Hazardous Substances Disease and Injury and Lead Absorption Notifications via BPAC - Information for GPs

General Practitioners are now asked to notify cases of disease and injury caused by hazardous substances seen in primary care to the Medical Officer of Health. A short electronic form linked to MedTech32 and developed by bestpractice Decision Support (BPAC) is available to make notification as simple as possible.

Notification may result in a Public Health Unit (PHU) investigation of a particular event or, a collection of related cases may initiate the investigation of a particular substance in a region or nationwide. Data will be collated and analysed to inform policy and preventive actions.

1 What to notify

Hazardous substances disease or injury

This is a vast group of diagnoses; from children swallowing cleaning products or cosmetics, intentional overdoses with agrichemicals, carbon monoxide poisoning, illness caused by exposure to chemicals such as solvents or chlorine, contact dermatitis from chemicals, a fireworks burn or eye injury, or huffing of butane.

A hazardous substance is officially defined as anything that can explode, catch fire, oxidise, corrode, or be toxic to humans; this is set down in the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. The same act was amended in 2005 requiring medical practitioners to notify cases to the Medical Officer of Health (section 143 2(A)).

Lead absorption

Notification of cases of lead absorption ≥0.48 µmol/L from non-occupational lead exposure is required under the Health Act 1956 (Schedule 2). The electronic form can also be used for these notifications. Please note that clinician notification is encouraged alongside direct laboratory notification.

Chemical contamination of the environment

Cases of disease or injury arising from chemical contamination of the environment eg. health effects following an agrichemical spray drift event, or skin effect following an oil spill event such as the MV Rena in 2011, are also required under the Health Act 1956 and can be notified using this form.

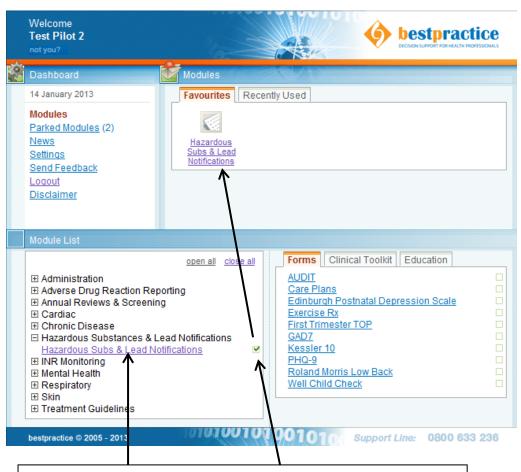
Occupational cases

Both occupational and non-occupational disease and injuries can be notified. However occupational notifications will not be followed up by the PHU. In some instances, the PHU may refer the notification to the Labour Group, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) for investigation but this will only occur with the consent of the patient.

GPs are asked to notify cases on suspicion, except for lead absorption where a confirmed lead level is required.

2 Accessing the notification form

After logging on at www.bestpractice.org.nz or through MedTech32, look for 'Hazardous Substances & Lead Notifications' on the dashboard. Access to the form for users of other PMSs will be available later in 2013. Please phone your local PHU to notify cases where the electronic form is not available.

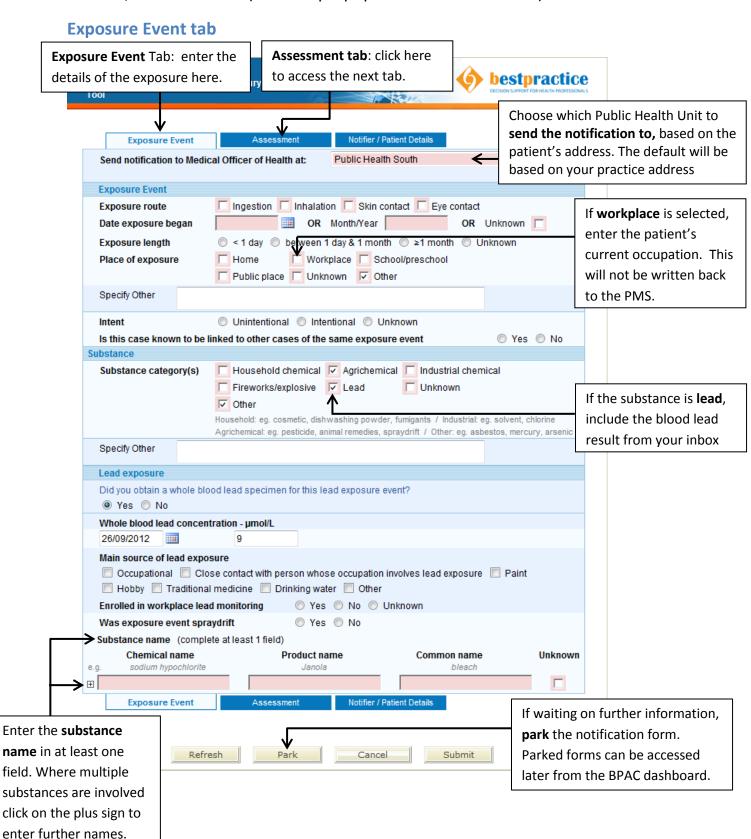


Select 'Hazardous Substances and Lead Notifications' from the Module list. Ticking the green box will add it to your favourites.

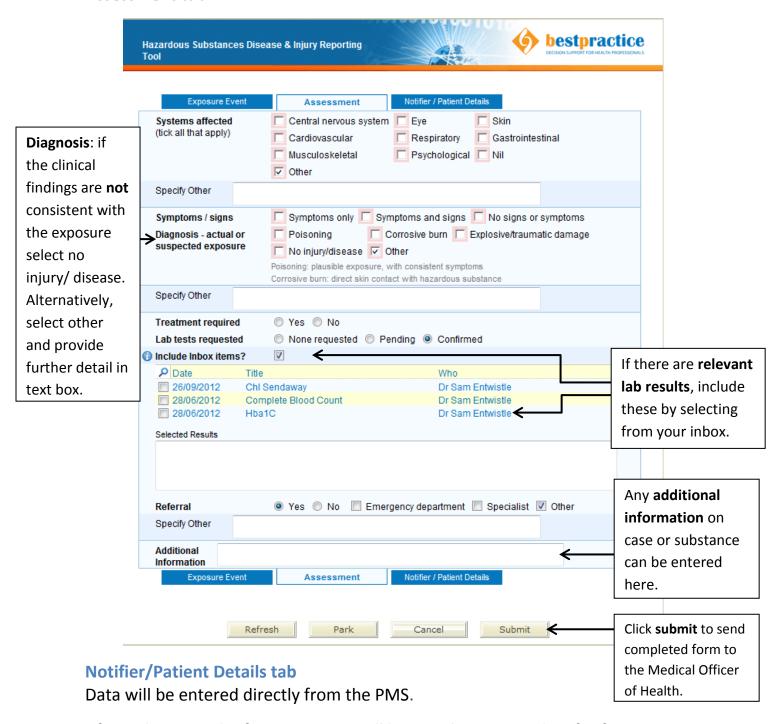
3 Completing the notification

The notification form can be completed at the time of consultation or for lead absorption, when results are confirmed. If necessary, 'Park' while awaiting further information.

The form has three tabs: 'Exposure Event' and 'Assessment', and Notifier/Patient Details (which is prepopulated from MedTech).



Assessment tab



After submitting the form a version will be saved in your outbox for future reference.

4 Feedback or queries

If you have questions regarding the patient or notification, please contact your local PHU. If you have feedback or questions regarding the BPAC system this can be entered using the 'Send Feedback' link in the BPAC dashboard, or by calling 0800 633236.