



message stick

National Indigenous Immunisation message stick (NIIMS) April 2016

A vaccine preventable diseases newsletter for health
services



*It is important to protect your kids from serious
diseases by getting their free vaccinations on time*



Why Immunisation is important

Immunisation is a simple, safe and highly effective way of protecting children and adults from harmful diseases before they come into contact with them. It is estimated that vaccinations currently save up to three million lives worldwide each year.

Immunisation uses the body's natural defence mechanism – the immune response – to build resistance to specific viral infections. When a person is vaccinated, their body produces an immune response in the same way their body would after exposure to a disease, but without the person suffering symptoms of the disease. When a person comes in contact with that disease in the future, their immune system will respond fast enough to prevent the person developing the disease.

Immunisation protects more than just one child's health. Vaccinating a child will reduce the opportunity for that child to pass that disease on to another – especially young babies who cannot yet be fully immunised.

When levels of immunisation in a community are sufficiently high, the risk of specific diseases can fall so low that even those who are too young or too sick to be given a vaccine will not be exposed to it. This communal or 'herd immunity' can save countless lives.





No Jab, No Pay and changes to immunisation requirements starting 1 January 2016

The Australian Government's No Jab, No Pay measure commenced from 1 January 2016. Parents who want to receive Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate or Family Tax Benefit Part A supplement for a child or young person up to the age of 19 must now make sure their child's immunisations are up to date, unless they have an approved medical exemption.

The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, which previously recorded immunisation details for children under 7 years of age, has been extended to capture immunisation details for children and young people under 20 years of age.

Objections on the basis of personal, philosophical or religious beliefs, sometimes referred to as 'conscientious' objection, is no longer a valid exemption.

The new [ACIR Immunisation Medical Exemption form \(IM011\)](#) is now available. General practitioners can use this form to identify:

- vaccines a child or young individual can't receive
- whether the contraindication is temporary or permanent, or
- vaccines for conditions which the child or young individual is naturally immune to

Please ensure you destroy any printed copies of the previous Immunisations Medical Contraindication form (IMMU11), as old forms signed after 1 January 2016 won't be accepted. Incorrect forms will be returned, and you'll be required to complete the correct form.

Arrangements for catch-up vaccination have been agreed as follows:

- For children under the age of 10 years, catch-up can be provided free under the current arrangements of the National Immunisation Program.
- For those aged 10 to 19 years, the Australian Government will purchase the required vaccine and use existing state and territory delivery systems to provide vaccines direct to providers. This time limited program (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017) will provide free vaccines to families who currently receive family assistance payments, who do not have a valid medical exemption, and now wish to immunise their children in order to continue to receive these payments.

More information is available on the Immunise Australia website at: www.immunise.health.gov.au



2016 National Indigenous Influenza Vaccine Programs

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged under five years are much more likely to be hospitalised or to die from the flu than non-Indigenous children. Those who survive a severe flu can suffer lasting health complications including lung, heart, brain and blood system problems.

Since 2015, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged between six months and less than five years can receive the seasonal influenza vaccine for free, under the National Immunisation Program (NIP). Free influenza vaccines are also available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over, and anyone over six months who has specific medical conditions that increase their susceptibility to influenza.

Uptake of the free NIP influenza vaccine for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under five years has been generally low to date. It is important to encourage improved uptake as getting the vaccine is by the far the best way to provide protection against influenza. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to get their vaccinations through general practitioners, Aboriginal community controlled health organisations and community health clinics.

You can find out more at the Immunise Australia website at www.immunise.health.gov.au



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

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