

Hawke's Bay District Health Board

HAVELOCK NORTH CAMPYLOBACTER OUTBREAK UPDATE

17 September 2016

Hawke's Bay District Health Board wants to keep Havelock North people up-to-date with important health information as the community recovers from this significant event.

The public meetings held a couple of weeks ago highlighted a number of issues we need to work on and address, such as improving our surveillance in the community. We want to be alerted quickly through a number of sources, other than the traditional methods of general practice and emergency centres. We will be working with schools and early childhood centres along with the Ministry of Education to come up with a better process to alert us to any increase of sickness.

We are also working with a number of other agencies on ways to quickly get mass communication out to older people and those confined to their homes.

The outbreak is a reminder to us all that no matter how well prepared you think you are for disasters there is always room for improvement. The transcript of the questions and answers from the public meetings are on www.ourhealthhb.nz

There are a lot of learnings and we are working hard to make sure they are addressed quickly. We are also looking forward to the Government inquiry, the final Terms of Reference to the inquiry is on www.ourhealthhb.nz

SCIENTISTS GATHER AS CAMPYLOBACTER INVESTIGATION CONTINUES



Hawke's Bay DHB invited 20 scientists from all over New Zealand to Havelock North on 6 September to review the on-going investigation into the Campylobacter outbreak.

The meeting was an opportunity for scientists from the Ministry of Health, Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR), Massey University, University of Otago, Hawke's Bay Regional Council and Hastings District Council, to discuss findings to date, document those findings and decide if more testing was needed.

The information gathered from the scientists will be fed into the investigation of the outbreak.

Public health information

The focus of the DHB's public health team is to make sure there is greater awareness of potential complications if you have been sick. Ongoing surveillance and monitoring is in place and that work continues with Hastings District Council to ensure a safe water supply is maintained.

Possible complications after having Campylobacter infections

Most people who get Campylobacter recover completely within two to five days, although sometimes recovery can take up to 10 days. Rarely, Campylobacter infection can result in complications.

Some people develop Reactive Arthritis. Others may develop a rare disease called Guillain-Barré Syndrome that affects the nerves of the body beginning days to weeks after the Campylobacter infection.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms below, please seek a health care professional's advice immediately.

- **Reactive Arthritis:** Joint pain (commonly knees, ankles and toe pain/swelling), signs of a urinary tract infection and/or sore eyes.
- **Guillain-Barré Syndrome:** Muscle weakness in legs, arms or face - worsening over the course of the day.

It is important to monitor how you are feeling for 4 weeks (one month) after recovering from a Campylobacter infection.

Surveillance and monitoring

While the outbreak is considered over, behind the scenes a high level of awareness is being maintained with health professionals to be alert for people presenting with post-infection complications.

The DHB continues to provide advice and guidance regarding appropriate testing and notification requirements to general practice.

At any time of year there is always gastric illness in our community and we continue to monitor and follow up these cases.

In addition, a surveillance programme is also in place for early detection of complications from this outbreak and any future outbreaks.

Ensuring safe water supply

The DHB's public health and drinking water teams are working closely with Hastings District Council and Hawke's Bay Regional Council to ensure the ongoing safety of the water supply.

Establishing the cause of the contamination and its implications for the ongoing water supply remain a priority for all concerned.

MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATES
CAN BE FOUND:
www.ourhealthhb.nz www.hastingsdc.govt.nz

We encourage everyone to look out for neighbours, families and anyone living on their own who may still be feeling under the weather from the illness. Healthline is available 24/7 on 0800 611 116.

We are always interested in your feedback. Email: comms@hbdhb.govt.nz, Phone: 027 599 9507 or write to: Chief Executive Hawke's Bay District Health Board Private Bag 9014, Hastings 4156