Dear Colleagues

**Meningococcal disease**
Please stay alert to the signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease. This disease can develop rapidly and early antibiotic treatment is vital. Meningococcal vaccines do not provide long-term protection. Ministry recommendations about meningococcal immunisation can be found at the webpage below, including recommending immunisation for young adults entering hostel type accommodation, particularly in their first year. [http://www.health.govt.nz/yourhealth-topics/children/immunisation/diseases-and-vaccines/hoods-and-vaccines/hoods-and-vaccines-203](http://www.health.govt.nz/yourhealth-topics/children/immunisation/diseases-and-vaccines/hoods-and-vaccines/hoods-and-vaccines-203). Please note that pamphlets and posters about meningococcal disease are available free through www.healthed.govt.nz. HE codes are: HE1303, HE9200, HE1325. There is also a pamphlet on GP diagnosis and management: HE9058.

**Preliminary newborn enrolment – not long to go now!**
Last month, the Minister of Health announced a newborn enrolment policy. From 1 October, newborns will be able to enrol with a GP and PHO shortly after birth. Early engagement with primary care providers enables more immunisations on time, which gives better protection for babies and better continuity of care. A training toolkit to support PHOs and GP practices with implementing these changes is near completion. The toolkit will also be supported by online videos (podcasts).

Medtech, Intrahealth, Houston Medical and MyPractice advise that the changes to practice management systems to implement the newborn pre-enrolment process and B code will be released into the most recent version of your PMS. To implement the newborn pre-enrolment process and B code, the latest PMS update must be installed.


**Whooping cough resources**
DHBs, PHUs, PHOs, GPs, Midwives and Plunket Nurses received new whooping cough brochures and posters this week. The Ministry’s website information for whooping cough has been updated and now includes video footage and case studies of families whose babies have been hospitalised as a result of this disease. To see this go to: [http://www.health.govt.nz/yourhealth-topics/diseases-and-illnesses/whooping-cough](http://www.health.govt.nz/yourhealth-topics/diseases-and-illnesses/whooping-cough).

The main focus of these resources is to emphasise the importance of immunisation timeliness. There will be a small media campaign, featuring the whooping cough poster, in parent publication/websites such as Kiwi Families and Bounty Magazine. The posters will also be displayed in parents’ rooms at shopping malls throughout the country over the next month.

The Ministry is also working with IMAC and KidsHealth to develop a video resource which includes interviews with parents, immunisation experts and doctors which should also be available this month on all three organisations’ websites.
If you would like to order either the poster, the brochure or both they are available on the Health Ed website www.healthed.govt.nz

Azithromycin advice for whooping cough
The Ministry has received some enquiries about the dosing advice for young infants (under six months) provided in the June GP Fax. The Ministry is obtaining expert advice and will provide any further guidance when it is available. In the meantime, please consult your local paediatrician or the medicine datasheet if unsure about dosing.

Measles update
The Ministry launched two new measles resources for parents/caregivers last month focusing on the effect of the most recent measles epidemic on children and young people. They can be found at http://www.health.govt.nz/news-media/news-items/measles-focus-new-publications.

Limited hard copies can also be ordered from the Health Ed website which can be found here: https://www.healthed.govt.nz/health-topic/immunisation-and-vaccinations

It is also important to continue to check the measles immunisation status of anyone born after 1 January 1969 to ensure they are fully immunised, and offer immunisation to those who aren’t, especially those born in the late 1990s whose parents may have declined to immunise due to incorrect information circulating at the time about MMR vaccine. Please share the resources mentioned above with them if appropriate.

People travelling overseas should also be reminded about the importance of being immunised with routine vaccines, in addition to considering any special travel health advice. Outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases continue to occur in many countries.

Influenza
Vaccine distribution increased following the Minister of Health’s announcement on 24 July 2012 that the publically-funded influenza programme would be extended until 31 August 2012. We have now distributed more than one million doses.

The Ministry would like to acknowledge your efforts in achieving this. We would also like to remind you that funded vaccine claims need to be submitted within eight months from the date the patient received the influenza vaccine.

A refund will be available for a total of ten units of unused stock of both FLUVAX and FLUARIX, from any one account. Unused stock must be returned by 30 September 2012 to be eligible for the refund. Thereafter surgeries are advised to contact their immunisation coordinator for information regarding safe disposal of unused vaccine.

Claiming for children who are re-immunised following chemotherapy
General practices are able to submit an immunisation claim for services delivered when children and young people are re-immunised following chemotherapy treatment. The completed Immunisation Benefit Claim Details Form and Immunisation Benefit Claim Summary Form may be submitted to Sector Services who will seek approval for payment from the DHB. Send all completed manual claim forms to: Immunisation claims, Sector Services, Po Box 1026, Wellington, 6104.

The indication value that best meets the definition for re-immunisation is 6 – booster.
An immunisation claim cannot be submitted to Sector Services for a vaccine that is not listed on the New Zealand Pharmaceutical Schedule.

If you have any queries about anything in this update, please email immunisation@moh.govt.nz. You can also follow the Ministry on twitter @minhealthnz