

**FEATURE****IMMUNISATION:  
The Basics**

Local Immunisation Coordinators in the metropolitan regions have been working collaboratively to organise several workshops for people interested in learning more about immunisation. Interested persons can attend any of the full day workshops or it may be possible to attend either a morning or afternoon session.

Immunisation: The Basics comprises of four modules. Module 1: Legislation includes consent, vaccine safety & OHSW & anti immunisation issues and Module 2: Vaccine Cold Chain management will be presented in the morning. Module 3: Vaccine Administration and Module 4: Immunisation Programs including basic immunology will be presented in the afternoon session.

The workshop is a great way to update your skills in the immunisation field and give you an opportunity to network with other providers.

If you are interested in participating in a workshop or require further information please contact your Local Immunisation Coordinator in the Division of General Practice. Numbers will be restricted so express your interest as soon as a possible to avoid disappointment.

Rural providers can also contact their Local Immunisation Coordinators in the Division of General Practice to find out more information about 'Immunisation: The Basics' workshops in their region.

**Proposed Dates of metropolitan 'Immunisation: The Basics' Workshops**

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Local Immunisation Coordinator</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Phone</i>
Tues 1st March	Sue Lake Western Division of GP	West TBA	8244-3822
Sat 19th March	Angela Newbound Northern Division of GP	North TBA	8252-9444
Wed 6th April	Julie Obrien Southern Division of GP	South TBA	8298-0777
Thurs 21st April	Louise Kennewell Adelaide North Eastern Division of GP	Education Centre Modbury Hospital	8396-4511

**Vaccine Safety pamphlet has been updated**

Following every vaccination encounter a 'Vaccine Safety' pamphlet should be given to all vaccinees as it provides information and advice about possible adverse events following immunisation. Contact your Local Immunisation Coordinator in the Division of General Practice or SAICU for more pamphlets.

The NHMRC also recommends that recipients remain in the vicinity of the place of vaccination for at least 15 minutes in case an immediate adverse event is experienced. Adults should also be warned of the risk of driving and operating machinery for at least 30 minutes after vaccination as most faints occur within 30 minutes. ref: The Australian Immunisation Handbook 8th Edition, page 29

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This newsletter is developed by the South Australian Immunisation Coordination Unit. We are always seeking contributions for the newsletter! What would you like to know? Do you have any issues of interest or concerns that you would like highlighted to other immunisation providers. If so we would like to hear about them: please email to: [susan.lewis@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:susan.lewis@health.sa.gov.au)

**ALERT!****Resources for the Pneumococcal Vaccination Programs**

The new 'Universal Childhood Pneumococcal Vaccination Program' and the 'Pneumococcal Vaccination Program for Older Australians' commenced on January 1 2005. More information is available from [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au) Resources for these new programs have been distributed to all immunisation providers.

The Australian Government distributed a set of resources for providers including fact sheets for the public. Additional copies can be ordered by phoning 1800 671 811.

The South Australian Immunisation Coordination Unit (SAICU) distributed an updated schedule and coloured chart to assist with the Universal Childhood Pneumococcal Vaccination Program. Additional copies can be ordered from your Local Immunisation Coordinator at your Division of General Practice or from SAICU.



Adapted from the NCIRS newsletter Dec 2004

**Q.** What is the minimum time period between doses for the primary course of 7-valent conjugate pneumococcal vaccine (7vPCV - Prevenar)?

**A.** Two months is the recommended minimal interval between the primary doses of Prevenar. However, should a more rapid catch up be desired, the absolute minimum spacing for any vaccine dose including 7vPCV is one month (see Product Information). Providers should adhere to the recommended schedule whenever possible. In order for it to be recorded as valid on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, doses need to be at least 27 days apart. (Ref: The Australian Immunisation Handbook 8th Edition, pages 229-232.)

**Q.** Is there any problem with giving Varicella-Zoster vaccine before the recommended age of 18 months?

**A.** There is some evidence from investigations of varicella outbreaks that younger age at vaccination (ie below 15 months) may be associated with an increased risk of developing break-through varicella infection. Due to this evidence and also that three other vaccines are due at 12 months of age the NHMRC recommends varicella vaccination at 18 months of age. (Galil K, Fair E, Mountcastle N, Britz P, Seward J. Younger age at vaccination may increase risk of varicella vaccine failure. Ref: Journal of Infectious Diseases. 2002;186:102-5.)

**Q.** What is the recommended spacing between Varicella-Zoster vaccine and any other live attenuated vaccine, including MMR?

**A.** Varicella-Zoster vaccine can be administered at the same time as other live attenuated vaccines using separate syringes and injection sites. If they are not given at the same time, then they should be given at least 4 weeks apart because there is an increased chance of a poor response to the vaccine and subsequent break-through varicella disease if given within 4 weeks.

(Ref: The Australian Immunisation Handbook 8th Edition, pages 53 and 281 CDC. Simultaneous administration of varicella vaccine and other recommended childhood vaccines – United States, 1995-1999. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2001;50:1058-1061.)



You may recall the SAVeS Project was introduced in the November issue of Sharp and to the Point. It aims to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of using data linkage to monitor the safety of vaccines in SA.

By now most of you will have received the SAVeS Immunisation Provider Survey about Vaccine Safety. Many, many thanks to those who have completed and returned it - to the end of December we had an astonishing return rate of 58%, after just 1 reminder. A final reminder will be sent in January to boost the return rate, hopefully to 80%. If you have not yet completed the survey PLEASE take 5 minutes to jot down your feelings.

Preliminary results will be presented in the March issue of this newsletter, and on the website which will hopefully be up and running soon.

Also on the January agenda are immunisation provider focus groups – these aim to explore privacy and vaccine safety more fully, and to discuss some of the issues which were raised in the surveys. There will be a total of 10 groups held, with 10 participants in each.

If you would like to register your interest in attending the focus groups, or would like further information about the SAVeS Project call Sarah Dugdale on (08) 8226-7195 or [sarah.dugdale@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:sarah.dugdale@health.sa.gov.au).



Injected live vaccines (MMR, varicella and yellow fever) are not believed to have an effect on live vaccines given orally (OPV, oral typhoid). Live oral vaccines may be given at any time before or after live injected vaccines.

Ref: CDC Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases, 6th Edition.



**Flu Program**

Now is the time to discard your 2004 flu vaccine. Please document the number of vaccines discarded on the new vaccine order form.

The Flu program for people aged 65 years and over will again commence on the 1st March. Orders can be placed with the Vaccine Distribution Centre by mid February for deliveries to commence from the 1st March 2005.

**SAICU**

**Phone:**  
**(08) 8226-7177**



**ALERT!**

**Reminder : Vaccine Distribution**

A new vaccine ordering form has been introduced from January 2005. On placing an order, providers need to also record the stock in their fridge and the expired stock on the new order form. This will assist in the management of vaccine distribution with the aim to reduce vaccine wastage.

**PROFILE**



**Barossa Council immunisation team awarded SA Great award**

In November 2004, the Barossa Council Immunisation Campaign was recognised for its efforts with a SA Great Regional Award in the Health Category for Light and Barossa Region.

SA Great Awards are presented annually through the Office of Regional Affairs and both support and acknowledge contributions made by organisations and individuals to regional communities. Barossa Council's Environmental Health Officer Myles Somers (pictured above) said "I believe the fact that Council managed delivery of the School based Meningococcal C Immunisation Program in a 14 month period as opposed to over three years, without any significant additional administrative resources and achieved high levels of coverage and community support, impressed the panel of judges. It also reflects recognition of the importance of public health programs, especially those that benefit the well being of a community's most valuable assets- our children".