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For immediate release

Immunisations are for people of all ages – Immunisation Week 2018

Rachel Mattison knows the importance of immunisations after spending 11 weeks in hospital with her first baby Oscar, born prematurely.

“Because I had my son at just 28 weeks’ gestation, I was too early to have any vaccination, which was a real shame because a baby like Oscar needed all the protection he could get at that point,” she says.

“The stress of continually making sure he didn’t catch anything was always in the front of my mind.”

Rachel, who is now just 10 weeks off giving birth to baby number two, is not leaving anything to chance this time and is getting her free vaccination for whooping cough and influenza.

“Protecting our babies starts in pregnancy so with this little one, I’m glad I’ve been able to do my best to keep her safe.”

This week, starting April 30, is national Immunisation Week and Waitemata District Health Board is reminding people to immunise throughout the lifespan, starting at pregnancy and moving through infancy, childhood, adolescence and older age.

Waitemata DHB community paediatrician Dr Tim Jelleyman encourages people to check with their GPs that their whanau members are up-to-date with immunisations following recent cases of mumps and whooping cough in Auckland – both preventable through immunisation.

“Whooping cough is a serious disease for young babies as it can prevent them from feeding and breathing properly. Immunising expectant mums can protect unborn babies right up until they are old enough to be immunised themselves at six weeks old,” Dr Jelleyman says.

“We are currently experiencing a national outbreak of the disease. Since the beginning of 2018, more than 1000 cases of whooping cough have occurred, with 72 people, including 31 babies hospitalised.”

Dr Jelleyman says all women should get immunised against whooping cough and influenza during every pregnancy.

Whooping cough immunisation is free at all GP clinics for any women between 28 and 38 weeks pregnant but women should aim for 28 weeks for best protection. The influenza vaccine is free for pregnant women at any stage of their pregnancies during influenza season. This is now available at all GPs, medical centres and pharmacies.

Caption: Rachel Mattison with son Oscar who spent 11 weeks in hospital when he was born.

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For further information contact

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