

"I can't forget my memories of working in parts of Africa where there is almost no immunisation. I can still see the faces of mothers holding babies dying of measles. I remember feeling completely helpless watching children walk into the hospital with early signs of polio – because they would never walk again. No technology or medicine could save them. Preventable diseases take away happy, healthy and much loved children. Here in New Zealand we can stop it happening, because we have the choice to immunise our children."

Dr Nikki Turner
Medical Director,
Immunisation Advisory Centre

If you would like to be part of the '95% by 2000' immunisation coverage campaign, contact:

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IMMUNISATION

prevents diseases

Immunisation Advisory Centre

(IMAC)

vision

to eliminate preventable disease by increasing immunisation rates to 95% or higher by 2000.



ĀRAINGA MATE

Immunise to protect



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Immunise to protect

There is a paradox with immunisation. The more successful a programme is, the less people tend to think they need it.

Today, the diseases which immunisation prevents are quite rare, so parents can find it a difficult decision to immunise their healthy child. Yet research suggests that until 95% of New Zealand's population are immunised, there is still a real threat of outbreaks of these diseases.

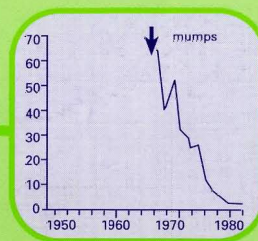
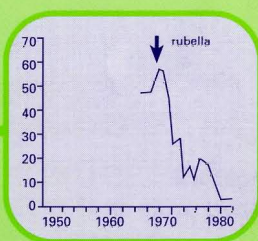
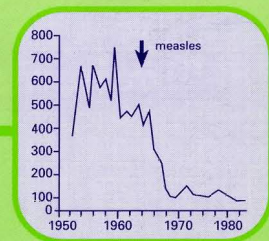
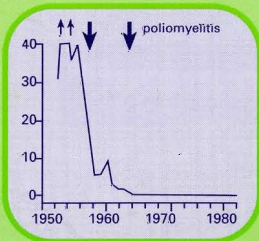
So, for everyone's health it's important to reach the minority of children who are not immunised.

The aims of the Immunisation Advisory Centre

- to promote awareness and knowledge of immunisation and vaccine-preventable diseases
- to influence attitudes by the provision of knowledge
- to encourage action in order to make full immunisation a reality.

The priority of this service is the delivery to professionals and the public of quality, factual, evidence-based information to support people in making an informed choice about their health and the health of their children.

number of cases (in thousands)



BELOW: The effect of vaccination on the incidence of various viral diseases in the USA. Most infections have shown a dramatic downward trend after the introduction a vaccine (arrows),

immunisation can eliminate preventable diseases such as hepatitis B, measles, rubella, diphtheria, polio, whooping cough, and HIB meningitis. It saves lives. Yet the 1996 North Health Immunisation Coverage Survey found that only 63% of children are fully immunised at the age of two. The rates for Maori and Pacific Island children are even lower. So at least one child in three is at risk from vaccine-preventable diseases.

North Health has taken the initiative by providing seed funding to create programmes to reach over one million people in the Auckland and Northland regions.

IMAC is run by the regional immunisation team which includes 16 health professionals, co-ordinators and community workers. They co-ordinate activities to promote immunisation and to ensure standards of vaccine delivery. This group includes Maori

and Pacific Island workers who are actively promoting and educating target groups within each community.

Members of the team are associated with the Disease Surveillance Unit of Auckland Public Health, Northland Public Health, Plunket, North Health, the Practice Nurse sections of the NZ Nurses Organisation, the Royal College of General Practitioners, Maori Women's Welfare League, and three major Independent Practitioner Associations; ProCare, IPCS and CHS. The team also holds the national contract for Immunisation Co-ordination.

The national team is a network of health professionals all working in immunisation co-ordination from the four regions of the country – North, Midlands, Central and South Health.

The number of cases of whooping cough, notified in the UK, fell steadily after the introduction of mass immunisation in 1958, although epidemics continued to occur at approximately four year intervals. Following this scare about the possible adverse effects of pertussis vaccine, the number of cases rose, and the epidemic in winter 1978-79 was the largest since the introduction of immunisation.

Graphs from "Medical Microbiology" by Mims, Playfair, Roitt, Wakelin and Williams (1993) Mosby, London

