

Weekly Health updates

26th July, 2018

MINISTRY of HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES
Shaping Fiji's Health



NATIONAL MENC IMMUNISATION ROLLOUT CONTINUES IN THE WESTERN AND NORTHERN DIVISION



National MenC Immunisation Program is currently being carried out in the western and northern division by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services

The National Meningococcal (Men C) Immunisation Program is currently being rolled out in the western and northern division. The program which initially started in the Central Division and Ra Subdivision on 14th May this year has seen over 100,000 children aged between 1 to 19 years been immunised. The rollout in the western division started this month on the 11th of July and the northern division rollout has started earlier this week.

The nation-wide mass immunisation campaign led by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services is supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Men-C immunisation programme aims to immunise all children and teenagers in Fiji aged between 1 to 19 years of age and it is currently being delivered at schools, kindergartens, health centres, nursing stations and communities across Fiji.

The Ministry would like to remind the general public that Men.C Immunisation is free, safe, it is effective, and it saves lives. Mass immunisation of Fijian youths also helps to protect the broader community, as it has been shown to significantly prevent the ongoing transmission of the bacteria within a population.

The Ministry acknowledges the support of the parents who have consented so far to have their children vaccinated. The Ministry also expresses gratitude to the teachers and the communities for their ongoing support for the National Men C Immunisation Program. Parents are encouraged to give consent for their children to be immunised and they are reminded that Meningococcal disease is a deadly disease and it's in the best interest of the children that they should get immunised.

- For children aged 1-5 years old, who do not attend school, parents and guardians can get them immunised by taking them to the nearest health centre or nursing station.

- For children aged 5 -17 years old, and in school, immunisation teams are visiting schools and immunising children under parental consent. Consent forms are provided to children under the age of 18 years, and immunisation will only be given to those children with a signed parental consent form. If any child misses out on their immunisation at school,

parents are encouraged to take their child to the nearest health centre or nursing station.

- For children aged 18-19 years old, undertaking tertiary level studies, stays home or is working, it is advised that you visit the nearest health centre or nursing station

Families are advised to familiarise themselves with the symptoms of this deadly disease and practice proper hygiene to prevent it from spreading. Men-C is treatable when caught in its early stages, but early detection is key to survival. If there is any sign suspect meningococcal disease, immediately go to a health facility to be assessed.

The MenC Diseases can be prevented by practicing proper hygiene by:

- Covering their mouth and nose with a tissue or handkerchief when coughing and sneezing
- Disposing of used tissues in the bin or washing your handkerchiefs daily with soap and water
- After coughing or sneezing, wash your hands with soap and water
- Don't share eating utensils, cups/glasses/water bottles, drinks at social gathering (taki), cigarettes or kava bowls.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease, especially for older children and adults include:

- Sudden fever
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Stiff neck/backache

Other symptoms include nausea, eyes are sensitive to light, confusion, and in the final stages of the disease, a red/purple rash on the skin.

In babies and small children, parents and carers should stay alert for the following symptoms:

- High fever, Unusual crying, Refusing to eat or drink, Vomiting, Floppy/drowsiness, Changes in sleeping patterns, Seizures or fits, In the final stages of the disease, a red/purple rash on the skin.

For further information about the disease, visit the Ministry's website: http://www.health.gov.fj/?page_id=6575 for information on Immunisation roll out program visit http://www.health.gov.fj/?page_id=6884

TAMAVUA VILLAGE, THE FIRST TO BENEFIT FROM WOLBACHIA PROGRAM



(pictured on the far right) Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Rosy Akbar with the members of the Tamavua village and World Mosquito Program (WMP) during the release of the first batch of mosquitoes with Wolbachia at the Tamavua village in the central division

The first release of the Mosquitoes through the Wolbachia Program was witnessed for the first time in Fiji, at the Tamavua village last week. This has been done in an effort to significantly reduce the risk of mosquito-borne diseases. Through community support, the World Mosquito Program (WMP) commenced their much-talked about project across Suva-Nausori and Lami, starting in Tamavua village in the central division.

Wolbachia is a safe, naturally occurring bacterium that, when present in Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, reduces the spread of dengue, chikungunya and Zika viruses. The aim is to help make Fijian communities healthier places to live.

Speaking at the official event at Tamavua village, the Health Minister, Hon. Rosy Akbar said that Wolbachia Program will relieve the dengue chikungunya and Zika burden in Fiji.

