



To The Point!

Happy New Year!

January 2008

Welcome to all our new readers. If you have a colleague who immunises, provides advice on immunisation to parents & other clients, or is interested in the dynamic changes happening in immunisation, please ask them to e-mail me so I can add them to the e-mail list.

The two public health interventions that have had the greatest impact on the world's health are, clean water and immunisation! (WHO 2000) Immunisation is an important whole-of-life commitment, so no matter what health field you work in, **you can protect your clients** by promoting immunisation.

Keep abreast of immunisation changes and National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommendations, through the **Hunter New England (HNE) Population Health website** - it has a wealth of immunisation info for health professionals and the community.

Did you know?

- **All due vaccines should be given at the same visit** - is less traumatic, improves protection for a range of diseases in the shortest possible time, reduces health visits. Is NHMRC recommended practice!
- **Pregnant women should be immunised for flu - even in the 1st trimester!** Reduces health risks to mum & foetus - vaccinate March - October each year.
- **Boostrix vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) given to adult contacts protects young infants against pertussis.** Infants are at greatest risk of hospitalisation & even death from pertussis. **The vaccine is cheaper than many toys and infant clothing, so encourage a gift of love** - advise all parents-to-be, grandparents-to-be, new parents and grandparents, to be jabbed, as their gift to their loved new addition. Also, child carers and healthcare workers should be immunised with & flu vaccine annually and Boostrix if not had it previously.
- **Planning a pregnancy** - both proposed parents should have had x2 MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), x2 VZV (varicella) if not had chicken pox, x1 Boostrix vaccine, flu (in flu season), x1 MenCCV (meningococcal C).
- **Vaccines must be maintained between 2°C - 8°C.** The Vaccine Cold Chain is important in ensuring that only potent vaccines are administered. When giving scripts for vaccines, emphasise that the vaccines should be brought directly from pharmacy to doctor or nurse immuniser, for immediate administration.
- **Catch-up vaccines can be given at any time after the due date.** Where vaccines have been missed, continue the course; do not re-commence.
- **Vaccines should be given on time despite mild-moderate illness.** Only contraindication for omitting a vaccine is anaphylaxis to a previous vaccine or to a component of that vaccine. Defer vaccines only for fever >38.5°C.
- **Adverse events following immunisation should be reported to HNE Population Health.** Ph: 4924 6477 (Newcastle); 6767 8630 (Tamworth) **NOT** ADRAC!
- **Lead by example!** Have your **free flu vaccine in March!** Encourage your colleagues to protect themselves, their family & their patients by having annual flu vaccine.
- **HNE Pop Health staff can assist you with complicated catch-up regimes or any immunisation advice** - We are as close as the phone or email! (see above)