



Australia's general practice immunisation newsletter

Contents

Continued vigilance required!

Rotavirus vaccine upfront

GP HPV Vaccine program update

HPV Register

NCIRS 10th Anniversary Conference & the 2nd National Immunisation Workshop

Handbook update

National Divisions Immunisation Workshop 2007

AGPN Forum – Detailed program now available!

Continued vigilance required!

Recent events have highlighted the importance of continued vigilance when it comes to immunisation. With the recent deaths of children in Perth, the arrival of a Polio victim in Melbourne and the continued outbreak of measles in Japan we need to fight complacency in the community and maintain the desired high level of immunisation coverage across the country. Those in the community who have decided against immunising their children for polio or measles in particular could be reminded that these diseases are alive and well in other countries very close to Australia. Fully immunise and minimise the risk of vaccine preventable diseases.

Rotavirus vaccine upfront

The Rotavirus vaccine program is now underway with all babies born from May 1 2007 able to receive the free Rotavirus vaccine from their GP or local health service as long as they do so within the appropriate time frame. GPs do not need to write scripts for this vaccine as it is available through the normal NIP ordering.

There are 2 important points to note with the rotavirus vaccines –

- **Rotavirus vaccines are ORAL vaccines, and**
- **have a limited administration time frame**

Practices are advised to order the rotavirus vaccines carefully! Some practices have found that the packaging is bulky and causing difficulties with fridge space.

Do not take the vaccine out of the packaging to store – the vaccine is a LIGHT SENSITIVE VACCINE!

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[Back to top](#)

Information contained within this newsletter is intended to inform you on immunisation issues with a national perspective. As such, it is possible that some references will require adjustment to be made specifically accurate for service providers in each individual State or Territory jurisdiction. For further clarification, contact your SBO Immunisation Coordinator or jurisdiction Health Department. AGPN acknowledges the financial support of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

Due to the limited time frame it is important to stress to practices that they need to encourage new parents to act quickly to take advantage of the funded vaccine. Information brochures for providers should be available from the Department of Health and Ageing shortly and in the mean time there is the information provided by divisions, the Immunise Australia hotline and the NCIRS web site fact sheet.

Immunise Australia Hotline: 1800 671 811

NCIRS Rotavirus fact sheet:

http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/rotavirus_vaccine_for_children_june_2007.pdf

There are two (2) vaccines available - Rotateq® (produced by CSL) and Rotarix® (Produced by GSK). It is important to know which vaccine your jurisdiction has selected as there are significant differences between the two. Below are two tables outlining firstly the vaccine to be available in each jurisdiction and secondly, the differences between the two vaccines.

Table 1: Rotavirus Vaccine by jurisdiction

State/Territory	Rotateq ®	Rotarix ®
ACT		✓
NSW		✓
NT		✓
QLD	✓	
SA	✓	
TAS		✓
VIC	✓	
WA		✓

Table 2: Differences between Rotavirus vaccines

	Rotateq ®	Rotarix ®
Produced by	CSL/Merck	GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)
Method	Oral	Oral
No of Doses	Three (3) oral doses	Two (2) oral doses
Age for routine administration	2 month 4 months 6 months	2 months 4 months
Minimal interval between doses	4 weeks	4 weeks
Age limits for dosing	1 st dose by 12 weeks 3 rd dose by 32 weeks	1 st dose by 14 weeks 2 nd dose by 24 weeks

Back to top

GP HPV Vaccine program update

The vaccine is available for practices and young women are beginning to book in for their HPV immunisations. The GP HPV vaccine program has had a staggered start around the country but will be in full swing nationally from the end of July. In preparing for the HPV program, the following list may be useful:

- Organise vaccine ordering for the anticipated whole patient equivalents (WPE) for your practice
- Check the Immunise Australia site for relevant HPV brochures that can be ordered for your patients
- Note that consent needs to be gained in 2 parts – for the procedure and for the sending of the information to the proposed HPV register
- Check how to capture the relevant data for the (soon to be established) HPV register
- If necessary plan an HPV clinic day
 - Order vaccines for the day
 - Think about cold chain management of vaccines
 - Discuss recording of patient details for the HPV Register

Up to date information can be found on the NCIRS fact sheet website –

http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/hpv_jan_2007.pdf

Or the Immunise Australia website –

<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/hpv-vac-prog>

The General Practice HPV program will run until June 2009 after which time the program will revert to a school based program for 12 year old girls or those in their first year of secondary school.

