



National Indigenous Immunisation message stick (NIIMS) June 2014

A vaccine preventable diseases newsletter for health
services



"Through vaccination initiatives we have a simple, timely, cost effective and affordable means by which to impact upon Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander health." (Dr Nagarie Brown)



What's new in Indigenous Immunisation?

Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Vaccination Coverage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Australia 2006-2010

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance of Vaccine Preventable Diseases has published a new report titled "Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Vaccination Coverage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Australia 2006-2010". The report highlights comparison of disease burden and vaccination coverage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people that's not provided in Vaccine preventable diseases and vaccination coverage reports, it also presents detailed data on vaccine preventable diseases and vaccination coverage that has not been included in "The health and welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples reports. The report is aimed at health professionals and it presents recent data from routinely collected sources, together with a considered commentary that will assist in service delivery, policy development and further research on vaccine preventable diseases in Indigenous Australians.

It is available online at

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-cdi37suppl.htm>

And hard copies can be requested from NCIRS.

If you have an issue that you would like to raise about immunisation and Indigenous people, email Brendon Kelaher at brendon.kelaher@health.nsw.gov.au



Brendon Kelaher (BHLthS(Hons)
National Indigenous Immunisation Coordinator
National Centre for Immunisation Research & Surveillance



2014 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Program

The 2014 flu programme started on 15 March.

Flu is a major cause of sickness and death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In fact, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are more than three times as likely to be hospitalised because of complications from flu, and almost three times as likely to die from these complications.

Annual influenza vaccination is provided free through the National Immunisation Programme to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over, pregnant women and people aged six months and over with medical conditions that make them more likely to have complications from the flu.

Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended in pregnant women. The flu vaccine is safe for pregnant women and provides protection for newborn babies during their first months of life. It is safe to receive the vaccine at any stage of pregnancy.

Influenza vaccination in children

bioCSL Fluvax[®] **must not** be given to children less than **five years of age**. There are alternative vaccines available for use in children.

bioCSL Fluvax[®] is only to be used in children between the ages of **five years to less than 10 years of age** if there are no alternative vaccines available. Parents must be informed that there is a potential increased risk of fever, but that febrile convulsions are rare in this age group.

Vaccine composition

Two strains of the 2014 trivalent influenza vaccine differ from those included in the 2013 season. For information about the composition of the vaccine visit the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) website at tga.gov.au.

Report influenza vaccinations and adverse events

Immunisation providers are encouraged to report all influenza vaccines given to children up to seven years of age to the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. Any adverse events following immunisation at any age should be reported to the TGA through the 'reporting problems' link at tga.gov.au or through the usual reporting mechanisms in the relevant state or territory.

For more information about the 2014 seasonal influenza vaccine, visit immunise.health.gov.au

2014 Influenza video

The Department of Health has produced a YouTube video providing information on the 2014 influenza vaccine and eligibility for free vaccine under the National Immunisation Programme. The video can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/i5FVElnCtDE>



Free Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations and resources

HPV immunisations in schools give young Indigenous males and females the utmost protection from HPV-related cancers and disease. Resources have also been developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and Indigenous health professionals. They include a comic for young males and females, as well as posters, a flyer, audio translations and digital resources. The comic book HPV and Me – My Health, My Future has a specific 'boys' story and 'girls' story and focuses on the lives of two 13 year olds, Wes and Bianca.

The comic follows Wes and Bianca's journeys as they find out more about the HPV vaccination and, with the consent of their parents, decide to have the vaccine. Parent/guardian consent is necessary before young people can get the vaccinations.

Aboriginal country singer **Troy Cassar-Daley** makes a cameo appearance in the comic, urging young Indigenous people to get their HPV vaccination.



Troy Cassa - Daily

HPV and Me – My Health, My Future is not only a great resource for anyone wanting to know more about the HPV vaccination, but also an engaging story about the importance of looking after your health and setting goals for the future. It is hoped that the resources will engage the community, informing young people, parents and guardians, and encouraging parental consent for the vaccinations.



HPV is a common virus that affects men and women. It can cause cancers and genital warts in both males and females. HPV can be passed from one person to another person through sexual contact. It usually doesn't cause symptoms so people infected with the virus may not know they have it.

Many types of HPV infection can be prevented by vaccination. The HPV vaccination program in schools has been successful in lowering rates of genital warts, and cervical abnormalities. It will in future prevent many cases of cervical and other cancers that affect males and females.

The HPV vaccine is available free in schools including to young Indigenous males and females aged 12-13 years to protect against cancers and disease caused by the HPV virus. In some remote areas, the vaccine will also be available in community health clinics.

Males aged 14-15 years are also able to get the free HPV vaccine until the end of 2014 as part of a catch-up program.

The vaccine is given by qualified immunisation providers. For full protection against HPV-related cancers and disease, three doses of the HPV vaccine are needed over six months. The vaccine has been tested to make sure it's safe for young males and females and more than 7 million doses have been distributed in Australia to date.

If you want to know more about the HPV vaccination program, go to australia.gov.au/hpv and then to the Indigenous website where you can order your free copy of the comic and download the resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; australia.gov.au/hpv.

Definition of 'Fully Immunised' and Family Tax Benefit Part A Supplement payments

The following is an important message for Indigenous families and immunisation providers. From 1 July 2013, the definition of 'fully immunised' was expanded to include the meningococcal C, pneumococcal conjugate and varicella vaccines, which are currently listed on the National Immunisation Program Schedule but have not previously been an eligibility requirement for Family Tax Benefit Part A Supplement payments. Data on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) will be used to assess children's immunisation status, so it is important that immunisation providers ensure the child's ACIR record is up to date to facilitate payment for families. All those working in Immunisation in Australia need to communicate the above to Aboriginal families at every point of contact.

For further information please visit the Immunise Australia website www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/faq-related-payments or phone 1800 671 811.



Immunisation Handbook Reprint

A reprint of The Australian Immunisation Handbook, 10th edition has been ordered and new copies should be available now. If you didn't receive a first-run hard copy, you can order one via the [Immunise Australia website](#). Orders will be back-filled once the new stocks become available. Electronic copies of the most recent version of [the Handbook](#) (which includes minor amendments made in January) are also available on the website, including a PDF version which can be downloaded. A list of the amendments is also available in the 'Updates' box, which can be used to annotate the original hard copies. Further enquiries regarding the handbook and its distribution, can be made to [the DOH](#).



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Contact us:

Brendon Kelaher

National Indigenous Immunisation Coordinator
NCIRS, KRI, The Children's Hospital at Westmead
Cnr Hawkesbury Rd & Hainsworth St
Westmead NSW 2145

brendon.kelaher@health.nsw.gov.au