



## Flu vaccinations are now available – protect your whānau from flu this winter



Flu vaccinations are now available at medical centres and some pharmacies in the Wairarapa.

Local doctors are urging people to get vaccinated to protect against this serious illness, particularly following a severe flu season in the northern hemisphere.

Given that experience, this year could be particularly bad for flu. A flu vaccination is one of the best ways to stay well during winter and avoid the spread of flu in the wider community. This year's vaccine provides protection against the strain that caused the worst of the illness overseas.

A recent study found that around 25 percent of the population get the flu virus each year, with 80 percent of those people showing no symptoms. That is 4 out of 5 people with flu germs that don't know it, possibly spreading it to friends and family.

Wairarapa DHB Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tom Gibson, suggests people have a vaccination before the onset of colder weather. "Now is the best time to have a vaccination, before winter really sets in, to ensure you're protected before the flu season starts," he says.

Flu vaccinations are free for pregnant women, for those aged over 65 and for people with certain medical conditions, including children aged under five with respiratory conditions. People can contact their local medical centre to check if they're eligible for a free vaccination, and to book an appointment. Flu vaccinations are also available at a number of Wairarapa pharmacies.

Some workplaces offer vaccinations to their staff. Workplaces can organise vaccinations by contacting their local medical centre.

### 4 out of 5 people who get the flu virus each year don't have any symptoms

You could be spreading the flu virus even when you feel completely well. Protect yourself and those around you this year by having a flu vaccination. Contact your local medical centre or pharmacy to have your flu vaccination today.

### Wairarapa DHB council appointments aim to enhance the consumer experience

The Wairarapa District Health Board Consumer Council is taking shape with the appointment of six new members. Diana Sotiri, Pene Saunders-Francis, Linda Penlington, Sarah Taylor-Waitere, Marlene Whaanga-Dean, and Paul Anderson join Council Chair, Mena Antonio, who was appointed late last year. Mena is excited about the opportunity for progress.

"My motivation is ensuring there is a match between what organisations say and what they do, in the context of service delivery," she says.

As a key DHB advisory board, and working in partnership with the DHB, the council will provide a forum whereby service design and delivery is influenced directly by the community voice. Council members were selected to ensure a balanced skill set that reaches out to the diverse Wairarapa community.

### LIVE STRONGER FOR LONGER

PREVENT FALLS & FRACTURES

### LOVE YOUR INDEPENDENCE

Every year one in three people over 65 will fall. For people aged 80 and over, the risk increases to one in two. Not every fall results in an injury, but those that do can cause broken bones, which can be painful and take a long time to heal.

A fall can be devastating for older people. It can make them fearful of falling again, which stops them doing the things they used to do. This can lead to social isolation and even depression.

People are often unaware of the link between a broken bone and osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is the gradual loss of bone strength and density. Over time bones become fragile and weak which causes other bones to break more easily. The good news is it's never too late to build up those bones and keep them strong and healthy. Fall prevention is the key.

The Live Stronger for Longer website [www.livestronger.org.nz](http://www.livestronger.org.nz) offers lots of practical information and advice on how to live an active, independent life and encourages people over 65 to exercise.

People that have good leg and 'core' strength\* also have good balance. Building your strength improves your balance and helps prevent falls. Exercise can:

- keep your bones strong
- give you more energy
- help you sleep better
- help control blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and weight

*\* What is core strength?*

*Your 'core' is made up of the muscles in your mid-section: your stomach, lower back and your sides. These muscles work to stabilise your entire body and give you balance and power.*

