

# Media Release



18 May 2010

## Immunisation Still Important

The suspension of the paediatric Seasonal Influenza immunisation program has raised concerns amongst parents of the safety of all vaccines.

It is important to remember that the issues surrounding the Seasonal Influenza vaccine are not affecting the many other vaccines included in the Childhood Immunisation Program.

Australia aims to have an immunisation rate of 90 percent or above, a good coverage rate by international standards. The vaccinations protect children from diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, mumps, rubella, hepatitis b and varicella (chicken pox).

Today's parents are lucky not to have experienced the trauma of witnessing children dying or becoming disabled from the aforementioned diseases. This is because vaccines were developed to prevent children contracting such illnesses. It is important that the community does not become complacent and remembers that these viruses do still exist. It is essential that high immunisation rates are maintained to protect the broader community.

"The best defence against illnesses is vaccination. Last year children presented to general practices with illnesses that could have been prevented," said Dr Steed, Chairman of the Wheatbelt GP Network. The risk to community is high, a pertussis epidemic on the east coast of the country last year led to the death of one child and severe illness for many more.

Children not vaccinated also pose a severe threat of passing on the illness to pregnant women, older or obese people and Indigenous Australians, with potentially tragic consequences. "These illnesses are often much worse for adults, and adults with a chronic condition are at a high risk of serious complications," Dr Steed said.

The Network suggests making an appointment with your GP to further discuss immunisation of your child/ren.

End.

For media inquiries please phone Trisha Ellis on (08) 9621 1530 or email [memberservices@wheatbelt.com.au](mailto:memberservices@wheatbelt.com.au).



PO Box 781 NORTHAM Western Australia 6401  
T 08 9621 1530 | F 08 9621 1532 | E [central@wheatbelt.com.au](mailto:central@wheatbelt.com.au) | [www.wheatbelt.com.au](http://www.wheatbelt.com.au)

Wheatbelt GP Network is an initiative of the Central Wheatbelt Division of General Practice Inc (ABN 73 639 952 959)

