



Immunisation awareness campaigner Mrs Hilary Butler and her husband Peter will both be holding workshops at the Home Birth National Conference in New Plymouth this weekend. They are pictured with their children, David (5) left, and Ian (7).

## Campaigner urges informed choice on immunisation

THE point is not "down with immunisation" but "up with informed choices", according to Mrs Hilary Butler.

The high profile of campaigns against unquestioned mass-immunisation programmes may have been counter-productive, she said.

The spokesperson for the year-old pressure group Immunisation Awareness Society said when information questioning the safety of immunisation was first collated and distributed, few people in power paid any attention.

"When the information first went out the Health Department and Pharmaceutical companies were not concerned, but since then their response has escalated to blatant propaganda."

She claimed the producer of one hepatitis B vaccine was particularly strident in the promotion of its product. It had recently started approaching school principals directly.

Armed with promotional material, videos and slides they would be a formidable prospect for principals with little access to sparse independent research on the effects of vaccines.

One of the company's early claims was that the vaccine had no side effects, but already a case of ascending paralysis (Guillaine Barre Syndrome) had been linked to it.

Other vaccination promotions had included prizes ranging from electrical goods to dolls and iceblocks and there had also been advertising based on emotional blackmail.

The Department of Health had also reacted strongly to the awareness campaign since its heightened profile, she said. A drug company approached her to assist with their information for parents. The alterations she made were accepted by the company but later rejected by the department.