

HEALTH: MATERNITY & CHILD HEALTH

Building Better Public Services



Better maternity care and healthier children

Young New Zealanders need to get the very best start in life. That begins with expectant parents getting access to quality maternity services. And it continues with first-class health services throughout childhood.

National inherited a maternity service with chronic staff shortages. Parents questioned its quality, safety, and access to care. One District Health Board offered supermarket vouchers for young mums to leave the maternity unit within six hours of delivery.

Children weren't receiving all the regular and necessary health checks to ensure they were meeting development milestones, and fewer were immunised against serious diseases like mumps, measles, or whooping cough.

More choice and better care

We've worked hard to ensure pregnant women have more choice in lead maternity carers. We've improved continuity of care, provided the option of longer stays in maternity units, and better post-natal support.

We've made sure children receive better and more frequent health checks, vaccinations when they need them, and a solid foundation for a healthy life.

National will further improve the quality and safety of maternity care, improve the health of pre-schoolers, and further support healthier lifestyles at school to help ensure the next generation of New Zealanders gets the best start in life.

“National will ensure that, by the end of 2014, 95 per cent of all eight-month-old children are fully immunised with three scheduled vaccinations. We will also bring local maternity professionals together to regularly review births, expand the number of midwives in our voluntary bonding scheme, and grow B4 school checks.”

Key facts

Better maternity care



We've provided an extra \$54 million for maternity services. This includes 56,000 extra WellChild visits.

Improved child health



A record 91 per cent of two-year-olds are fully immunised, up from 73 per cent a few years ago.

We've delivered more than 100,000 B4 School Checks to ensure children are ready, and healthy when they start school – a record high.

Boosted the maternity workforce



Around 180 midwives are currently enrolled in the Voluntary Bonding Scheme.

We expect an extra 170 midwifery graduates in 2011 compared to only 118 a few years earlier.

National has...



Boosted funding for maternity and child services

- ✓ Invested an extra \$54.5 million more into quality maternity services. This includes:
 - \$18.5 million to improve the safety and quality of services for mothers and babies, by bringing together all local maternity professionals for clinical reviews of all births.
 - \$6 million to revamp information services for new parents.
 - \$6.8 million to help vulnerable mothers access a fuller range of health and social services. It will also assist midwives to make appropriate and timely referrals to other practitioners.
 - \$2 million to establish a central maternity database that monitors pregnancy through the first three months of a baby's life.
- ✓ Provided an extra \$9 million since 2008 for the Zero GP Fees for Under Sixes programme.
- ✓ Allocated \$12 million to reduce rheumatic fever, to benefit 22,000 children.



Provided better maternity care

- ✓ Provided more support services for first-time mums including more Plunket, WellChild, and Tamariki Ora visits.
- ✓ Fully funded PlunketLine for a 24-hour, seven-days service.



Improved child health

- ✓ Provided more funding for the Zero GP Fees for Under Sixes programme, providing more affordable doctor visits for young children.
- ✓ Delivered record rates of immunisation for under twos.
- ✓ Delivered a record number of B4 school checks for four-year-olds to ensure they are fit, well, and ready to start school.
- ✓ Continued funding school nutrition programmes, including *Fruit In Schools*, to encourage children to eat more fruit and adopt healthier lifestyles.
- ✓ Worked with industry to more than double 'food advertising free zones' during children's TV.
- ✓ Boosted physical activity in schools through Kiwisport.



Boosted the health workforce

- ✓ Increasing the number of midwives in hospitals, together with medical specialists on-site and on-call.
- ✓ Put in place the Rural Midwifery Recruitment and Retention scheme.
- ✓ Boosted the number of midwives through our Voluntary Bonding Scheme.

Our results so far

We're making each health dollar go further with a focus on efficiency and less bureaucracy.

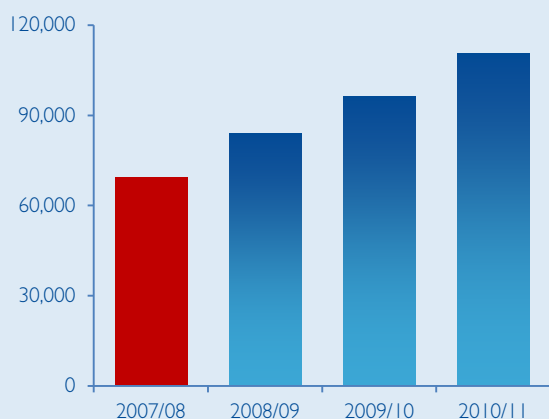
More support for young mums

- More WellChild visits for 18,000 mothers – with a focus on first-time mums.

24-hour PlunketLine

- 41,000 more calls were made to PlunketLine in 2010/11 – after National funded it to provide a 24-hour 7-day service – compared with 2007/08.

Calls to PlunketLine



Better child health

- A record 91 per cent of two-year-olds are fully immunised – up from 73 per cent three years ago.
- More than 100,000 B4 School Checks to ensure children are ready, and healthy, to start school.
- 22,000 children to benefit from National's focus on rheumatic fever.

More maternity staff

- More midwives working in the community or in hospitals.
- Around 180 extra midwives enrolled in the Voluntary Bonding Scheme.
- 170 more midwifery graduates in 2011 than in 2008.

