

The Special Support Service for Former Sawmill Workers Exposed to PCP – General information for patients

The Special Support Service for Former Sawmill Workers Exposed to PCP (the Sawmill Workers Service) is for former sawmill workers who were exposed to pentachlorophenol (PCP) and other hazardous substances at sawmills throughout New Zealand from the 1950s to the 1980s. The Sawmill Workers Service aims to help people stay healthy by supporting the early detection of diseases, promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing modifiable risk factors.

Who can use this Service?

You can use this Service if you are entitled to publicly funded services in New Zealand, and if you meet the following criteria:

- worked in sawmills where PCP was used AND
- worked in jobs that used PCP chemicals or if you came into contact with PCP baths/tanks or if you worked with timber that was still wet from the PCP treatment process AND
- worked in these jobs for at least one year (in total).

What services can I use?

Eligible people get a free annual health check from their doctor or practice nurse. Because every person's health needs are different, your doctor or nurse will want to know what your needs are and make sure that you use services that help you stay healthy. Your health check depends on your medical history and current health needs.

Generally, your doctor or nurse will:

- talk about PCP exposure and its health effects
- ask about your health

- assess any health risks like smoking, blood pressure, and cholesterol level
- provide brief advice about things that will help you to stay healthy
- talk about any mental health concerns you may have
- check for symptoms of diseases or conditions linked to PCP or dioxin exposure
- do a physical examination if necessary
- refer you to other services if you need them, including physical activity programmes, services to help maintain a healthy diet, programmes to help quit smoking or reduce alcohol use, or mental health services.

For Bay of Plenty residents, a local facilitation service is also available at:

Ngati Awa Social & Health Service Trust
36 Thornton Road Whakatane
PO Box 2076
Kopeopeo
Whakatane 3159

Telephone: (07) 307 1472

The local facilitation service provides help with completing service documentation and accessing referral services. You do not have to be eligible for the Sawmill Workers Service to receive support from the local facilitation service.

Will I need to pay?

The health check is free. All prescriptions, tests or treatments are funded as they normally are. Other referred services are likely to be free or at very low cost.

How do I get my health check?

You will need to make an application to have your eligibility assessed. If you are eligible, you will be sent a letter (the confirmation of eligibility letter). When you get your confirmation of eligibility letter, you will need to make an appointment with your usual doctor. When you go for the appointment, you will need to give your confirmation of eligibility letter to the practice nurse or doctor. You will be sent a new confirmation of eligibility letter every year.

What information will I get about PCP and health?

Your doctor and practice nurse will tell you about PCP and dioxin exposure and answer your questions. To help, the Ministry of Health has given doctors and nurses information about PCP and dioxin exposure and health. Your doctor or nurse can also contact an expert if you have more specific questions. More information about PCP, dioxin and health is available on the Ministry of Health's website www.moh.govt.nz/dioxins

Will I need to give any information to the Ministry of Health or my GP?

A database records information about people who apply for eligibility assessment. This database is used for communications and monitoring. It is managed by the Ministry of Health. Information will not be shared with other parties unless the explicit permission of individuals is granted.

There is further information on privacy and the disclosure of information included in the application form for the Sawmill Workers Service.

Do I have to take part in the health support service?

No. You do not have to make an application. If you make an application and are assessed as being eligible but change your mind, you can decide at any time that you do not want to take part. If this happens, you will need to advise the Ministry of Health of this in writing.

What happens to my information if I withdraw from the Sawmill Workers Service?

If you withdraw from the Sawmill Workers Service, the Ministry of Health will retain information on your participation. This information is used for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor or practice nurse can tell you more about accessing health services. You can get an application form, more information about the Sawmill Workers Service, and information about PCP and dioxin exposure and its health effects from the Ministry of Health. Our contact details are:

Special Support Service for Former
Sawmill Workers
Ministry of Health
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6145

Email: emailmoh@moh.govt.nz

Telephone: 0800 288 588

Website: www.moh.govt.nz/dioxins