

ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK

13 – 19 MAY 2013



At least 1 in 10 babies born in New Zealand today will develop an allergy and other related health issues such as asthma, eczema and allergic rhinitis.

These allergic conditions impact the quality of young children's lives, affect learning and development, and in some cases result in life-threatening reactions called anaphylaxis.

Allergy Awareness Week on 13 – 19 of May will raise awareness of the growing and increasingly complex allergy epidemic and the impact on people's lives.

Allergy New Zealand, who runs the annual campaign, is a not-for-profit organisation whose primary role is to provide information, education and support to the many thousands of New Zealanders living with allergies.

Allergy New Zealand's CEO, Penny Jorgensen, says the health system does not see the increase of allergies in New Zealand.

"The health system generally does not understand or take account of the increasing complexity and severity of allergies and many families and individuals are left to struggle with the consequences."

Dr Miriam Hurst, Chair of the NZ Clinical Immunology and Allergy Group, says there is a need for more resources in all allergy areas.

"There is a need for more resources to be available, from increasing the numbers of allergy specialists to educating GPs and community as a whole."

"Awareness of less common but distressing conditions, such as oral allergy syndrome and food and exercise-induced anaphylaxis, can also help identify and remove allergic triggers, while better education can prevent misinformation as well as avoiding unhelpful and potentially dangerous treatments."

Allergy New Zealand is encouraging people to show their support for allergy education and the thousands of allergy affected children and families in NZ by painting one finger out of 10 and hold a fundraising event, such as a allergy free morning tea.

Fundraising is crucial to help Allergy New Zealand support thousands of Kiwi children and families everyday which is why fundraising through Allergy Awareness week is so crucial.

Allergy New Zealand's info pack and other free resources including recipes are available here, or to make a donation go to Allergy New Zealand.

For further information or to arrange an interview time with an Allergy New Zealand spokesperson, ambassador or allergy specialist, contact:

Karina Yanez on 021 0842 2680

About Allergy New Zealand

Allergy New Zealand is the national charity providing information, education and support to people with allergies, their caregivers, schools, health professionals and communities.

Key facts:

- Over one-third of New Zealanders suffer from an allergy-related health issue
- Food allergies are increasing worldwide including in complexity and severity, especially in children
- Allergies, including to food, significantly affect the quality of life of sufferers, mainly children
- Allergy New Zealand receives no Government funding and is totally reliant on donations and grants
- Allergy services are limited, and those at risk of anaphylaxis, the most severe form of allergic reaction, must be prescribed an EpiPen or Anapen – this life-saving medication is not subsidised by Pharmac and can be cost-prohibitive for people at risk

To learn more about allergies and how to help others, particularly those with food allergy and/or at risk of anaphylaxis, go to www.allergy.org.nz.

Links

Allergy NZ website: www.allergy.org.nz

Allergy Awareness Week: <http://www.allergy.org.nz/Allergy+Awareness+Week+2013.html>

Allergy New Zealand Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/allergy.nz?ref=hl>