

## 2 March 2023 Immunisation Update

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## 2 March 2023 Immunisation update

Kia ora colleagues,

Nearly the end of the week whānau.

Please find below this week's update. Please share with your contacts and networks as relevant.

As always, if you need key messages, collateral, or any other comms or engagement support, please email me [sandy.thambiah@health.govt.nz](mailto:sandy.thambiah@health.govt.nz).

### **Medsafe safety signal - Mpox vaccinations**

Medsafe have published a new 'safety signal' for mpox vaccinations on their [website](#).

There have been two reports of pericarditis following mpox vaccination. We are asking clinicians for extra vigilance to the signs of pericarditis among patients who may recently have had an mpox vaccination.

Te Whatu Ora is working closely with Medsafe and awaiting further information. In the interim, people who present for mpox consultations will continue to be fully informed about the risk and benefits of vaccination for their circumstances at this time.

There is also temporary delay in second doses for people other than those with immune disorders while further information is sought. While two doses were recommended, good levels of protection are provided by a single dose.

As always, please report any suspected adverse reactions to

## Influenza update

April 1 marks the start of the Flu Vaccination programme so there is a lot of work underway to help make 2023 a hugely successful year. Today Pharmac confirmed the eligibility criteria for funded vaccines in 2023 – the key headline is that they are widening access to tamariki ages 6 months to 12 years, and will again offer it to Māori and Pacific peoples 55-64 years. [You can read the full release here](#).

In support of the rollout there are several key dates which may be of relevance to you depending on your role within the immunisation space:

- 3 March – IMAC Flu Kit will be available online (and posted out to vaccination providers from mid-March)
- 6 March – Flu vaccine can be ordered by nominated vaccination clinics
- 20 March – Flu vaccine stock deliveries commence
- 21 March – IMAC training webinar
- 1 April – Flu vaccination begins

We're also excited to confirm that from 16 March consumers will be able to book their flu vaccination appointments on the Book My Vaccine website, alongside their COVID-19 vaccinations. If you are offering the flu vaccine, [please click here](#) to learn how you can include your location and appointments on the site.

We'll be in touch with more information soon including dates of clinical materials and QR codes being available on the Dropbox, workforce immunisation targets, and much more!

## COVID-19 vaccine changes from 1 March

From 1 March, there are changes to the stock for those aged 12+. The changes include:

- All COVID adult doses will now have a 'grey cap'.
- Any stock with a 'purple cap' should be taken out of circulation and destroyed.

At end of day 28 February, all Comirnaty (12+ years) Purple Cap Vaccine vials should have been disposed in the Interwaste vial disposal bins and recorded as wastage in the CIR inventory.

To learn more about these changes a set of resources for vaccinators is found on [IMAC's website](#).

## **The Bivalent vaccine**

From 1 March, a new Pfizer COVID-19 bivalent vaccine is available to eligible New Zealanders as a booster dose. This will replace the existing Pfizer booster and is considered likely to be more effective against Omicron subvariants than earlier vaccines. It will not replace the vaccines used for the primary vaccination course, which will be the original grey cap Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine or the Novavax vaccine.

There are no changes to who is eligible for a booster right now, but you can expect to see changes in early April.

There is more information on the [MOH website](#) and eligibility information is found [here](#).

## **Meningococcal B (Bexsero) vaccine is funded from 1 March**

IMAC held a webinar last week on Meningococcal B vaccine implementation. If you missed the Webinar, a recording is available on [IMAC's website](#).

Yesterday we put up a news item: [Meningococcal B now funded available – Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand](#). We also have new collateral (poster and brochure) available in our [Dropbox](#) that you can use. Information on HealthEd is being updated and we'll let you know soon when this goes live.

## **Aotearoa Immunisation Register - update**

We continue to expand the features of the AIR vaccinator portal. Over the last 6 months, enhancements have enabled us to commence decommissioning the ImmuniseNow portal in pharmacy (15 March 2023) and support the mpox campaign.

Our focus for the next two months is preparing the AIR and BMV to support the 2023 flu campaign.

Our AIR admin teams continue to use our new digital onboarding experience to support users to sign-up to the AIR, and we will shortly start our interim reporting arrangements to support operational reporting for outreach and population coverage for flu.

We will keep you informed about our progress - for a full update please visit [our website](#).

## **Updates to the Operating Guidelines, and COVID-19 Immunisation Policy**

A new version of the Operating Guidelines is now available.

You can see it on the [MOH Website](#).

Changes have been made to Section A (Ready to vaccinate), and Section B (Pathway to COVID-19 vaccination). The Appendices section has also been updated to remove outdated information.

The updated COVID-19 Immunisation Policy can be found here on the [MOH website](#).

## **Regular reminders**

### **Weekly vaccination data**

From January 2023, the weekly Trends and Insights report has been replaced with an interactive dashboard including graphs on rates over time of COVID-19 cases, hospital admissions for COVID-19, and deaths attributed to COVID-19. Our Māori and Pacific data can be found here: [COVID-19 Trends and Insights](#), [COVID-19: Current Cases](#), [COVID-19 Case Demographics](#) and [COVID-19 Vaccine Data](#).

### **Collateral on Dropbox**

Don't forget all our immunisation collateral is available on Dropbox for health care providers to use when promoting vaccinations. Please feel free to share this link and the collateral widely with your other healthcare colleagues: [Dropbox: NIP – vaccine](#)

[resources – Simplify your life.](#)

Consent forms (English and Te Reo Māori) and policy statements for use by health professionals can also be found in this Dropbox.

You can also find a range of vaccination stories on our [YouTube channel](#).

## Where can I get more information?

We're here to help! If you need any comms assistance please don't hesitate to reach out to the team:

*Health sector information and resources*  
[Sandy.thambiah@health.govt.nz](mailto:Sandy.thambiah@health.govt.nz)

*Māori Comms and Engagement*  
[Eddie.Sykes@health.govt.nz](mailto:Eddie.Sykes@health.govt.nz) or [Katene.Durie-Doherty@health.govt.nz](mailto:Katene.Durie-Doherty@health.govt.nz)

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[Yvonne.timaloa@health.govt.nz](mailto:Yvonne.timaloa@health.govt.nz)

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