

# Immunisation

Immunisation has proven to be one of the most effective medical treatments we have to prevent disease.

Modern vaccines provide good levels of protection against many diseases and against the disability and death they can cause. Immunising a person not only protects that person, but other people as well by increasing the community level of immunity and minimising the spread of infection.

As with most medical treatments, immunisation is not entirely risk-free, yet the currently available vaccines are many thousands of times safer than the risks of the diseases they prevent.

Contraindications to a vaccine and the risk of side effects need to be discussed before being immunised.

A large number of vaccines are available. Some are recommended for use by all children or adults and are on the NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) National Immunisation Program Schedule, Australia. Because this schedule changes quite frequently, the most up-to-date version is found online at <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/> or by referring to the latest edition of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

There are also many additional vaccines for use in certain circumstances, and the use of these is described under specific conditions in this handbook or website.

Further information on vaccination can be obtained from your doctor or by phoning the Immunisation Section, SA Health on (08) 8226 7177. For further information for other Australian states, contact the health department in that state or territory or the National Immunisation Program.

## Useful website

- > **Australian Immunisation Handbook**  
<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/>