What we will do next...

I. Improve the health of our youngest and most vulnerable children

→ Introduce a new immunisation target. By the end of 2014, 95 per cent of all eight-month-old children will be fully immunised with three scheduled vaccinations.

Now that we are on track to meet the national immunisation target for 95 per cent of two-year-olds being fully immunised by June 2012, it's time to set a new goal.

Research shows children are more likely to complete all immunisations if they begin early. It also shows they are more likely to be enrolled with their GP and in regular contact with them, helping set healthy foundations for life.

Children are most vulnerable to infections like whooping cough and pneumococcal disease between three and 18 months old. That's because immunity built up from their mother begins to reduce, and they're unable to respond quickly to diseases. Early vaccination helps a child's immune system become more responsive and react quickly to infections.

Three sets of vaccinations are given at six weeks, three months and five months to protect children against polio, whooping cough, hepatitis B, and pneumococcal disease.

→ Ensure all children are enrolled with a GP or WellChild/Tamariki Ora provider at birth.

We want to ensure every baby is given the chance for a healthy life by being enrolled at birth with a GP or WellChild/Tamariki Ora provider.

This will help support the new immunisation target.

Budget 2011 allocated funding to this programme.

→ Work with primary care to extend the *Zero Fees for Under Sixes* scheme to after-hours care.

See our **Better Care Closer to Home** policy

→ Roll out a \$12 million nationwide rheumatic fever programme targeting vulnerable communities.

Rheumatic fever is an entirely preventable third-world disease that can have serious consequences for children during childhood and throughout their lifetime. Many sufferers will need years of monthly antibiotic treatment and even cardiac surgery.

The rates of rheumatic fever in New Zealand are around 14 times higher than in any other OECD country. National is determined to significantly reduce rheumatic fever through a \$12 million programme – funded by Budget 2011 – that targets communities of high prevalence.

Proportion of eight-month-olds immunised	Our target dates
70%	Now
85%	July 2013
90%	July 2014
95%	End of 2014

- Work to ensure even more four-year-olds receive a B4 school check, and have any potential health issues assessed and treated by a health professional or specialist.

These checks are an opportunity for a stocktake – to see exactly where a child is at, physically, emotionally, and socially.

Today around 80 per cent of four-year olds are being checked before heading off to school. More than 100,000 children have had a B4 School Check since late 2008 compared with just 3,000 under the previous Government.

Children with eyesight problems are being identified and are seeing clearly for the first time. Others are being helped to hear better, or to work through behavioural issues.

We will ensure more children get B4 school checks and receive the potentially life-changing help they need. Extra B4 school checks will be funded within existing health budgets.

2. Further improve maternity services

- Work with midwives, doctors, and other health professionals to further improve the quality and safety of maternity care.

Budget 2011 funded \$33 million for a series of maternity safety and quality initiatives.

We will continue working with maternity experts and new mothers to improve services. This includes:

- Bringing all local maternity professionals together for regular clinical reviews of all births.
- Increasing the number of midwives in hospitals.
- Better access to medical specialists on-site and on-call.

- Roll out improved ante-natal classes to respond to the needs of today's parents.

Ante-natal classes haven't really been updated since the 1960s. We need to make sure the right information is being provided to meet the needs of today's parents.

Building on advice from the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Sir Peter Gluckman, about the importance of maternal nutrition, we will also improve nutrition education for mothers during pregnancy and after delivery.

Budget 2011 allocated up to \$6 million to revamp parent information services.

- Further grow the number of midwives enrolled in our Voluntary Bonding Scheme and continue the Rural Recruitment and Retention scheme.

180 graduate midwives have enrolled in National's Voluntary Bonding Scheme and are providing midwifery services in areas around the country with high demand.

We're working to grow this successful programme to provide more midwives where mums-to-be need them most.

We will also continue to support midwifery in rural areas with the Rural Recruitment and Retention Scheme.

In 2011, midwifery graduate numbers are projected to increase from 118 to 170. From 2012 annual graduate midwife numbers are projected to stabilize between 195 and 220.

Growth in the number of midwives will be funded from within existing health budgets.

3. Encourage healthier lifestyles at school

- Continue education about healthy lifestyles through Kiwisport and other programmes.

We know that children are less active now than they were 20 years ago.

National has put extra funding towards giving more kids the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity through the Kiwisport programme.

We will continue to support this important programme, and will investigate expanding the successful Project Energise. This has reported reduced weight, waist measurements, and improved running ability in primary school children. Funding for Kiwisport will come from within existing budgets and the annual increase in the health budget.

Labour would take New Zealand backwards

Labour:

- ✘ Means more bureaucracy, more committees, and endless visions that don't deliver.
- ✘ Provided only 3000 B4 school checks compared to National's 100,000 plus checks.
- ✘ Said in 2001 that reducing the impact of rheumatic fever was a priority. They did nothing. Instead rheumatic fever rates increased.
- ✘ Allowed 27 per cent of under twos to miss out on vital immunisations – meaning more children were catching preventative diseases like whooping cough or mumps.
- ✘ Cut funding for PlunketLine in 2006, despite demand from parents. National reinstated and fully funded the 24-hour service.

We can't afford another dose of Labour.