



Contents

What a start to 2009!!	1
Healthy Kids Check	1
Changes to Due and Overdue Rules	2
Measles Alerts	2
Media Support for Immunisation	3
Immunisation Success	3
The GP HPV program – reminder about the end date.	3
The HPV Register – the latest news	4
Pandemic Flu	5
Cold Chain Incidents	5

What a start to 2009!!

As we all know, the horrific Victorian bushfires and prolonged Queensland floods have devastated many communities. The effects will be felt across the country for decades and our thoughts are with those who have suffered.

Healthy Kids Check

The Minister for Health and Ageing, The Hon Nicola Roxon MP has sent all parents a letter introducing the *Healthy Kids Check* and the *Get Set 4 Life – Habits for healthy kids* Guide. The two initiatives are a part of the Governments plan to improve the health of all children.

The Healthy Kids Check is aimed at 4 year old children who are starting pre-school in 2009 and coincides with the time their 4 year old immunisation is due. The Get Set for Life guide provides information on health and development, including healthy eating, exercise, oral health and other important areas.

The letter is also a reminder of the recommended immunisations for 4 year olds before commencing the school year to protect them and the community from the spread of infectious diseases.

Information about immunisation can be found on the website at immunise.health@gov.au or phone the Immunise Australia Infoline on 1800 671 811

Changes to Due and Overdue Rules

Changes to these rules took place on 1 January 2009 and will effect the payments associated with immunisation.

Helen Moore - Principal Advisor for Immunisation

Contact details: ☎ 02 6228 0833 📠 02 6228 0899 ✉ hmoore@agpn.com.au

Information contained within this newsletter is intended to inform you on immunisation issues with a national perspective. As such, it is possible that some references will require adjustment to be made specifically accurate for service providers in each individual State or Territory jurisdiction. For further clarification, contact your SBO Immunisation Coordinator or jurisdiction Health Department. AGPN acknowledges the financial support of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

The changes apply to children born from 1 January 2005 who will now be overdue at 4 years and 1 month instead of at 5 years of age.

Parents who are receiving the Child Care Benefit will need to make sure their child is immunised as close as possible to the 4 year old birthday. Parents will receive a reminder notice from Centrelink if the child's immunisation status is not received by 4 years and 1 month. They will then have 63 days to complete the immunisation schedule and ensure that Centrelink has been informed to be certain that the payments will not be cut.

Unlike the parents, General Practice must ensure that the 4 year old immunisations are completed by 4 years and 1 month with no extensions.

Measles Alerts

There have been a number of confirmed cases of measles in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and in the Northern Territory. These have all come from imported measles and spread to unimmunised people. Despite these recent outbreaks, the status of Australia as being "measles free" still stands as that term applies to endemic measles infections.

Doctors are asked to inform their public health units in their jurisdictions if any patient is suspected of having measles. Information on measles prevalence in your area and symptoms can be found at the relevant health service website listed below.

[NSW Health](#)

[Department of Human Services, Victoria](#)

[Queensland Health](#)

[Department of Human Services, SA](#)

[Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services](#)

[Department of Health, WA](#)

[ACT Health](#)

[Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania](#)

For information on all immunisations that are part of the National Immunisation Program:

[Immunise Australia Program](#)

http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/f-fact_sheets.html

Media Support for Immunisation

There has been some very positive support from different areas of the print media in recent weeks.

1. Selfish dummy mummies need their consciences pricked – Sat 21st Feb 09

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/selfish-dummy-mummies-need-consciences-pricked-20090220-8dko.html>

2. Tues 18th Feb – Naked truth of immunisation

<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,,25072995-5001030,00.html>

3. Wed 19th Feb – Inoculation rates worst amongst Sydney’s richest.

<http://www.news.com.au/story/0,27574,25071789-1242,00.html>

4. Gold, Sunshine Coast hinterlands have low immunisation rate

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,25073010-3102,00.html>

Immunisation Success

On February 23rd 1954 the first mass vaccination of children against polio took place. The link below leads to an article written in the New York Times in 1954. It comments on the tests on 500,000 children throughout the USA. “Each child was given 3 shots of one cubic centimetre each. The first two or primary ‘shots’ will be given at intervals of one week while the third or ‘booster’ shot will be given one month after the second.”

<http://www.rotaryfirst100.org/foundation/timeline/1954.htm>

The first doctor to deliver the vaccine in these trials was a GP, Dr. Mulvaney, McLean's first general practitioner.

