya Gale says.

"We will offer parents the same high quality education about pregnancy and birth, and also how to look after and build a relationship with their newborn. It will also give families the chance to meet Plunket people and find out what services they can access, whether that's playgroups or PlunketLine."

For more information or to book a class with Plunket, ring 0800 291 658.

Baby boom for birthing unit

Around 15 months after the DHB's Kawatiri Birthing Unit was reopened for planned low risk births in Buller, it's a hive of activity.

Managers Correen and Alan Haslett have instigated a physical refurbishment and new systems that provide safer birthing options, resulting in more women choosing to birth at the Westport facility than in recent years.

"There's a steady momentum with more and more women choosing to birth here if they can. It's a real joy to see them reowning Kawatiri," Correen says.

Services now operated out of Kawatiri include ante-natal checks, free vaccinations (flu and whooping cough) for pregnant women, cervical screening, pregnancy and parenting education, and fortnightly visits from obstetricians.



Buller midwives Mieke Siebelink and Sekita-Ra Mennie unveiled the Kawatiri Birthing Unit sign in 2015.

A couple of other initiatives are also underway, to ensure every new mum gets given a Pepi-pod for her baby and every Buller baby gets a book.

Since reopening last March, 39 babies have been born at Kawatiri, 23 of whom were born in the first year, and that equates to around 30% of all Buller births over that time.

Correen and Alan feel that's a significant achievement.

"The best rural primary unit in the country is delivering about 40% of all births. So for us to get to 30% in a year is brilliant," Alan says.

Buller is also managing a monthly ante-natal clinic in Reefton.

The Hasletts have worked collaboratively to improve the service and its key relationships, and set up a 36 week review for all those involved in each pregnancy.

"We're much more proactive at making good decisions about where women can give birth," Correen says.

They have put an emphasis on emergency kits being available for Lead Maternity Carers (LMCs), and at Kawatiri. These include for post-partum haemorrhage situations and also for premature births.

The Hasletts complete their contract on 31 July when Buller midwife Mieke Siebelink will take over managing Kawatiri. The DHB is advertising for a new LMC for the district.

New Poutini Waiora staff focus on family health

Two new Poutini Waiora employees have the health of mums, babies, children and wider whānau on their “to do” list, and they are very keen to make a difference.

Gemma Rae has just been appointed Mama and Pepi Kaimahi (worker) and Cody Frewin Tamariki Ora nurse, and they say the roles will very much complement each other.

“We’re very much working under Te Whare Tapa Wha – the four pillars of health – mental, physical, spiritual and family health. I’m there to do Well Child checks, but I don’t go in just with these eyes on. And quite often Gemma will be there with me working with mum, dad, nan and others so they can support the relationship between mama and pepi (mother and child),” Cody says.

Gemma is of Ngati Whatua descent and was born on the Coast. She has been recently working with the Mana Tamariki Mokopuna (MTM) project with 67 young mums, many of whom don’t have their own mothers nearby, or other support. She is able to answer many of the questions that come up for young mums, particularly as she has personal experience with five of her own children.

“Before I started as the MTM coordinator, I was one of these mums. It’s hard enough when you do have family here. But often these mums want to be able to ask someone things like: ‘is it normal for my baby to cry for hours on end’, and ‘who will show me how to breastfeed because I’m struggling’.

The women will range from Karamea and Haast, and that entails working collegially with other agencies, in the same way Māori health provider Poutini Waiora works, Te Kaihautu (Chief Executive) Carl Hutchby says.

“Poutini Waiora provides services under the korowai (mantle) of Whānau Ora, and works collaboratively and in partnership with the West Coast DHB and other government departments and non-government organisations.”

Very important to Poutini Waiora is working with iwi in their own homes.



Cody Frewin and Gemma Rae talk about getting out into the community.

Cody was born in Whakatane but her great great grandparents were from Waimangaroa. Both women feel a real connection to the Coast.

Cody’s last role was district nursing and home based support for the DHB in Buller. She is still based in Westport, and loves the outdoors. Her past lives include a science degree, working as a probation officer, working for the Department of Conservation, in maternity and mental health.

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“Poutini Waiora provides services under the korowai (mantle) of Whānau Ora, and works collaboratively and in partnership with the West Coast DHB and other government departments and non-government organisations.”

Very important to Poutini Waiora is working with iwi in their own homes.

“It’s such a privilege to be welcomed into somebody’s home. You don’t take it lightly,” Cody says.

“Quite often they’ll get their information from other young mums, and sometimes they don’t know what they don’t know! When Cody and I visit, it’s a chance to talk to them about the things they can do to stay well, how to access services and what is available,” Gemma adds.

Clients can self-refer, or get in touch through their GP or midwives.

To get in touch directly, contact Gemma or Cody at Poutini Waiora, 03 755 6572.

Improving Māori health a focus

JoAnne Gilsenan hopes working collaboratively and networking in her new role as Māori health clinical assessor for the Complex Clinical Care Network (CCCN) will result in better health outcomes for Māori on the West Coast.

JoAnne is of Ngati Apa Ki Te Ra To descent, her hapu is Puaha Te Rangi. Born in Reefton, JoAnne trained as an occupational therapist and has experience in mental health and older persons' health, including dementia care.

Through her existing networks and efforts she is hoping to reach further into the Coast's Māori communities, JoAnne believes it is possible to highlight the importance of working collaboratively to help identify barriers for Māori in the health system.

