

# Notifiable Disease and Injury Surveillance: Frequently Asked Questions

## What are 'notifiable diseases'?

A notifiable disease is a disease or injury that health professionals are legally required to report to public health authorities. This is a legal requirement under the Health Act (1956) and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act (1996).

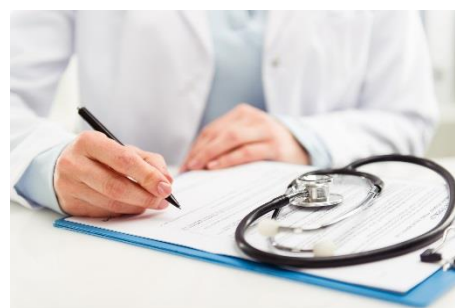
## What does surveillance mean?

This means the collection of information about a disease or injury and its risk factors to inform the actions taken by public health authorities.

## Why is this information collected?

The reason depends on the type of disease or injury. Information about a notifiable disease may be used to:

- Identify and manage an outbreak of disease.
- Identify the source of disease or injury.
- Identify new diseases or new sources of disease and injury.
- Monitor how much of a problem different diseases or injuries are.
- Inform immunisation strategies.



## What happens after my information is notified?

Information from your doctor or nurse is sent to Community and Public Health. This is the public health unit responsible for the public health follow-up of notifiable diseases in Canterbury, South Canterbury and the West Coast.

Staff at Community and Public Health will review the information about your illness. If they need more information they will call you or send out a questionnaire for you to complete. In a small number of cases, a home visit is required to talk with you further or to take soil or water samples.

Your information will also be entered into a national database. This allows public health staff to monitor national disease rates and to compare disease rates between regions.

## Contact your local public health unit for more information

If you have questions or concerns about your own or your family member's illness, then you are welcome to call our staff.

Call your local Community and Public Health office and ask to speak to the on-call Health Protection Officer:

- **Christchurch:** 03 364 1777
- **Timaru:** 03 687 2600
- **Greymouth:** 03 768 1160

[More information is also available on the Community and Public Health website.](#)