



How's your home? Housing survey

A warm, dry home is fundamental to good health – and Public Health South wants to better understand the housing situation in the Southern district.

Its new housing survey - *How's your home?* – aims to identify housing needs – starting initially in Central Otago but looking elsewhere in Southland and Otago.

“Housing issues can expose people to a number of health risks,” says Southern DHB Medical Officer of Health, Dr Marion Poore. “Understanding our housing needs is the first step to improving housing, which helps reduce injury and disease, improve quality of life and even saves lives.”

Open to all residents of the Southern district, the survey is anonymous and takes just three to four minutes to complete. Participants can enter to win one of three \$100 petrol vouchers. Closes May 6th.

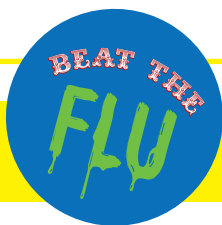
Take the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SDHBHousing>

- Structurally deficient housing increases the risk of injury
- Expensive or short-tenured housing is stressful
- Cold, damp and draughty homes contribute to cardiovascular and respiratory problems
- Crowded housing increases risk of exposure to infectious disease
- Air pollution – from inefficient domestic burners using coal and wet wood – harms respiratory and cardiovascular health, and may trigger allergies and asthma

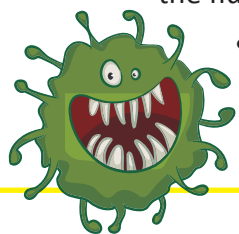
For more warm and health home information, see <http://www.cosyhomes.org.nz>

THE INFLUENZA VIRUS HAS ARRIVED EARLY!

FLU FACTS:



- Around a quarter of New Zealanders are infected with flu each year. Four out of five of these won't feel sick at all, but can still pass it on to others*
- Flu isn't just a bad cold – it can be serious and is sometimes fatal
- There's no such thing as natural immunity to flu
- Immunisation prepares your immune system to fight flu
- You cannot get flu from the vaccine
- Anyone can get the flu – being fit young and healthy doesn't protect you against the flu
- Flu immunisation is FREE for those most at risk.



*The SHIVERS Serosurvey 2015

Flu vaccination now available

The flu has already arrived in the Southern district and residents are urged to get the flu vaccination to protect themselves, their families and the community against the virus.

“We typically see more flu cases in July, but this year the flu has arrived much earlier with a high number of cases,” says Southern DHB Medical Officer of Health, Dr Susan Jack.

“The flu vaccine is now available from your general practice or pharmacy and is the best protection against the virus. The vaccine can take up to two weeks to start protecting you so people should really get in now and urge their loved ones to do the same.”

Although symptoms start similarly to the common cold, they tend to be more severe and last for longer. Flu symptoms include

a sudden high temperature, headache, general aches and pains, tiredness and a sore throat. They can make you feel so exhausted and unwell that you have to stay in bed and rest until you feel better.

The flu vaccine is free for New Zealanders at high risk of complications – pregnant women, people aged 65 and over, and people of any age with long-term health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, respiratory disease (including serious asthma), kidney disease and most cancers.

To find out if you are eligible for a free vaccination, or for other information, talk to your family doctor or practice nurse. You can also find out more by visiting www.fightflu.co.nz

New pharmacy clinic launches

Patients managing multiple medications have access to more support with the launch of a new pharmacy clinic in Dunedin.

The new outpatient clinic – a joint venture between the University of Otago's School of Pharmacy and Southern District Health Board – is believed to be the first of its kind in Australasia.

Patients referred to the clinic receive an hour of specialist pharmacist time to work through their needs and provide additional advice and support, including medicines education to increase their adherence, minimise side effects and improve health outcomes. Patients are not charged for the service.

Officially opening the clinic on March 29, Health Minister Dr David Clark said the clinic was innovative solution for people with complex health needs, helping to reduce inequities. “We know that early intervention and prevention, the cornerstones of primary care, lead to better health outcomes for people and can help take pressure off our hospitals and specialist services,” Dr Clark said.

The new clinic provides several consultation rooms with space for pharmacists, patients and students, a waiting area, a reception area and storage for equipment and consumables. No medications will be dispensed in the clinic; it provides clinical advice only.



University of Otago Chancellor Dr Royden Somerville, Southern DHB Deputy Commissioner, Richard Thomson, Dr Carlo Marra and Health Minister Dr David Clark at the unveiling



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Commissioner Update

Kathy Grant



Easter weekend is just ahead, and marks for many of us a welcome autumn break, and the chance to sort out a few chores as we look ahead to winter. As well as stocking up on firewood, tidying up the garden and putting on pots of vegetable soup, it's also the right time to think ahead for staying well.

Winter can make some illnesses worse, and there will be circumstances beyond our control where we may find ourselves unwell.

But there are some things we can do, and now is a good time to start putting some plans in place.

Firstly, please get a flu jab. This is an easy form of protection.

If you have an ongoing health condition, consider a visit with your general practice to discuss your health needs, issues you may need to watch out for, and when to seek further help.

