

2014 Winter Rheumatic Fever Awareness Campaign

Background

The 2014 Winter Rheumatic Fever Awareness Campaign is aimed at raising awareness of the serious impact rheumatic fever can have on the lives of children, young people and their families.

This winter awareness campaign is focussed on helping to increase knowledge of the link between sore throats and rheumatic fever, the serious heart damage that it can cause and the impact this has on at-risk families and communities.

Rheumatic fever has a huge impact on the lives of Māori and Pacific children and young people aged 5 to 19, and it starts with a sore throat. This campaign encourages parents and caregivers to respond to their child's sore throat by getting every sore throat checked by a doctor or nurse or at free community based sore throat clinics (Auckland and Porirua only).

The national campaign will start on 1 May with regional radio advertising in Auckland and Wellington which will be followed by national television advertising.

The Government has identified a reduction in the incidence of rheumatic fever by two thirds, to 1.4 cases per 100,000 by 2017, as one of 10 cross-government Better Public Services targets. It will take government agencies, health professionals and communities working together in new and different ways to prevent young people from developing this disease.

The Ministry of Health and the Health Promotion Agency are working together to ensure that the awareness campaign predominantly targets Pacific and Māori parents and caregivers of at-risk children and young people aged 5 to 19 years for initiatives to prevent rheumatic fever and a national campaign. The Health Promotion Agency is delivering the campaign.

About the campaign

The national campaign starts on 1 May and runs through until August 2014 and is timed for winter when rates of the sore throat that rheumatic fever develops from increase.

The campaign consists of sequenced mass media, including national TV and targeted regional media promotions in Auckland and Wellington, with a heavy weighted radio component, online banners, print, outdoor promotions, social media activities and a high level public relations component. National and regional communications channels targeting Pacific and Māori parents and caregivers of children and young people will be used.

Who is the campaign talking to and why?

The campaign aims to create national awareness of what rheumatic fever is, the heart damage it can do and the importance of checking children's sore throats at an early stage to prevent strep throat from leading to rheumatic fever. National incidence of rheumatic fever shows that Pacific and Māori children are most at risk and that the high risk areas include Auckland and Wellington.

Pacific children are 44 times more likely to contract rheumatic fever than other children in New Zealand and Māori children are 25 times more at risk. The campaign is targeted at parents and

caregivers of at-risk children and young people with a focus on Auckland and Wellington as there are high rates of rheumatic fever in these areas.

Key messages have been prioritised and turned into 'calls-to-action' for a range of communication channels designed to engage these audiences. These calls to action have been tested in focus groups with at-risk groups. Among the key messages are:

Key Messages

- A sore throat can lead to rheumatic fever if it's left untreated. Rheumatic fever is very serious and causes heart damage.
- Every time your child has a sore throat it could be serious. Don't ignore, take them to a doctor or nurse straight away to get it checked.
- We know it is a big ask to get your child checked every time they have a sore throat, but it is important. Do it for them.

Calls to Action

- Every time your child has a sore throat it could be serious – take them to a doctor or nurse straight away to get it checked. Ring Healthline on 0800 611 116 to find out where your nearest free sore throat clinic is.
- If you are prescribed a course of antibiotics, please take them for the whole 10 days or they might not work.

The Ministry of Health and Health Promotion Agency are grateful for the support of the launch of the Rheumatic Fever 2014 Winter Awareness Campaign by Alliance Health +, National Hauora Coalition, and the Pacific Health and Wellbeing Collective.

For further information: www.health.govt.nz/sorethroats

