

Preparing for Winter 2026

Dear healthcare provider,

Between April and September 2025, you collectively administered 1.2 million doses of influenza vaccine, 400,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, and 300,000 pertussis vaccines which is an outstanding achievement.

Protecting our communities this winter season

Immunising 95% of tamariki by 2030 is a key Government health target. The annual flu vaccination event is an opportunity to check that whānau are up to date with all vaccines, including Measles, COVID-19, Pertussis, HPV, and Shingles. If you can't provide other vaccines at the appointment, share information with consumers on how to access them and help them with their booking.

A reminder that, as we start seeing the usual winter coughs and colds, a runny nose is **not** a reason to delay childhood immunisations. Whānau should be reassured that, in most cases, unless their pēpi/tamariki has a temperature over 38°C or an acute systemic illness, the immunisation can safely proceed.

Sector Support items

Non-Health New Zealand (HNZ) Flu Reimbursement Scheme

The National Public Health Service (NPHS) will again reimburse non-HNZ Health and Disability employers the cost for vaccinating their frontline staff through the reimbursement portal from 1 April to 30 September. Employees must satisfy **all** of the following criteria for reimbursement:

- not be employed by HNZ,
- provide a health and/or disability service,
- have direct patient/client contact, and
- not be eligible for a publicly funded influenza vaccine.

Please wait until you have vaccinated all your staff to submit only **one claim** into the portal. **No late claims will be accepted.** Further information for employers can be found on our website:

tewhatuora.govt.nz/influenza

HNZ staff should contact their Occupational Health team or speak with their line manager about how they can access free flu vaccination.

Collateral

All immunisation posters, leaflets, consent forms, post vaccination flyers, and translated resources can be accessed via the following links.

- FLU2026 collateral online on the Immunisation Dropbox: tinyurl.com/2hsxx62s
- Digital resources on HealthEd: healthed.govt.nz
- Free printed collateral ordering from Bluestar: portal.bluestar.co.nz/login/moh_vaccine

Clinical Support

The Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) 2026 Influenza Toolkit contains key clinical information and resources for vaccinators. An electronic copy of the toolkit as well as additional clinical guidance including factsheets, can be found on the IMAC website immune.org.nz

IMAC provides clinical advice and guidance to healthcare providers (not consumers) via **0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863)**, 8.30am to 5.00pm weekdays or email 0800immune@auckland.ac.nz

The Immunisation Handbook also provides clinical guidance for health care providers: tewhatauora.govt.nz/immunisation-handbook



Influenza Vaccine Eligibility

The 2026 funded vaccine is Influvac Tetra. Eligibility criteria have not changed from last year and is published on the Pharmac website schedule.pharmac.govt.nz. Please ensure all members of your team are familiar with the eligibility criteria and able to advise consumers where to access the vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccines update

The COVID-19 vaccine for those age 12 years and older is now offered as a pre-filled syringe and **DOES NOT** need to be diluted. If your service is interested in offering COVID-19 vaccines, please email help@imms.min.health.nz or contact your immunisation co-ordinator.

Book My Vaccine and Healthpoint

Healthline and Vaccine Helpline refer consumers to Healthpoint or Book My Vaccine to find local vaccination services and it is important that providers keep their information up to date. These platforms are available free for providers.

For assistance with editing your **Healthpoint** profile or to list your vaccination services please contact info@healthpoint.co.nz. Information displayed on Healthpoint should include the age ranges able to be vaccinated (including age range of children), which vaccines are offered, booking options (i.e if group bookings or walk-ins are possible) and vaccination operating hours.

Providers can sign up to take vaccination bookings through **Book My Vaccine** at nibs.my.site.com/bmv/SignUpWithEmail. If you have an existing profile, please ensure details are up to date.

Cold Chain - vaccine storage and transportation

Prior to commencing offering flu vaccines, providers must have an up to date cold chain policy, processes and evidence of accurate fridge monitoring (including daily min/max and weekly download of the datalogger) and processes to respond to out-of-range temperature alerts. If you are offering off site vaccinations, you must have robust processes in place to accurately monitor and document cold chain during transportation of vaccines. Providers who will be vaccinating off site should inform their immunisation co-ordinator well before commencing these services so that full support can be offered and processes to manage vaccine incidents are put in place. These steps are essential to avoid wastage of vaccine and avoid revaccination of consumers.

Documentation of vaccine events

Vaccinators should ensure they have access to AIR prior to vaccinating and **vaccine history is reviewed before administering a vaccine**. All vaccine events should be entered into the AIR or PMS at the time of the vaccination or within 48 hours of this. This is to prevent vaccine errors and ensure consumers are offered all vaccines they are eligible for like MMR or Tdap.

Thank you for your important mahi with the 2026 winter preparedness campaign.

Ngā mihi nui,
Immunisation Team
immunisation@tewhatauora.govt.nz