



PUBLIC HEALTH HEALTH NEWS FOR SCHOOLS

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Hello, Kia Ora Koutou – Malo e Lelei – Talofa Lava – Ni Hao

Welcome to edition 17 of the health news for schools newsletter. The weather is certainly cooling down and we are now heading into the dreaded “coughs and colds” season. This edition includes tips on preventing seasonal illness and ideas to keep your home clean and warm during the cooler months.

CONTROLLING MOULD IN YOUR HOUSE

Mould is a type of fungus that grows in damp areas inside and outside the home. It usually appears as green, grey, brown, black, white or red growth or stains on walls, ceilings and other surfaces.

Small amounts of mould are common in most houses and usually don't cause any health concerns. However, when mould is left to grow in large quantities it can cause serious health problems. This is because mould releases thousands of very tiny or invisible spores into the air. These spores can cause serious health issues when breathed in. Mould needs moisture to live – it grows when there is dampness for a long period of time. If there is a lot of mould in a house, it means there is too much moisture in the air, or there may be a water leak. However, the most common cause is condensation.

Condensation is dampness on walls, ceilings, floors, windows or window sills. It happens when wet, warm air such as cooking or bathroom steam touches cold surfaces. This causes water to form. The most important thing is to reduce moisture in your house. This will help stop mould growing. Wipe condensation off windows and walls. Don't leave damp towels on the window sill to dry. Open windows slightly throughout the house for 1-2 hours a day so air can circulate. On sunny days, open windows and doors for longer to let in plenty of fresh air.

When showering, open a window in the bathroom a little or use an extractor fan. Leave the window open for a while after your shower to let steam and condensation clear.

Portable gas heaters create a lot of moisture in the house. Always open windows slightly when using them, or use a dry source of heat such as an electric heater or wood burner.

If you find mould in your home clean it away. This can be done easily using a household cleaner or White vinegar sprayed directly onto the mould and wiped away with a clean cloth. Remember to clean the cloth or throw it away when finished so that the spores don't spread.

To keep your house warmer and drier, open curtains to let sunlight in through the day and close them at night to keep the warm air in. Open wardrobes occasionally to air them out. Dry wet clothes or shoes outside before putting them into a wardrobe. Keep beds and furniture pulled slightly away from walls so air can circulate.



CHEAP WAYS TO CLEAN YOUR HOUSE

You don't always have to buy expensive cleaning products for general household cleaning. You may have some very good cleaning products already in your kitchen cupboards.

These cleaning tips are not new – they've been used successfully for many generations.

Make your own cleaning kit using four readily available ingredients: baking soda, salt, white vinegar, lemon juice. These can be as effective as commercial products and are definitely much safer and less expensive.

Baking soda can help remove strong, smelly odours from household laundry even when, after repeated washing, they still linger. Soak clothes overnight in a 1/2 cup of baking soda to 1 bucket of water before washing in the washing machine.

White vinegar naturally cleans like an all-purpose cleaner. Mix

equal quantities of water and vinegar into a spray bottle and you have a solution that will clean most areas of your home. It is not only a great cleaning product but can be also used as a disinfectant and deodoriser. It is safe to use on most surfaces and has the added bonus of being incredibly cheap.

Add ½ a cup of vinegar to a bucket of water and use to mop the bathroom and kitchen floors.

Lemon juice can be used for cleaning around your home. Mix with vinegar and/or baking soda to make cleaning pastes. Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section and use to scrub dishes, surfaces and stains.

Salt can be used to soak up carpet spills. Pour it over the stain – wait until it's dry, then vacuum and clean as usual.

For more tips check out www.hnzc.co.nz

Cheap and environmentally friendly hints and tips for around your home.

HEADLICE CAUSE ITCHING, AND OCCASIONALLY SCALP INFECTION

Not all children complain of an itchy head.

Life cycle

- Female lice lay about 7–10 eggs each night. Eggs are laid close to the scalp. The eggs or nits are small, hard and are normally pale grey in colour. Eggs hatch in 9 days and headlice will live for 40 days.

Looking for headlice

Look over the scalp for insects or eggs, especially:

- around the hairline at the back of the neck
- behind the ears
- on the crown.

When to treat

- If you find a LIVE insect on the scalp.
OR
- If you find eggs within 1 cm of the scalp.

How to treat

Speak to the school public health nurse, pharmacist or doctor for advice

- Use a shampoo or lotion (containing insecticide) available from the public health nurse, doctor or your pharmacy. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use wet combing: This involves wetting the child's hair and covering in conditioner, then using a fine toothed nit comb and combing through small sections of the hair. (white conditioner is perfect as any headlice or nits can be seen easily). This needs to be repeated every few days until there is no evidence of headlice or nits.