She will be working alongside kaupapa Māori nurses through Poutini Waiora and going on to marae with them.



Complex Clinical Care Network Manager Diane Brockbank and Māori Health Clinical Assessor JoAnne Gilsenan.

"We're possibly looking at a kaupapa process for clinical assessments that will also work with our Interrai (assessment) system," JoAnne says.

CCCN Manager Diane Brockbank says JoAnne will try and increase referrals to the CCCN at an earlier stage in any health issues they might be having.

"People need to be supported to recognise what their own symptoms are, and what might be causing things. Māori will often just carry on when they're not well without being aware that there are things in place to support them," Diane says.

JoAnne will also be looking to bridge some of the barriers that prevent Māori from going to their general practice. She will be visiting people at home, carrying out a comprehensive health and wellbeing assessment that will help identify further support needed – either medical, social or allied health services.

These services can help people stay well and independent in their own homes.

While most referrals to the CCCN come from general practice and social workers, if people have concerns about a friend or loved one, they are able to contact the CCCN team directly, on care.link@westcoastdhb.health.nz.



Hospital residents Audrey Reid, Zelda Curtis, Allan McInroe, Percy Peterson, Mary Keane get ready to play.



Sam Parkinson, Luca Schwass, Lee Palmer and Daniel Palmer from Sacred Heart School in Reefton listen to the Reefton Hospital residents playing a tune with instruments purchased following fundraising by the school's Young Vinnies group.

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES!

The West Coast DHB is increasing the availability of healthy options in our cafes and vending machines.

Over the next couple of months, we are going to have more choices of food with whole grains, fruits, vegetables and water.

These changes are in line with the development of our new Healthy Environment : Food & Beverage Policy – look out for that online in coming months.

Healthy West Coast
Te Hauora o Tairāwhiti – The Health of Us All

West Coast Primary Health Organisation

Three directors provide medical leadership

Three medical directors are providing leadership for the West Coast health system.

Last year Coast senior doctors met to discuss options and choices for the way in which medical leadership for the West Coast could be organised following the departure of Chief Medical Officer Dr Carol Atmore.

The outcome of the discussion was the creation of three new clinical leadership roles:

- Medical Director | Medical Council, Legislative Compliance and National Representation
- Medical Director | Patient Safety and Outcomes
- Medical Director | Facilities Development

Mr Meates says the roles provide an opportunity to lead and engage stakeholders; develop, enable and support the delivery of policy and direction; and influence and enhance medical capability, patient safety and outcomes and facilities development.



Cameron Lacey



Vicki Robertson



Pradu Dayaram

Greymouth-based orthopaedic surgeon Pradu Dayaram was appointed Medical Director | Facilities Development. Mr Dayaram has been chairing the group of clinicians leading the design of the new Grey Base Hospital and Integrated Family Health Centre [IFHC]. He is also advising on the design of the new Buller IFHC.

Taking on an interim role as Medical Director Patient Safety and Outcomes is West Coast Gynaecologist Dr Vicki Robertson.

Psychiatrist Dr Cameron Lacey was appointed to the role of Medical Director | Medical Council, Legislative Compliance and National Representation. Dr Lacey is Clinical Director, Mental Health and Addiction Services, West Coast DHB and works in Christchurch and on the West Coast.

The 2015 Quality Accounts publication, **Focus on Patients** looks at the West Coast health system's initiatives to improve quality and safety for patients over 2015. It is available through your local general practice. Feel free to help yourself to a copy.



Key messages

Influenza.
Don't get it.
Don't give it.

1. Influenza vaccination is provided FREE for those who need it most

- People with certain medical conditions
- People 65 and over
- Pregnant women (any trimester)

2. Influenza can be anywhere, so you can easily catch it or spread it to other people

Contact with the influenza virus is almost unavoidable, and while it does not always mean you'll be infected, it does mean the risk is never far away. You can infect other people even before you know you're sick. Even if you are not in one of those groups most at risk from complications, it is important you do not pass the virus onto those who are more likely to get sicker from influenza – including young infants, pregnant women, the elderly and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma or heart problems.

3. Being young, fit or healthy will not protect you from influenza

Influenza can make healthy adults, children and infants seriously ill or cause death. A healthy diet and regular exercise may help support your immune system but they will not protect you from influenza. Unvaccinated pregnant women are at particularly high-risk of influenza, even when they are fit and well.

4. Influenza is a serious illness that can put anyone in hospital or kill them

Influenza is more than just a "bad cold". Although some of the symptoms are the same, influenza is usually much more severe and lasts for longer. Symptoms of influenza include a cough, headache, fever or chills, body aches and pains, fatigue and generally feeling miserable. Influenza can also lead to serious complications, particularly in people with certain medical conditions such as heart or lung conditions. Complications of influenza include pneumonia, heart failure, and worsening asthma. Each year more than 400 New Zealanders on average are estimated to die from influenza or influenza-related conditions (e.g. pneumonia, heart failure, lung failure).¹

5. The influenza vaccine cannot give you "the flu"

There is no live virus in the influenza vaccine. It has an excellent safety record and has been proven to provide effective protection for most vaccinated people, including pregnant women and their unborn or newborn babies.

6. More than a million kiwis get annual influenza immunisation – get it early for the best protection

More than a million New Zealanders have their influenza vaccination each year. Getting vaccinated each year as early as possible before winter hits gives the best protection, and protection can last until the next year.