



**Riverland Division
of General Practice Inc.**

Give your child the healthiest start to 2012 with immunisation

The Riverland Division of General Practice is encouraging parents of children starting kindy for the first time to have their four year old vaccinations completed before their first day.

When children start kindy they often mix with a much larger group of people, putting them at greater risk of coming into contact with infectious diseases. The four year old vaccinations protect children from Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Polio, Measles, Mumps and Rubella. However, despite this, they are commonly forgotten.

Chair of the Riverland Division of General Practice Board, Dr Grant Baker, said that ensuring children receive the required immunisations is a great start for young children starting kindy.

“By ensuring that children are immunised, we are making sure that their time at kindy is enjoyable, fun and, most importantly, that their formative learning years are kept as disease free as possible,” Dr Baker said.

Dr Baker also warns parents not to become complacent when it comes to immunisation. “When there is a lack of disease in the community, it is very common for people to get complacent and the immunisation rates for these diseases drop, which is concerning,” he said.

“There is a perception that vaccine-preventable diseases are no longer present in Australia, however diseases such as whooping cough and measles are still prevalent and can cause serious illness and, in some cases, even death.”

Although South Australia boasts high coverage rates for one and two year old vaccinations, the rates of immunisation coverage in four year olds have declined over the past two years. During the same period, there has been an increase in the notification rate of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as whooping cough and measles.

In July 2011, SA Health launched a state-wide awareness campaign highlighting the importance of the booster vaccinations required before children start kindy. The campaign also reminds parents that these immunisations can be administered safely from three and a half years of age.

In a further effort to increase the immunisation coverage of Australian children, from July 2012, families will need to have their children fully immunised in order to receive the Family Tax Benefit end-of-year supplement.

Dr Baker has urged parents to ensure their children are up-to-date with their immunisations.

“Immunisation is critical for protecting the individual child and subsequently the whole community, by preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable disease,” Dr Baker said.

“Completing the childhood immunisation program will ensure all children in the Riverland are protected.”



Parents with any questions or concerns should contact their GP or a Practice Nurse for more information. Alternatively, information about childhood immunisation can be accessed by contacting the Department of Health (Immunisation Section) on 8226 7177 or visiting www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/immunisation.

For more information, please contact Kerryn Rose at the Riverland Division of General Practice on 8582 3823.

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