



# Infection Control and Immunisation Background Information



Infectious diseases can be transferred from one infected person to another and include common viral illnesses which can be a significant cause of lost productivity for a business. New Zealand lost around 7.3 million working days to absence in 2020. Illness (non-work related) was the most common cause of absence. The direct costs of absence amounted to \$1.85 billion across the economy in 2020.

## Why is it Important?

According to the 2021 Workplace Wellness Report, New Zealanders are most likely to be absent from work due to illness, the second most common reason to take sick leave is caring for a family member or other dependent due to illness.

Promoting good infection control measures and immunisation within your workplace can prevent a wide range of infectious diseases. Correct hand hygiene in the workplace is a key measure to help staff avoid contracting and spreading infectious diseases.

Encourage staff to keep themselves and their families up to date with immunisations. National campaigns are currently being run to encourage New

Zealanders to be vaccinated against covid-19, measles and influenza.

Workplaces can play a key role in supporting our national Covid-19 vaccination campaign. We encourage all businesses to support their workers to access vaccination without workers facing costs or disadvantage. Click here to find out more.

## Facts

According to the 2021 Workplaces Wellness Report the average rate of absence in 2020 was 4.2 days per employee, down from 4.7 2018.

## Key Messages

Encourage staff to:

- Stay home if they feel unwell
- Wash and dry their hands
- Get their COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations
- Use the NZ COVID tracer app

Workplaces should provide adequate hand washing facilities and support their workers to access the COVID-19 vaccine. Reliable information and resources regarding the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Aotearoa New Zealand can be found from the sources below:

- Ministry of Health — [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)
- Unite Against COVID-19 — <http://www.covid19.govt.nz>
- Trusted information in te reo Māori and English can be found at [www.karawhiua.nz](http://www.karawhiua.nz)
- The Immunisation Advisory Centre — <https://covid.immune.org.nz/>
- Medsafe - [www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/covid-landing.asp](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/covid-landing.asp)
- From your GP, pharmacist, iwi health provider or other health professional.