(NZ Herald, 2021q)
[15 Dec 2021]

NEW ZEALAND

Covid 19 Delta outbreak: Young child who died was unknowingly infected

18 Dec, 2021 02:55 PM

3 minutes to read

cember 18 2021 There were 39 new cases of Covid-19 in the community today and 10 new cases in MIQ. Video / NZ Herald

NZ Herald

The family of the young child who died with Covid-19 didn't know their loved one was infected until after they were gone.

In a statement, the Ministry of Health said the child under the age of 10 died earlier this week and tested positive for Covid after dying.

"The child was a contact of an identified case but was not a known Covid-19 case before the time of death."

The death remained under investigation and has been referred to the coroner, a ministry spokesperson said.

"For privacy reasons, and out of respect for the family, no further information will be provided at this time," the spokesperson said.

The tragic death marks the youngest person to die while infected with the virus.

There have now been 49 people who have died since Covid-19 arrived on our shores last year.

Recorded Covid deaths include all cases where a person was classified as having an active case of the virus at the time of death. In some of these cases, the underlying cause of death may have been unrelated to Covid-19.

It is not clear if the child, believed to be a Māori boy from Counties Manukau, had any underlying medical conditions that may have contributed to his death.

The ministry would like to express its heartfelt sympathies to the family of the child at this incredibly difficult time, the spokesperson said.

Earlier yesterday, it was revealed another person died after testing positive for Covid-19 in a managed isolation facility a month ago. They were included in New Zealand's official outbreak death toll.

That person died at Auckland's Crowne Plaza Hotel within days of arriving in New Zealand on November 3 and the death has been added to the grim tally this week, the Ministry of Health confirmed this morning.

Dr Matire Harwood of the Papakura Marae Health Clinic said the child's death was "tragic and sobering".

"Although people have been saying Covid is mild, for children with asthma and other respiratory conditions it can be really severe and we know our Māori and Pacific have higher rates of those conditions."

She said it was critical that we do all we can to prevent children getting the virus.

"The vaccine is the best tool and the sooner we get that into all communities and before school starts the better.

"It reiterates the importance for all adults and caregivers of children, including teachers, ECE, and kaumātua to get vaccinated.

"Te aroha to the whānau, that is tragic."