"This partnership is also in-line with the National Development Plan and showcases one of Fiji's many development priorities that is rooted in the principle of sustainability. Long-term monitoring in the majority of World Mosquito Program's international project sites show that Wolbachia is self-sustaining at high levels for up to seven years after release. In these areas, there has been no evidence of local dengue transmission. I am enthusiastic about the potential positive effect of this method on our health-care system," Minister Akbar

elaborated. The WMP Fiji team will continue to talk with communities while releases of mosquitoes with Wolbachia continues until the end of 2018. Taniela Moli, member of the independent Community Reference Group (CRG) gave the team a big thumbs up ahead of releases starting. His support was an echo of the other 11 CRG members who unanimously voted to endorse the program.

"This is a wonderful initiative and the local team have been inclusive and sensitive of community needs while carrying out their work and we are happy to back this up with our support and endorsement," said Moli.

"We, along with the community, wish this project success as we hope for healthier future for Fiji."

Over the next few months, communities can expect to see WMP Fiji staff releasing mosquitoes with Wolbachia from small white tubes closed with black mesh on both sides. These mosquitoes are safe and do not have any side effects when they bite.

Long-term monitoring in other World Mosquito Program project sites shows that Wolbachia is self-sustaining at high levels. In these areas, there has been no evidence of local dengue transmission. Locals may notice a short-term increase in mosquito numbers during releases, however the population size will soon return to normal. Fijians are reminded to continue protecting themselves from mosquito bites.

CHINESE HOSPITAL SHIP TO ASSIST PATIENTS IN FIJI



Pictured from left Mr Josefa Bolaqace (Ministry of Health) Chinese Ambassador to Fiji His Excellency Quin Bo and Mr Mesake Ledua the protocol officer of the Foreign Affairs Ministry Fiji at the Chinese Embassy

The Chinese Navy Hospital Ship "Ark Peace" will be visiting Fiji from the 2nd to 9th of August 2018 to provide a wide range of medical services to the people of Fiji for a second time after its first visit in 2014.

This partnership between the People's Republic of China and Fiji will unfold new opportunities to benefit thousands of people who are in need of medical services. The medical team comprises of specialized surgeons on the ship which is capable of serving 300 people in the morning and 300 people in the evening. Two major purpose of the ship's visit is to attend to patients from the three identified health centres namely Lami Health Centre, Valelevu Health Centre and Makoi health centre while the engineers from the hospital ship will attend to the maintenance of equipment's at the various health facilities.

Speaking at the press conference at the Chinese Embassy His Excellency the Ambassador of People's Republic of China Mr. Quin Bo said that China and Fiji enjoy a very cordial friendship and such initiative further strengthens the bilateral cooperation.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services has expressed its sincere gratitude to the People's Republic of China for its strengthened partnership with Fiji's Health Ministry. Fijians are advised to take full advantage of such services available to them through this initiative.

National Blood Services Manager of the Health Ministry Mr Josefa Bolaqace said that people will be notified of the daily schedules through the media and they can also contact the Health ministry for more information.

NCD MONTH OBSERVED AT NAVUA HOSPITAL



Free screenings provided during the Health Ministry's ongoing awareness programs on the prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases

Reaching out to the families and younger generation to take responsibilities of their health and wellbeing is one of the keys to addressing the increasing rates of Non Communicable Diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks. This was the message conveyed at the NCD Awareness Day Program organized at the Navua Hospital. The awareness program also included wide range of information dissemination on healthy living, healthy diet, physical activities, exercises and also free screenings at the Navua Hospital.

Sub-Divisional Medical Officer Navua, Dr Ana Maisema said that the program was organized to raise awareness amongst people to make healthy choices.

"At the end of the day the message is to be taken to the people on how they can make changes and

combat the rising cases of NCD's and in particular how the Special Outpatient Department patients can motivate the changes in other people", Dr Maisema added.

The various outreach teams including the Eye unit, Tobacco unit from the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and Empower Pacific were deployed to Navua hospital for awareness raising and information sharing relative to healthy lifestyle and disease prevention.

Ministry of Agriculture also presented on the importance of backyard gardening and distributed seedlings to the people present so that they could encourage people to grow fruits and vegetables.

The Ministry of Health firmly believes that the battle against NCD's can be won only if people are committed to their health and make healthy choices on a daily basis.