

Medical Director update

Resources for vaccine hesitant patients

This update provides you with the best information we have right now.

To say the last few weeks have been stressful for GPs would be an understatement.

On top of business as usual, vaccinations and swabbing, we now have the reality of COVID-19 in the community for our colleagues in Auckland and Waikato. These are difficult times, with GPs continuing to be at the forefront.

As we all know the only way forward is vaccination. Over the last few days, I have worked with a group of epidemiologists and infectious disease and vaccine specialists to come up with seven 'vax facts'. These are useful and easy to read facts about COVID-19 and the vaccine.

We have developed 'vax facts' A4-sized infographics to be printed and used within your practice as handouts, displayed as posters, or on social media.

The infographics (see links below) can be printed with your own printers, or sent to a local print shop (if you'd prefer the colour version) and provide good content to use as conversation starters for vaccine hesitant people. Please share them widely.

[The 'Vax Facts' \(red\)](#)

[The 'Vax Facts' \(blue\)](#)

[The 'Vax Facts' \(light blue\)](#)

The 'Vax Facts'

Vax Facts

1 So far, over 10 million* people around the world have died from COVID-19.

2 As well as being deadly and highly contagious, the virus can have serious long-term side effects called long COVID.

3 Without the vaccine, almost everyone will get the virus.

4 Those infected without being vaccinated are at least 20 times more likely to get dangerously ill. This is even higher for Māori and Pacific peoples.

5 The vaccine is cleared from the body within a few days, leaving the body's defences strengthened to fight COVID-19.

6 If vaccinated, you are less likely to spread the virus to your whānau, friends, and workmates.

7 The vaccine is Medsafe approved and safer than either the contraceptive pill or common pain relief such as paracetamol.

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* Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington in Seattle

Background

One of the key headline points include the fact 10 million people around the world have died from COVID-19. This does make it one of the biggest pandemics in history.

This estimate of 10 million comes from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington in Seattle. They are the research group who developed the Global Burden of Disease Programme when they were with WHO and have now moved to the University of Washington. They are considered the world leaders in disease modelling and projections.

They have estimated that the excess deaths worldwide since the beginning of the pandemic is approximately 15 million, of which 11 million are directly from COVID-19. The reported number of less than 5 million on common COVID-19 sites is widely accepted by the epidemiological community worldwide to be a gross underestimate. India alone is estimated to have had over 4 million deaths

Let us know how you're feeling

Sam and I continue to have regular meetings with the Ministry, from the Director-General down, and with Ministers and government officials.

We encourage you to share your thoughts and concerns about how you and your practices are coping with your role on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic. Feedback and real-life examples are really helpful when we are highlighting workforce concerns to central government.

Our workforce is at the forefront of the COVID-19 response, and we'll continue to play a crucial role. We have known all along that we have duty of care to our patients and the communities we serve and will continue to do so.

Stay strong!

Dr Bryan Betty
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