



YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR:
ALL ABOUT YOU



AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 23- 29 July 2017

Your Family Doctor: all about you

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR ABOUT IMMUNISATION

Recent outbreaks of measles highlight the need for parents who are hesitant about having their child vaccinated to talk to their family GP, AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said today.

Dr Gannon said that while the World Health Organization officially declared Australia measles-free in 2014, there have been at least 23 confirmed cases of measles in NSW this year, including 16 locally acquired cases attributed to a traveller who contracted the potentially lethal disease in Bali.

“Measles kills 134,000 people every year globally, and is still common in many developing countries,” Dr Gannon said.

“Pockets of Australia have had recent breakouts of measles, and we are also seeing a resurgence of diseases including mumps, whooping cough, tetanus, and diphtheria – diseases that many people thought had been consigned to history.

“Vaccination rates of 95 per cent are needed to protect vulnerable members of the community – infants, the elderly, and those with suppressed immune systems - from these highly transmissible, infectious diseases.

“Children who are not fully protected are susceptible in an outbreak of infectious disease, and if an unvaccinated person comes into contact with measles, they have a 90 per cent chance of contracting it.

“In Australia, 7 per cent of children are not protected against these preventable, deadly, and debilitating diseases.

“A small number of these – between 2 and 3 per cent – have parents who are vaccine rejecters. The remainder of parents may delay vaccination because they are uncertain about vaccines, or their child is ill at the scheduled vaccination time, or they are concerned about cost.

“Your family doctor is the most trusted source of advice for parents. GPs see 93 per cent of children in the 0-6 year age group an average of seven times a year, and deliver almost three-quarters of all vaccinations in this cohort.

“In Family Doctor Week, which recognises the work and dedication of the nation’s 34,600 GPs, the AMA is encouraging parents to talk to their GP about vaccination.”

Background

- Vaccination is not just for children. It is estimated that of the 4.1 million under-vaccinated Australians each year, the vast majority are adults – many of whom are eligible for free vaccination.
- Completed vaccinations for HPV sits at around 73 per cent for adolescent girls and 67.3 per cent for boys. HPV infection can cause a wide range of cancers, including cervical cancer, and other conditions such as genital warts.

- Of those aged 65 and over, who are eligible for free pneumococcal and influenza vaccines under the National Immunisation Program, only 51 per cent had received both vaccines.
- Influenza kills 3000 people each year in Australia, results in 18,000 hospital admissions and 300,000 GP consultations.
- 70 year olds can now access a free vaccine to protect against shingles.

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