

# Join our **WellKiwis** study and help fight the flu



*'Wouldn't you like to be part of the change that helps make our children be more healthy than the generation that came before them?'*

*Jamie*

## Live in the **Wellington** region and expecting a baby?

We're calling for volunteers to take part in ground-breaking research into how children develop immunity to the flu. This will help scientists develop a universal flu vaccine that could put an end to flu pandemics and save millions of lives around the world.

**WellKiwis**  
influenza study



## What is the WellKiwis study?

We're looking for pregnant mums in the Wellington region to take part in WellKiwis, a study being run by scientists at ESR.

Influenza (flu) is a serious illness that affects millions of people globally. It can cause severe complications in young children and the elderly, and studies show that a person's first exposure to the flu has a great effect on their immunity against the flu throughout their life.

The purpose of the WellKiwis study is to follow children from birth to 7, watching closely to see how their first exposure to the flu or flu vaccine influences their ongoing immune response to the flu as


they grow. We hope that our findings will lead to a more effective and longer lasting flu vaccine for everyone, prevent pandemics and save lives.


## Taking part: the benefits for you and your child

There are many ways that you and your child will benefit from being part of the WellKiwis study, while helping to save lives:


- Your child will have healthcare professionals looking out for their wellbeing, and those in your family, for the duration of the study.

- Every time your WellKiwis child catches a cold or flu, a nurse will be in contact and may come and visit you at home.
- You will find out quickly if your child is infected with the flu or another respiratory virus (including COVID-19) and get access to the right support to keep them healthy and well.
- You'll receive a gift card each time a sample is taken to thank you for your participation.

 Pregnant: You can enrol at any time during your pregnancy

 Labour: Call the WellKiwis team to take baseline cord blood after birth

 Enrol your baby aged 2-8 weeks old

 Child 0-7 WellKiwis monitor your child's flu-like illnesses for seven years

 Child is 7

*If there are any COVID-19 lockdowns during your time with us, we'll adapt our contact and protocol to make sure that you and your child are kept safe.*

## You and your baby's journey with WellKiwis

### Register your interest in being part of the WellKiwis family

You can register your interest and enrol in WellKiwis at any time during your pregnancy. Your midwife or obstetrician will talk to you about the WellKiwis study and give you the WellKiwis pamphlet. If you are interested in finding out more about the study, they will pass on your contact details to the WellKiwis team. You can also contact the WellKiwis team directly.

Expectant mums are enrolled into the study while they are pregnant. Babies can only be enrolled after they are born.

### When you go into labour

Call the WellKiwis team to let them know. Your midwife will also notify the WellKiwis team. After the birth of your baby, a WellKiwis midwife will take a baseline cord blood sample from the umbilical cord.

### Baby is 2-8 weeks old

A WellKiwis team member will enrol your baby if you decide you want to continue to be involved in the study.

### Child is 0-7 years old

We'll keep in contact and monitor your child's flu-like illnesses for seven years. During the flu season, we'll send you regular surveys to find out how they're doing.

A WellKiwis Healthcare professional from the neonatal nurse practitioner team will take one small blood sample from your child every year. Tikanga Māori protocols will be applied when taking samples.

If your child is ill with flu-like symptoms, we'll take a nose or throat swab to test for flu or other respiratory viruses. If the swab tests positive for the flu or COVID-19, we'll take two small blood samples from your child. We'll also take a small blood sample if your child has any flu vaccinations.



## Privacy and confidentiality

Your child's test results and information are confidential. No personal identifiable information will be published.

This study is being conducted at the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR), 66 Ward Street, Upper Hutt, New Zealand.

ESR is New Zealand's Crown Research Institute specialising in science for communities – we detect and protect. ESR uses world-leading science to safeguard health, keep communities safe, protect our food-based economy, and improve the health of water and natural environment.

## Find out more about the study

It's important that you have all the information you need to make an informed decision before participating in this important study.

Go to [www.wellkiwis.co.nz](http://www.wellkiwis.co.nz) for more detailed information. You can also check out our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/wellkiwis/](http://www.facebook.com/wellkiwis/)

Speak to your lead midwife, GP or obstetrician to register your interest. A WellKiwis study staff member will get in touch with you directly.



To find out more about the study, please contact WellKiwis – phone 0800 493555 (08004WELLKIWI) or email [Wellkiwis@esr.cri.nz](mailto:Wellkiwis@esr.cri.nz) or use the code to visit our website.

***Our team will be delighted to hear from you.***



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ESR is leading the WellKiwis study with New Zealand ethics approval (NTX11.11.102. AM42&52). It is a multi-agency collaboration including Lead Maternity Carer (LMC), the Universities of Otago and Auckland, Regional Public Health, the Capital Coast and Hutt Valley District Health Boards and Malaghan Institute of Medical Research. It is a part of a large international collaboration – DIVINCI led by St. Jude Children's Research Hospital that is enrolling about 3,000 children from three different sites around the world – Los Angeles, Managua, Nicaragua and Wellington. WellKiwis is funded by the United States National Institutes of Health (US NIH).