We know not all houses in the South are as warm and dry as we would like. But there are cost-effective steps we can take to reduce moisture and make homes easier to heat. Advice on heating options and subsidies can be found at www.cosyhomes.org.nz

Making it easier to get help early is one of the reasons we have been focused on supporting general practices to work more flexibly, through the Health Care Home programme. This will lead to new ways of working, including telephone consultations, and greater use of technology, so doctors and nurses have more time for longer consultations with those who need it the most.

We were also excited to launch a new School of Pharmacy Clinic with the University of Otago, to help people get the most out of their medications regimes. The Southern district has a high rate of people on multiple medications, which can lead to further risks and complications, so this is a further step towards supporting people to stay well.

Finally, congratulations to the team at the Maniototo Health Trust on the opening of their redeveloped aged care facility. This is a significant achievement for the community, and the result of their dedicated fundraising efforts. It contributes to a network of care across the district, and speaks to the Trust's commitment to delivering quality care closer to home for their people.



Patient Liz Harris and Musselburgh Medical Centre Practice Nurse Team Leader Marryllyn Donaldson discussing Liz's ACP

Southerners encouraged to think about what matters to them

Southern DHB and WellSouth are encouraging everyone, regardless of their age or health condition, to think about, talk about and share what matters to them for their future health care.

“Advance care planning is about exploring what matters to a person and can be completed by anyone at any time. Advance Care Plans are often thought to be for people at the end of life, however it also becomes important if you have some health problems, are getting older, or simply have strong views about what you do and do not want,” says Southern DHB Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialist and Clinical Advisor ACP, Helen Sawyer.

“This information is shared with their loved ones and healthcare teams so treatment and care plans can support what matters most to them in the event they become unable to make decisions for themselves.”

Making an Advance Care Plan (ACP) was a priority for Dunedin resident Liz Harris who suffers from a respiratory condition. Liz wants to make sure that her family and healthcare providers know what is important to her when she can no longer speak for herself and is encouraging everyone to make an ACP.

Liz's mother didn't have an ACP when she died and this highlighted the importance of having one in place for Liz. “We had to make decisions that we were unsure about as my mum had not told us her wishes. I don't want that to happen to my family,” says Liz.

“For me, having an ACP in place is one of the most important things I need to do. It gives me peace of mind – it's a gift to my family so they know my wishes and they don't have to think about what I would have wanted.”

ACP champion Marryllyn Donaldson, who is Musselburgh Medical Centre Practice's Nurse Team Leader, says a good way to begin making an ACP is by having a conversation with your healthcare professional, family, or even friends over lunch.

“Talk about what matters to you as you get older, how you want to live the rest of your life and your future healthcare needs. It's important to know that you can complete an ACP at any age and any time – the sooner the better,” she says.

ACP's can be completed online at www.advancecareplanning.org.nz, or a plan template can be downloaded to complete later and updated at any time.

Nurse opens world to refugee patients

“We just need to drop by Pak'n'Save to buy a bag of bees,” said Registered Nurse Fadheela Ahmed to her young son, who looked at her perplexed and responded “You can't buy a bag of bees here, mum!”

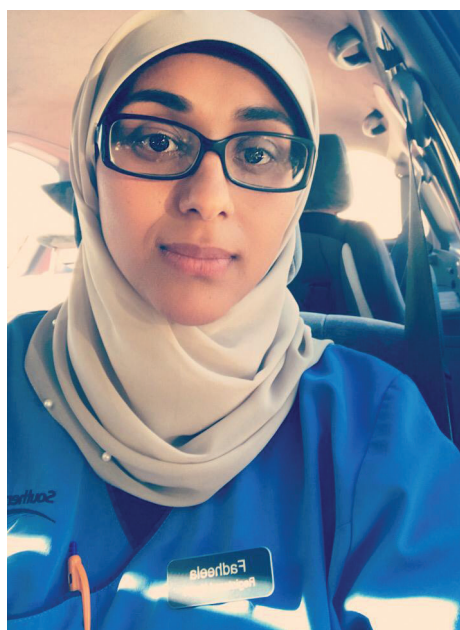
That was the day Fadheela knew the significance of how a simple language mishap (peas not bees) could act as a barrier for refugees settling into their new world in Dunedin.

Originally from Bahrain, Fadheela is married with two children and has called New Zealand home for 14 years.

“I spent the first two years here learning how to speak English from SpongeBob Squarepants!” she laughs. “Once you overcome the language barrier, the world opens up to you.”

Indeed, the world did open up. After completing a nursing degree at Otago Polytechnic, Fadheela began her career as an Acute Orthopaedic Nurse at Southern DHB.

“My heart has always been in nursing. It gives me such purpose, even more so now, connecting with Muslim patients.”



When the first cohort of refugees came to Dunedin around three years ago, Fadheela was asked to be an Arabic translator for a Muslim patient – a role she now enjoys in partnership with her nursing.

“It can be such an overwhelming experience for someone who isn't familiar with the New Zealand health system, customs and culture. Everything is different, so to have someone to connect with is crucial.”

When it comes to her culture she encourages people to ask questions, insisting it's not offensive. “I'd rather people get the full picture than make assumptions about my culture and me.”

Fadheela regularly presents to teams across the organisation on how to treat and support Muslim patients, including information about their faith and customs.