



**AMA Family  
Doctor Week 2015**  
YOU AND YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR:  
THE BEST PARTNERSHIP IN HEALTH



## VACCINATION SAVES LIVES

### AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 19-25 July 2015

*You and Your Family Doctor: the best partnership in health*

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, today paid tribute to the role played by family doctors in safely and effectively immunising generations of Australians against potentially deadly diseases.

Professor Owler said GPs were on the front line in protecting families against measles, whooping cough, influenza, and other infections, providing advice and administering vaccines that prevent serious illnesses and save lives.

“Many serious life-threatening diseases are now rare because of immunisation, some have been eradicated, and a great many others are under control, but we must not become complacent,” Professor Owler said.

A recent National Health Performance Authority report, *Healthy Communities: Immunisation Rates for children in 2012-13*, identified pockets in the community where vaccination rates were well below desired levels, increasing the risk of a sustained outbreak.

Professor Owler said it was of great concern that some parents were not ensuring their children were fully immunised, either because they had lost track of the schedule or, in some instances, had been misinformed about the safety and effectiveness of vaccination.

“Where immunisation levels are low, illnesses such as measles and pertussis [whooping cough] can be more easily spread.

“The truth is that declining vaccination rates are a threat to public health.”

Professor Owler said family doctors were best placed to explain the benefits of vaccination.

“Family doctors are in an excellent position to spread the facts and give parents balanced evidence so that they can make informed decisions about what is best for their health, the health of their children, and the health of other children in our schools and local communities.

“Parents should speak freely with their family doctors about any concerns they may have regarding their child’s immunisation program.

“Family doctors are uniquely skilled to ensure vaccinations are administered safely and effectively to people right across the nation, wherever they may live.”

Clear, evidence-based information about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines is available in the Australian Academy of Science publication, *The Science of Immunisation: Questions and Answers*, which is available at [www.science.org.au/immunisation.html](http://www.science.org.au/immunisation.html)

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As part of Family Doctor Week 2015, the AMA has produced a number of videos highlighting the important contribution family doctors make to the health of the nation, including:

- General Practice: More a Passion than a Job
- Prevention and Care throughout Life
- Plan for Pharmacists in General Practice

All the videos can be downloaded from the AMA Family Doctor Week website at <https://ama.com.au/family-doctor-week-2015>

AMA Family Doctor Week is proudly sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, the National Health and Medical Research Council, Cutcher & Neale, and AMEX.

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