



Colleagues, Welcome 'To-The-Point' - HNEAHS Immunisation News

Catch-up Regime Advice – is but a phone call away! Ph: 4924 6477

- For complicated catch-ups, HNE Pop Health can advise you on vaccines to give right away, and will fax a regime for subsequent visits.
- Children aged older than 24 weeks (32 weeks Rota Teq) **should not receive Rotarix vaccine**. It is not licensed in Australia for an older aged child. No safety data available.
- Children older than 2 years do not need Prevenar vaccine unless they suffer with a chronic condition or were dramatically preterm (>12 weeks early).
- **All due vaccines should be given at the first visit.** Children who are well over-due for immunisation, and therefore require primary infant doses (2, 4 or 6 months) **and 12 and 18 month doses** – should be given at 1st visit! You could be legally accountable if a child contracts a disease because you delayed immunisation.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

- School-based program for 2007 is almost complete. Catch-up clinics are being held in most areas; venues and dates soon on our website.
- Via GP – Female students in Y10, 11, 12, who did not commence at school in 2007, and females who are not students, aged <27 years; need 3 dose course (0, 2 & 6 months). HPV vaccines will be free for only 2 years, then only free for Year 7 students.
- Female students in Y7, 8, 9 & 10 in 2008 will be offered HPV at school in 2008.

Myth of the Month

Alleged link between MMR vaccine and autism

- The suggestion of a link between MMR vaccine and autism has largely come from one source, a team at the Royal Free Hospital, London, led by Dr Andrew Wakefield (1998).
- Parents often first notice the signs of autism around the time MMR is usually given. This does not mean that one causes the other.
- The claim prompted world-wide research. Immunisation expert panels in many countries, including the UK, USA, Sweden, Finland and Australia, have reviewed the available evidence and found no evidence to support a link between MMR vaccine and autism. This finding is also supported by WHO.
- Some of the findings of many leading, independent groups and researchers from around the world:
 - March 1998 - UK's Medical Research Council, over 30 experts in all relevant fields, reviewed all the evidence and heard full presentations from the team at the Royal Free Hospital. They concluded: **"There is no evidence to indicate any link between MMR vaccination and bowel disease or autism"**.
 - June 1999 - independent expert Working Party of the Committee on Safety of Medicines (UK) made a detailed evaluation of over 100 children's records, referred by solicitors where the parents believed their autism was due to MMR. The Working Party concluded that: **"The information available did not support the suggested causal associations or give cause for concern about the safety of MMR or MR [measles, rubella] vaccines"**.
 - Many studies, in many countries, published in numerous medical journals, examining possible associations between MMR vaccine and autism, concluded:
 - **No increase in autism associated with the introduction of MMR in any country.**
 - **No difference in age of diagnosis between MMR immunised and unimmunised children.**
 - **No difference in MMR immunisation rates between children with autism and the rest of the population.**
 - **No link between the timing of MMR and the onset of autism.**
- More evidence supporting the safety of MMR vaccine can be found at: http://www.users.bigpond.net.au/mellick/uk_mmr.htm#Introduction