

Childcare

and Children's Health

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS



A Reminder for Parents about Immunisation

It's not only babies, toddlers and children who need to be immunised against common childhood illnesses – parents, grandparents and carers do too. You could unwittingly give a serious illness to your child if your immunisation status is not kept up-to-date. Even if you were fully immunised when you were a child, those immunisations won't necessarily last for your whole lifetime. Speak to your health care professional about how you can help to protect your children by ensuring that your immunisations are current.

Some facts about immunisation

- Immunisation uses the body's natural defence mechanism – the immune response – to build resistance to specific infections.
- Immunisation helps people stay healthy by preventing serious infections.
- The protective effect of immunisations **does not always last a lifetime**.
- Recently in Australia there has been resurgence in the vaccine-preventable disease whooping cough (pertussis).

What does this mean for you?

- As a parent, grandparent or carer you need to keep your immunisation status up-to-date.

Some facts about childhood illnesses

- Parents and other people (including grandparents, carers, etc) who come into contact with young children are commonly carriers of some childhood infections.
- Several studies of infant whooping cough (pertussis) cases have indicated that family members, and parents in particular, were identified as the source of infection in more than 50% of cases.
- Whooping cough can be a serious – even deadly – disease in babies.

What can you do?

- Speak to your local doctor about your immunisation status.
- Ask adults who have close, regular contact with your baby about their immunisation status.
- Visit your local government immunisation service.
- Log on to: <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au>
- Telephone the National Immunisation Infoline on 1800 671 811.

Information about adult/adolescent diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccine

Your doctor may recommend a booster vaccine. Booster vaccines are very effective options to provide up to 100% protection against diphtheria and tetanus and greater than 92% protection against whooping cough. Booster vaccines are recommended on a **single occasion** for adults before planning pregnancy, or for both parents as soon as possible after birth.

This Parent Fact Sheet is available in different community languages and can be downloaded along with references from the Early Childhood Connections website www.ecconnections.com.au

AN INITIATIVE OF

The **Royal Children's**
Hospital Melbourne
Centre for Community Child Health

SUPPORTED BY AN
EDUCATIONAL GRANT FROM

Johnson & Johnson
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