



7 November, 2017

(For immediate release)

Vaccination “catch-up” programme protects against mumps

An immunisation programme set to begin in west Auckland this month will specifically target Year 9 and 10 pupils.

The Waitemata DHB is rolling out the initiative as part of a proactive bid to immunise teenagers who may have missed their Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine as young children.

The Ministry of Health recommends a dose of the MMR vaccine at 15-months, followed by another at four-years-old.

A mumps outbreak across Auckland affecting more than 700 people this year underlines the importance of immunisation.

“The only way to be sure your child is protected from needless suffering and the risk of potential hospitalisation is to have them immunised,” says Waitemata DHB paediatrician Dr. Tim Jelleyman. “We ask parents to make up-to-date immunisation a priority.”

Dr Jelleyman says the programme will take place through the last school weeks of 2017 and continue into the first term of 2018. Immunisation consent forms will be distributed for students, parents and caregivers at a number of schools included in the first stages of the exercise over the next few days.

MMR immunisation is also available free from family doctors and health centres for anyone born from 1 January 1969. Keeping a track of immunisation records for teenagers can be tricky so anyone who can't find their records can contact their GP for the free vaccine.

Dr Jelleyman encourages all parents/caregivers to make the most of the opportunity and ensure their children are fully immunised, irrespective of their age.

The Ministry of Health recommends anyone who doesn't know whether their children have received the two doses should have them vaccinated anyway. It says there is no health risk associated with a third dose.

Mumps is caused by an airborne virus and causes fever, headaches and swelling of the glands around the face. It may, in rare cases, lead to infertility in males and can cause meningitis and encephalitis (swelling in the brain).

Parents and caregivers seeking more information on the vaccine can phone the Immunisation Advisory Centre information line on 0800 466 863 or visiting www.immune.org.nz or visit ARPHS.govt.nz

Ends

For further information contact:

Waitemata DHB Media Line
Ph. (09) 487 1276