



**AMA Family
Doctor Week 2019**

YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR AND YOU:
PARTNERING FOR HEALTH



AMA CALLS FOR FREE CATCH-UP VACCINES FOR ALL AUSTRALIAN ADULTS

AMA FAMILY DOCTOR WEEK, 21-27 July 2019

Your Family Doctor and You: Partnering for Health

The AMA is advocating that all Australian adults should be eligible for free catch-up vaccinations, under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), to protect as many people as possible from preventable diseases.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, made the call as part of AMA Family Doctor Week 2019, a week dedicated to recognising the dedication and service of general practitioners around the nation.

“Immunisation is the most important way that Australians can protect themselves, their family and friends, and others in the community from illness and death,” Dr Bartone said.

“GPs, our family doctors, are well-placed to advise on and provide vaccinations to adults and children alike, and currently deliver about three-quarters of all vaccinations to children under the age of six years.

“Australia has one of the most comprehensive, publicly-funded immunisation programs in the world and we are very close to reaching the target of 95 per cent immunisation coverage for one- and five-year-olds.

“However, it is estimated that there are about 4.1 million under-vaccinated Australians each year, and most of them are adults.

“There are many reasons why adults might be unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. Vaccinations may not have been available at the time, people may have migrated to Australia from countries without a strong vaccination regime, or there may be no record of their vaccination.

“The Federal Government currently funds catch-up vaccinations through the NIP for people under the age of 20 years who may have missed out on their childhood vaccinations, and for refugees and humanitarian entrants of any age.

“Other adults have to pay, which can add up to hundreds of dollars, depending on the number of vaccinations that need to be caught up on.

“The AMA is calling on the Government to fund all catch-up vaccinations, recognising that immunisation is a cost-effective public health measure.

“Vaccination status should not be determined by wealth. All people wishing to be fully vaccinated should have access to Government-funded recommended vaccines.

“This will help enhance herd immunity within the community and will help avoid outbreaks of preventable and potentially deadly diseases.

“Recent outbreaks of measles and whooping cough highlight the need for catch-up vaccinations. Five years ago, we had eradicated measles in Australia. Now, we are seeing cases among travellers returning from overseas. This could be prevented through vaccination.

“If you think your immunisation schedule may be incomplete, or you may need a booster shot for tetanus, diphtheria, or whooping cough, contact your family doctor.

“Your family doctor will partner with you to ensure you have evidence-based information about vaccination, and to ensure your vaccination schedule is up to date to give you and your family the best protection possible from preventable disease.”

The Australian Academy of Science publication, *The Science of Immunisation*, is available at <https://www.science.org.au/learning/immunisation-and-climate-change/science-immunisation>

Background

- Immunisation is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people from potentially deadly diseases.
- Worldwide, immunisation programs prevent about 2.5 million deaths each year.
- At December 2018, national coverage rates for children in Australia were 94.04 per cent for all one-year-olds, 90.75 per cent for all two-year-olds, and 94.67 per cent for all five-year-olds.
- Of the 4.1 million unvaccinated Australians, 92 per cent (3.8 million) are adults.
- Funding for vaccine purchasing and services to support immunisation was more than \$460 million in 2017-18.

Follow all the action on Twitter: #amafdw19 and Family Doctor Week [website](#)

25 July 2019

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ama_media

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>

SPONSORED BY

