

MEDIA RELEASE

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Celebrating our midwives

May 5 is International Day of the Midwife – celebrated worldwide and in our region.

There are about 1,450 babies born across the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough region every year, and there are approximately 60 midwives working in our hospitals and communities.

Nelson Marlborough Health's Associate Director of Midwifery Debbie Fisher says that we are fortunate in New Zealand to have high quality maternity services and midwives, unlike many parts of the world.

"Many people would be shocked to know that, in 2017, approximately 287,000 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

"In NZ however, every woman who is eligible for free public healthcare will receive free LMC and specialist services," Debbie says.

Midwifery care doesn't start and end with a baby's birth. A family's lead maternity care midwife (LMC) meets with their client regularly throughout pregnancy for health check-ups, birth planning, and to listen and discuss any concerns. After birth, a LMC continues to care for a woman and her baby for up to six weeks after birth to monitor a woman's healing, give breastfeeding and baby-care advice, refer her to any extra healthcare she may need and help parents adjust to parenthood in those all important first 45 days.

"Our core midwifery teams provide additional care for women during their stay in hospital and also provide excellent care for women and babies with additional health needs. They are the experts in care for women who need that all important support in the early days with breastfeeding," Debbie says.

How to celebrate International Day of the Midwife on 5 May

Nelson Hospital: Afternoon tea event at the Nelson Maternity Unit from 2.30-3.30pm. All welcome.

Nelson city: Morning tea event at the Broads playing fields, hosted by the Nelson Playcentre Association, from 11am to 1pm. The wet-weather alternative venue is the Tahunanui Community Centre.

Wairau Hospital: Morning tea event at the Wairau Maternity Unit from 10-11am. All welcome.

Motueka: Morning tea at Motueka Playcentre from 10.30am.

About midwifery in our region:

- Midwives complete education and ongoing learning every year to keep up to date – providing high quality care for women and babies
- Diabetes in pregnancy is rising – to help keep women and babies well we now screen all women for diabetes in early pregnancy.

- Nelson Marlborough Health recently undertook a maternity survey. More than 200 mums and dads responded.
- All pregnant women are eligible for free flu vaccination – talk to your midwife and see your GP or pharmacist for your free vaccine. Pregnant women are more likely to get very sick with a flu so it's important to get protection now.
- Where does your baby sleep? Talk to your midwife today about having a special safe place for your baby to sleep – we offer free Pepi Pods for babies that need a safe place to sleep – ask your midwife about it today.

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