

30 March 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa

Preparing for winter 2026

Encouraging and promoting annual immunisation in the lead up to Winter reduces the burden of influenza (flu) illness on whānau and communities and reduces the seasonal impact of flu on community health providers and hospitals.

Last year, over 1.2 million influenza vaccines were administered in New Zealand through a variety of vaccination providers. Thank you for your support in achieving this result!

As seen in the Northern Hemisphere, we expect to see an early and severe influenza season; however, we can collectively have an impact by achieving high flu immunisation coverage.

Annual flu immunisation presents an opportunity to recommend other immunisations

There are a number of vaccine preventable illnesses that present a risk to whānau and communities including:

- **COVID-19** continues to circulate in communities across the country and we continue to encourage people to keep up to date with recommended doses.
- **Measles outbreaks** remain at high risk due to low immunisation rates and recurrent measles incursions from overseas.
- **Whooping Cough (Pertussis) epidemic**, is ongoing across the country and continues to put our newborn infants at high risk of becoming infected and needing hospitalisation.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage you, as a trusted health care professional or valued community organisation, to recommend immunisation as part of your regular interactions with your communities. There is strong evidence that a recommendation from a trusted health care professional often results in people proceeding with vaccination. This includes not only influenza but also COVID-19, pertussis, measles, shingles and HPV vaccination, depending on their age.

Remember to look after yourselves and your kaimahi

Keeping up to date with your own immunisations protects you and ensures we can continue to look after our communities.

[TeWhatuOra.govt.nz](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz)

PO Box 793

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Health NZ will reimburse non-Health NZ health and disability sector employers the costs associated with vaccinating their frontline staff for influenza. Please check the [Health NZ website](#) for more information on how to claim this.

Winter 2026 immunisation goals and objectives

For the upcoming winter season, I encourage everyone to focus on the following goals and objectives

Goals of the 2026 Influenza vaccination campaign:	Objectives for the 2026 campaign are to offer the influenza vaccine:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 75% of people aged 65 years old and over vaccinated against Influenza.- 80% of Health NZ employed workers vaccinated against Influenza.- More non-Health NZ health and disability workers vaccinated against Influenza in 2026 than in 2025.- 5% increase in co-administration of other vaccines with the flu vaccine in those aged 65 years at vaccination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- to all children aged between six months and four years upon hospital discharge following respiratory illness.- to all pregnant people and TDaP for those eligible (i.e. from 16 weeks pregnant).- to all eligible people on discharge from hospital.- alongside any other vaccines people are eligible for.

Pharmac funded eligibility criteria

The Pharmac influenza vaccine eligibility criteria remains the same as last year and a reminder of these can be found on the [Pharmac website](#).

These criteria include those with serious mental health conditions / accessing secondary or tertiary mental health and addiction services, as well as children four years of age and under who have been hospitalized for a respiratory illness or have a history of a significant respiratory illness.

Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure whānau and communities are kept protected.

Ngā mihi



Dr Nick Chamberlain
National Director
National Public Health Service

For more information and resources

FLU2026 resources

There are a range of resources including posters, leaflets and electronic materials which are available to use for promotion of immunisation in your community.

- FLU2026 collateral can be found online in the [Immunisation Dropbox](#):
- Printed collateral can be ordered for free from [HealthEd](#): or [Bluestar](#):