“His first patient was 6-year-old Randy Kerr of Falls Church, a gritty youngster with poison ivy who had begged his parents to let him be the first to get the shot. The doctor-patient pair became famous nationwide when photos of the April 26, 1954, inoculation were sent over news wires. The picture still turns up in old World Book encyclopaedias, on the March of Dimes Web site and in a Smithsonian Institution exhibition on the history of polio.”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/02/AR2006110201750.html>

The GP HPV program – reminder about the end date.

The Commonwealth has issued a variation to the GP HPV program to enable as many women as possible to access the funded vaccine. All women between 18 and 26 (before they turn 27) are able to access funded HPV vaccine as long as they have the first of the 3 shots before 30 June 2009 and they complete the 3 doses before 31 December 2009.

The school based program will continue to offer funded vaccine to those girls in their first year of secondary school.

Check your state or territory health websites to find out about the school based program in your area.

The HPV Register – the latest news

The next stage of development of the register will involve patients receiving completion or history letters and general practice receiving log on details to be able to check their patient’s history as the register becomes interactive. This process should mean that practices across the country are able to access the register information by May this year.

Details about the HPV register are available online at www.hpvregister.org.au.

The Register can be contacted on 1800 478 734 (1800 HPV REG) from 8am -6pm Monday – Friday and 9am – 2pm Saturdays across Australia.

When submitting data to the HPV Register, remember that hand writing must be legible and the GP provider number clear!

GP registration

The first table shows GP Registrations as at 05/02/2009. The table below shows the payment file that was sent to Medicare Australia for payment to GPs at that time. Nearly \$3 million has been paid to GPs who have send data to the HPV Register.

State	# GP's sent Registration letters	Data entered this week	Total Registered	% Registered
NT	254	132	110	43.31%
SA	1870	1514	1472	78.72%
ACT	369	282	271	73.44%
Tas	608	414	408	67.11%
WA	2089	1699	1488	71.23%
NSW	7703	5859	5258	68.26%
Vic	5694	4625	4055	71.22%
Qld	3903	3353	2814	72.10%
State unknown		160	120	
Total	22490	18038	15996	71.12%

	January 2009 payment file						Total - all payment files		
	Current			Corrected failed payments from previous months		Total January 2009			
	GPs	Notifications	\$	Notifications	\$	Notifications	\$	Notifications	\$
ACT	58	4,110	24,660			4,110	24,660	7,458	44,748
NSW	1,296	63,065	378,390			63,065	378,390	143,162	858,972
NT	29	546	3,276			546	3,276	3,368	20,208
Qld	1,945	27,873	167,238			27,873	167,238	115,850	693,900
SA	411	2,024	12,144			2,024	12,144	62,232	373,392
TAS	69	1,642	9,852			1,642	9,852	12,177	73,062
VIC	990	56,162	336,972			56,162	336,972	117,639	705,798
WA	227	6,796	40,776			6,796	40,776	31,529	189,774
Total	5,025	162,210	\$ 973,308			162,210	\$ 973,308	493,309	\$ 2,959,854

Pandemic Flu

The 2008 version of the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza 2008 has been released.

The Australian Government also launched www.flupandemic.gov.au

This site is a dedicated pandemic influenza website with important information on what the Australian Government is doing, and how individuals, businesses, communities and health professionals can prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic. The website also links to state and territory pandemic resources.

If you would like a hard copy of the plan, they are available from January 2009 and can be ordered from the website.

Cold Chain Incidents

Maintaining the cold chain for vaccines is vital to ensure we have an effective and safe immunisation program. In times of power outages and high temperatures this can be very difficult and stressful for practices. All vaccine fridges, whether a properly packed domestic fridge or purpose built vaccine fridge, must be logged and checked regularly to ensure they stay between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius.

Each practice needs to have an alternative plan to deal with the power outages that occur during high use of electricity in hot weather or as a result of disasters such as the bushfires or floods. Vaccine fridges will heat up quickly in hot temperatures.

If you have a cold chain break,

- Record the temperature inside the fridge at the time the problem was discovered,
- Record the length of time the vaccine may have been exposed to the temperature outside the 2 to 8 degrees required,
- Isolate the affected vaccines, store at 2-8 degrees if possible and mark 'do not use' until advice has been sought from your regional or public health immunisation coordinator,
- Contact your regional or public health immunisation coordinator or central immunisation authority and fax through the relevant incident form.