Ordinary shampoo or soap will not kill headlice.

You must not use: Flyspray, kerosene or animal remedies, as these may harm children.



KEEPING WARM AND HEALTHY THIS WINTER

Why is it important to keep my home warm and dry?

It's important for your family's health that your house is warm and dry. Cold and damp homes are linked to poor health, especially for babies and small children, people who are ill and older people. Here are some ways to keep your home healthy that won't break the bank:

How to heat your house

Only heat the room that you are in. Try and keep the temperature between 18 and 21 degrees. Dress warmly for bed and make sure your bedroom is warm enough - it is very important to stay warm during the night. Block up unused chimneys and stop draughts around doors and windows. You can make your own draught 'snakes' by stuffing rugby socks or pantyhose with newspaper or cushion filling. Up to 20% of heating can be lost through draughts. Open windows and curtains on sunny days, and close them when the sun goes down to trap heat in your home. Trim any trees that prevent sun entering your house (but if you are renting, remember to ask your landlord first!).

Curtains and blinds

When warm air hits cold glass, two things happen the warm air escapes outside, and the newly cooled air forms condensation on the windowpane. Keeping the warm air away from the window with curtains and blinds and insulating

the windowpane will help this. Curtains create a pocket of air between themselves and the window. How curtains are installed is more important than their material or thickness. Ensure your curtains and blinds form a good seal against all sides of your window frame. Net curtains are also OK at keeping heat in, as they generally sit quite close to the window and disrupt the downward movement of cool air. Floor-length curtains are the most effective.

Double glazing traps a layer of air between two glass windowpanes. Most new houses have double glazing. It's possible to retrofit older houses, but can be expensive. "Do It Yourself" insulation film is a cheaper option, is easy to install and can help prevent condensation and reduce heat loss. If you're renting, check with your landlord whether it's OK to install temporary double glazing.

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/brochures/keeping-warm-healthy.html>

TIPS TO PREVENT GETTING SICK

The single best way to prevent influenza (flu) is to get vaccinated. However good health habits such as covering your cough and washing your hands can help stop the spread of germs and prevent illnesses like the flu. The following tips may help:

1. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

2. Stay home when you are sick.

To help prevent spreading illness to others stay home from work and school.

3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

4. Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Practice other good health habits.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



Call Healthline on 0800 611 116 for free, for advice from our trained registered nurses. Healthline nurses can help you any time - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Phone calls are free from within New Zealand - this includes calls from a mobile phone. Call Healthline if you're:

- feeling unwell - but not sure whether you need to see a doctor
- needing some advice about a family member or friend who's sick (if you are with them)
- on holiday and want to know where the nearest doctor or pharmacy is.

Healthline nurses are specialists in assessing and advising over the phone.

TIPS FOR A HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH BOX

Preparing school lunches can be a challenge, seasonal fruit and vegetables can provide variety for a healthy lunch. Children need lots of nutrients to help them concentrate in class and help them through the school day.

Filling lunch boxes with pre-packaged food that is high in saturated fat, salt and sugar, is often the easy option.

To help maintain kids' energy levels during the day, lunch should consist of a variety of fruit and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, good fats and calcium-rich foods. Getting children involved by asking what they would like for lunch will help increase the likelihood of lunch boxes coming home empty.

Here are a few tips for a healthy lunch box:

Tip one: Cut fresh fruit into bite-sized pieces, add different fruit to create a fruit salad. Serve with a small tub of reduced fat yoghurt. For a savoury option, use baby carrots and cucumber sticks as dippers with a small container of hummus.

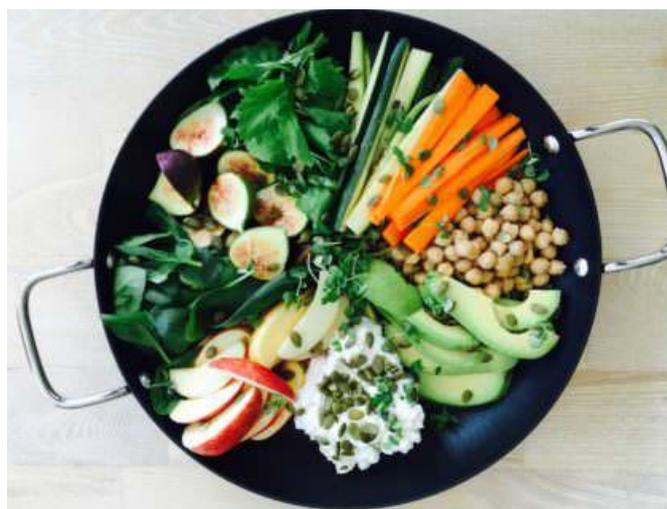
Tip two: Wholemeal wraps or mini pita pockets with simple fillings add variety to lunches. Try adding avocado, grated carrot and marmite, cucumber, mint and low-fat cream cheese or lettuce and mashed hard-boiled egg.

