

You may or may not be aware that some ECE's up in Hastings being effected by a nasty respiratory virus over the last week or two. This seems to be continuing on with another ECE also effected now. As far as I am aware this has not hit schools yet and seems to be confined to 3-4 ECE's at this stage.

I believe that there may be some messaging coming out in the media around this and the need to be vigilant with basic hygiene practises, staying at home if you are unwell and getting a COVID test if you fit the criteria, but in the meantime, just some reminders for you. I am sure you are doing this already.

- A respiratory virus is going around and has been causing some severe illness particularly among young children (in Hastings, we have no evidence as yet that CHB has been effected)
- We need to maintain basic COVID prevention methods as not only will these prevent transmission should it get into the community but the same methods will protect from other virus:
  - wash/sanitise hands regularly
  - Cover your mouth or Cough into elbow
  - Stay home if unwell.
- The level of COVID testing currently happening in our community has been going down. This is not what we would expect given the onset of winter coughs and colds due to RSV and other viruses. COVID cannot readily be distinguished from other respiratory virus illness based on symptoms. Testing is vital because if we assume a respiratory illness is due to something else when it is actually due to COVID there could be days or even weeks of delay before we recognize that community transmission is happening. The Ministry of Health advice remains for anyone with COVID symptoms to get tested. This is particularly important for anyone who works in a setting where they are more likely to come into contact with COVID such as border workers, anyone who has recently completed MIQ, or anyone who has recently travelled back from a Quarantine Free Travel zone. We all need to play our part in ensuring that if any COVID does occur in our community we find out about it quickly.

Hei kona mai

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