

MidCentral DHB

Well communities



With the wintry weather outside, often we avoid the cold by staying indoors but try to make sure you are still incorporating some physical activity into your week as this is important for your wellbeing.

Social contact is also important, so make sure you keep in contact with friends and family and reach out to anyone you know who might be isolated or lonely.

Get your Influenza Vaccination

If you haven't already done so, don't forget to get your annual influenza (Flu) immunisation. A Flu vaccine protects not only you, but also the people around you. Around one in four New Zealanders are infected with influenza each year. Many people do not feel sick at all, but can still pass it on to others.

Annual influenza immunisation is free for:

- Pregnant women (any trimester)
- People aged 65 years or older
- People aged under 65 with certain medical conditions
- Children aged 4 or under who have been hospitalised with respiratory illness or have a history of significant respiratory illness.

To get your vaccination contact your general practice team or the Unichem Levin Pharmacy.

Testing for COVID-19

Until recently everyone with respiratory symptoms had a COVID-19 test. From now on, only people with a higher risk of COVID-19 need to be tested.

You are at higher risk if, in the last 14 days, you have:

- Had contact with someone who has / had (or probable) COVID-19 OR
- Have travelled overseas OR
- Had contact with someone who travelled overseas
- Worked as a cleaner at an international airport or maritime port OR
- Worked on international aircraft or shipping vessel.

Please note:

- Children under 16 will not be swabbed unless they are at high risk.
- Māori, Pacific peoples, those with pre-existing conditions, healthcare and aged residential care workers, may be offered a swab as part of community surveillance.

Kōhungahunga Maternity Unit Open Again

Kōhungahunga, the Horowhenua Maternity Unit was reopened at 7am on Monday 15 June.

The unit was closed at the beginning of April to allow for space and bed requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic planning period. Horowhenua maternity staff were relocated to work in Palmerston North over this time.

We would like to thank all Horowhenua women who birthed during this time and their whānau, as well as staff, for their understanding during the time the unit was closed.

Ambulance Services for Horowhenua residents – which hospital will you be transported to?

St John Ambulance provides the ambulance service for the Horowhenua Community. In an emergency, residents of Horowhenua will be taken to Palmerston North Hospital unless there is a clinical need that requires them to be transported to another facility.

Common questions ambulance officers are asked (and the answers) are:

If the ambulance needs to take me to hospital, can I go to Wellington Hospital as my family support is there?

As St John provides ambulance services for the MidCentral DHB area, people from Horowhenua will be transported to Palmerston North Hospital unless there is a clinical need for them to be transported to another facility.

Why do some people get transferred directly to Wellington Hospital in an emergency and others don't have the choice?

Ambulance services transport patients to the most appropriate hospital and will only take people to Wellington Hospital if their condition requires it, such as for some major traumas or STEMI (the most serious type of heart attack). Patients may also be taken to Hutt Hospital in the case of serious burns.

Mental Health Workshops

Two MH101 workshops are being held in the MidCentral District next month.

Blueprint for Learning are running workshops for frontline government agency staff, social services staff, and members of the community who are not trained in mental health or addiction. People are eligible to attend these free workshops if they are likely to come into regular contact with individuals experiencing mental distress in their day to day work.

The first workshop is being held in Palmerston North on Wednesday 19th August and the second in **Levin on Thursday 27th August**. For further information or to register please go to the webpage: <https://www.blueprint.co.nz/workshops/4-mh101/>.

Improvements at Palmerston North Hospital

New Women's unit opened

Women now have their own dedicated space in Palmerston North Hospital for surgical recovery and assessments with the opening of the new Women's Assessment and Surgical Unit (WASU).

The unit is an eight-bed short-stay surgical unit for women. It will have a specialist focus on gynaecology, however, women recovering from other surgeries will also be able to utilise the facility.

MidCentral District Health Board Healthy Women Children and Youth Operations Executive Sarah Fenwick said the unit would provide a safe space for women to recover.

"We are excited to have the opportunity to open this unit to assist the women of our district in having a dedicated space of their own within the hospital," Ms Fenwick said.

"The unit is going to be especially helpful for women dealing with pregnancy loss. We hope this unit will provide them with a space where they can recover with privacy and dignity."

New cancer treatment machine means people will get quicker, more efficient treatment

A new linear accelerator (LINAC) has replaced an older machine Palmerston North Hospital's Regional Cancer Treatment Service (RCTS) and has significantly improved the capacity for treating cancer patients.

The state-of-the-art LINAC started operating clinically at the end of May and is the first of two replacements at Palmerston North Hospital.

MidCentral DHB Cancer Screening, Treatment and Support Clinical Executive Dr Claire Hardie said the new LINAC meant the service was now on par with anywhere else in the world using the most modern techniques possible.

"This new machine enables us to deliver more efficient radiation treatment to the people of the MidCentral district, as well as the regional patients we serve from Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, Whanganui and Wairarapa," she said.

"Instead of treating 20 to 25 patients per day on a single LINAC, on this new machine we can now treat up to 35. We know our patients will now be getting quicker, more efficient treatment."