Tip three: Spread rice cakes with reduced fat cream cheese and top with a range of vegetables and fruit including carrot, celery, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, summer berries, sprouts and capsicum.

Tip four: Finger food is a favourite with kids and mini frittatas fit the bill perfectly. Sauté grated carrot and chopped onion. Add to grated courgette and mix through whisked eggs. Pour the mixture into muffin tins and sprinkle with a little grated cheese. Bake until golden, cool and pack.

Tip five: Lightly spread pita pockets with tomato paste and top with sliced mushrooms, capsicum and halved cherry tomatoes. Sprinkle with a little grated cheese. Bake in a hot oven until golden.

For more lunch box ideas, go to: www.5aday.co.nz.



RECIPE

Feijoa Cake with Lemon Passionfruit Drizzle

Serves: 8 to 10, Preparation: 20 minutes, Cooking: 30 minutes

Ingredients

6 feijoas, peeled and halved, 1 banana, mashed

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup wholemeal flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder

2 eggs, 100g butter, softened, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup desiccated coconut

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup caster sugar

Passionfruit Syrup

Flesh of 4 passionfruit, Juice of 3 lemons

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup caster sugar

Method

Preheat oven to 170°C

Grease and line a medium sized slice tin about 16cm

Beat the butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and creamy. Then beat in the eggs, banana and stir in the coconut, sifted flour and baking powder

Spread evenly into tin and press in the feijoas (sliced side up as per photo)

Bake for 30 minutes or until skewer comes out clean

To make syrup heat the lemon juice and sugar in a saucepan until boiling and stir until sugar is dissolved. Simmer for 3 to 5 minutes or until thickened to syrup, remove from heat and add passionfruit and stir through

Once cake has cooled take out of the tin and drizzle syrup on top



INFLUENZA

Influenza (or 'the flu') is caused by three types of influenza virus – A, B and C that infect the respiratory system. It is spread very easily by coughing, sneezing and direct contact with an infected person or by touching a contaminated surface. Spending a lot of time in an enclosed poorly ventilated space with an infected person increases the chances of getting influenza. Often you can be infectious for a day before symptoms even begin to appear.

The symptoms of flu are: fever, muscle aches, headache, lack of energy, dry cough, sore throat, and possibly a runny nose. The fever and body aches can last 3-5 days and the cough and lack of energy for two or more weeks.

The Flu can be a serious illness that affects the whole body and often lasts up to a week or more. It is different to a cold which affects the nose, throat and the upper chest and lasts for a few days. Flu can lead to a stay in hospital for any age group but particularly the elderly or people with ongoing medical conditions and can make existing medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes, a lot worse.

Children over the age of 6 months can have the vaccination, this is free for children aged four years and under who have been hospitalised for respiratory illness or have a history of significant respiratory illness or have other medical conditions that increase the risk. Some community pharmacies provide free influenza

vaccinations to:

- individuals aged 65 years and older
- pregnant women (any trimester)

Now is a really good time to think about getting the Flu vaccination before the main influenza activity in May to September.

Check with your family doctor or practice nurse for eligibility and vaccination charges. For more information www.fightflu.co.nz/



WORLD SMOKEFREE DAY 31 May



IT'S ABOUT
WHĀNAU

smokefree
AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND
2025

NOT REGISTERED WITH A GENERAL PRACTICE? (GP)

The GP Waiting List Enquiry Service is for people wanting to enrol with a medical practice and for general medical practice enquiries.

Please call 0800 55 56 57

www.centralpho.org.nz/practicesandfees

PUBLIC HEALTH HEALTH NEWS FOR SCHOOLS

PUBLIC HEALTH HEALTH NEWS FOR SCHOOLS ONLINE.

You can access 'Public Health News' from the MidCentral District Health Board website: <http://bit.ly/1QWrrll>

This latest issue, as well as back issues, are available on the website. So if you remember seeing an article that was of interest and you'd like a copy, it is now only a click away.

QUOTE

"Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children."

- Charles R. Swindoll

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Please email any comments about the newsletter, and ideas for future articles (including health and wellbeing initiatives your centre would like to share) to: pam.owen@midcentraldhb.govt.nz. For any enquiries please phone 0800 153 042
- we are happy to provide you with information and answer any questions you have.