



# ISLHD Immunisation Newsletter - September

## CONTENTS

- **NIP Health Professionals Kit**
- **Cold Chain Management**
- **Influenza Vaccination**
- **Cold Chain E-Learning**
- **NSW Pharmacist Vaccination Program**
- **School Immunisation Program**
- **Private Vaccines**
- **Vaccines - How many is too many?**

### Influenza Vaccination

Influenza vaccination has taken a dive along with many other routine vaccinations since the COVID-19 pandemic. The rate of vaccination against Influenza in NSW in under 5 year olds is only 26% this year, which is well below what we need it to be in this vulnerable population. Influenza can cause serious illness in children aged 5 and under, and particularly those under 2 years. Children under 5 years are most likely to spread influenza and suffer severe illness and complications. Vaccination is FREE for children 6 months to 5 years old; in the first year of vaccination they should receive 2 jabs given 1 month apart, then an annual jab from then on. Other groups that are eligible for a FREE Flu shot, because they are at greater risk of severe illness, are pregnant women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 6 months old & people over the age of 65 years.

### Cold Chain E- Learning

ISLHD PHU recommends that all staff involved in vaccine management complete the Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Management course every 12 months to maintain and refresh skills while keeping up to date with any changes as they are made.

To access this training, and add CPD hours, click on the following E-Learning link:

[Cold Chain Management \(Updated\)](#)  
[VSWEBHTMLFlash \(seertechnolutions.com.au\)](#)

### NIP Health Professionals Kit

Department of Health has released an NIP Routine Childhood Immunisation Health Professionals' Kit. The kit is part of a campaign to improve childhood vaccination rates in the community following a slight decrease in rates during COVID-19 pandemic. It contains information to assist with conversations around immunisation, communication resources - including some specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as answers to FAQ and clinical support for practitioners.

You'll find it at: [NIP Health Professionals Kit](#)

### Cold Chain Management

The importance of good management of vaccines was highlighted recently following a very large cold chain breach in another LHD, which resulted in many patients having to be contacted. The Strive-for-5 National Cold Chain Management Guidelines spell out every requirement for vaccination providers to follow to keep their vaccines in good condition. Minimum requirements for everyone holding government funded vaccines are:

- Purpose built vaccine fridge,
- Data logger monitoring of temps at 5min intervals,
- Min/Max thermometer checked at beginning and end of session and whenever vaccines are removed from the fridge,
- Twice daily temperatures documented and graphed on Strive-for-5 Temperature Chart,
- Esky, cold packs, bubble wrap & portable Min/Max thermometer for alternative vaccine storage in case of fridge malfunction,
- Online or hard copy of Strive-for-5 National Cold Chain Management Guidelines,

Public Health Unit contact phone number & email for cold chain breach notification & advice. (see below)

### Contact your Public Health Unit for immunisation enquiries:

#### Phone:

1300 066 055

#### Fax:

4221 6759

#### Email:

[islhd-phu-immunisation@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:islhd-phu-immunisation@health.nsw.gov.au)



### NSW Pharmacist vaccination program

The NSW Pharmacist Vaccination Program has been expanded to allow pharmacist immunisers to administer a broader range of National Immunisation Program (NIP), state and privately funded vaccines and to lower the age cohorts that existing vaccines can be administered to.

The [NSW Pharmacist Vaccination Standards](#) and [Authority](#) have been revised with the following key changes:

- inclusion of meningococcal B, haemophilus influenzae type b and varicella vaccines to people aged 5 years and over;
- removal of reference to diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis combination vaccine and measles-mumps-rubella combination vaccine;
- addition of diphtheria toxoid, tetanus toxoid, pertussis antigen, measles vaccine, mumps vaccine and rubella vaccine to enable pharmacist immuniser to administer the vaccines in varying combinations e.g. ADT and MMRV;

lowering of the age that pharmacist immunisers can administer vaccines protecting against diphtheria, measles, meningococcal ACWY, mumps, pertussis, rubella and tetanus to people aged 5 years and over, and administer human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to people aged 9 years and over.

### Vaccines — How many is too many?

It's not uncommon for parents and carers to ask this question, especially when their child may be due to receive 4 or 5 vaccines at the one appointment, and it is often up to healthcare professionals to give parents the reassurance they are looking for.

Immunisation schedules are assessed regularly to ensure they represent the most current research about safety, timing, and effectiveness of vaccines so that children are protected from serious diseases as early as possible. Young children are most vulnerable to many vaccine preventable diseases. Giving multiple vaccines at the one visit will not overwhelm their immune system and is in fact the preferred scenario to minimise unnecessary risk. See advice for giving multiple injections - [here](#)

Consider how many viruses and bacteria a crawling baby is exposed to on a daily basis, they are constantly developing immunity to many different microbes without us even realising it.

### Private Vaccines

When patients are given a script for a private vaccine there is some vital information that should be given with it, **preferably in written form**.

Vaccines are very temperature sensitive and must be kept between 2-8 degrees C, otherwise they lose their potency and may not produce immunity. GPs, Practice Nurses and Pharmacists should tell patients that they have 2 options:

1. Purchase the vaccine and take it straight back to the medical centre so it can be stored in their vaccine fridge until their appointment, OR
2. Purchase the vaccine immediately before their appointment then bring it in and give it straight to staff to put in the vaccine fridge. They should not sit in the waiting room with the vaccine sitting in their lap/bag/pocket!

We regularly get phone calls from GPs and nurses telling us that their patient has bought a vaccine yesterday/last week/last month and it's been in their fridge at home or in their handbag since. Patients usually say they weren't told how to store it, this may be true at times, but it's more likely that not enough emphasis has been placed on temperature control and clear directions have not been given. Directions need to be reinforced at each opportunity – when the script is handed to the patient, if they speak to the Nurse & when they collect the vaccine from the pharmacy.

### School Immunisation program

The NSW School Immunisation Program is an ongoing program offering vaccines to Year 7 and Year 10 students across Illawarra and Shoalhaven.

This year the consent process moved to an online system called CaRMI (Consent and Records Management for Immunisation). Parents are provided communication from the school with a link to provide consent for their child to receive vaccinations at school.

**Consent process overview :** [Providing consent for your child to receive a vaccination at school - Immunisation programs \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

If a child presents to you for school based vaccinations please ask the following questions;

- Do you currently have consent to receive vaccination at school? If no check AIR to ensure child has not received these vaccines.
- If child indicates yes but missed it at school, there is always opportunity for catch vaccination at school please contact the Public health Unit or if they decide to have it done with you, consent needs to be withdrawn in the online system or by contacting the Public Health Unit Ph: 1300 066 055

In the first instance always encourage students to have their vaccines done at school as this is a free service.

Online consent portal: [NSW Health Federation Broker](#)