HPV Register

The Bill to allow the development of the HPV Register will be debated during the spring sitting of Federal Parliament. Once this is passed the register can be processed and may become operational later this year. Until this happens, we need to continue to encourage all practices to collect HPV data and hold it for future lodgement with the register.

As well as consent for the procedure for the HPV immunisation, providers also need to gain consent from their patients for the lodgement of this data with the proposed register.

Collecting the HPV Data

As this register is not yet operational, all practices are asked to collect and hold the information until it can be forwarded on. Data can be collected by:

1. Using your medical software – step by step instructions for collecting HPV information using various medical software programs are available on AGPN's immunisation website: <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=1813#Register>. These also include instructions to help retrieve the information in a report format which can be sent to the register later in the year.

Back to top

2. If you do not have desktop software we still encourage you to collect the data. A couple of templates that can be used to collect the data with the fields that will be needed to populate the proposed register can be also be found on the website:
<http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=1813#Register>. This spreadsheet can be populated and kept electronically or in hardcopy.

How to submit your data when the register is operational

1. Using your medical software – the documents listed above include a step by step procedure sheet which shows how to pull a report from the data you have recorded. This information can be printed and faxed when the register is operational. Your division will give you information on times and fax numbers. There is also the possibility that the information will be lodged electronically.
2. Using the spreadsheet template mentioned above for data collection – simply print and fax to the number when that is clarified.

You will be notified about the timeframe and manner of lodgement of this data by your Division or the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

A \$6 administration fee (plus GST) will be paid to you by the Commonwealth for lodging each HPV immunisation encounter for 12 to 18 year olds once the register is operational.

All data needs to be kept safely until the proposed register is operational later this year.

NCIRS 10th Anniversary Conference & the 2nd National Immunisation Workshop

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance celebrated its 10th Anniversary last month with a one-day conference entitled '**A Decisive Decade in Immunisation**' which was held in conjunction with the 2nd National Immunisation Workshop.

The day was opened by Dr Michael Wooldridge who was the Federal Minister for Health 10 years ago and the driving force behind the Seven Point Plan and GPII program. The conference was a great success with some wonderful presentations from international guest speakers including Professor Scott Halperin and Professor Heinz-Josef Schmitt along with well known national speakers including Sir Gustav Nossal, Professor John Horvath, Professor Terry Nolan and Professor Margaret Burgess. It was a great opportunity to reflect on the progress of the National Immunisation Program and the importance of the contribution made by NCIRS.

Presentations from the conference will be posted on the NCIRS website <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au>.

Handbook update

The new 9th Edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook is progressing through the final phases of its publication and should be available in hard copy later this year. The additional section on the HPV vaccines has finished its public consultation and has now been included. This extra chapter has delayed the publication

[Back to top](#)

process as it too has to pass through the checking and double checking phases. We will advise the network of the date of the Handbook's release as soon as we know.

Until this publication has been released, the 8th edition is the governing handbook and any information not available in the 8th Edition (for example the new vaccines Rotavirus or HPV) can be found on the NCIRS fact sheet site.

For HPV - http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/hpv_jan_2007.pdf

For Rotavirus - http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/rotavirus_vaccine_for_children_sep_2006.pdf

National Divisions Immunisation Workshop 2007

Program available now!

The workshop, with the theme ***Unleashing the power of Divisions***, is being held on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th August. A detailed program of the times, topics and speakers is now available on AGPN's immunisation website: <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=24698>

The program in brief is as follows:

- Breakfast session with speaker Dr Raymond Seidler, a GP who has been working in Kings Cross, Sydney for the past 30 years. He will share some interesting experiences from the world of "the Cross".
- Dr Greg Rowles, a GP with a country practice in Victoria who will speak on the Vaccines of the Year.
- Kate Russo is the Divisional Immunisation officer for Dandenong in Victoria. Kate has been running a success collaborative with various stakeholders of immunisation and will report on her successes.
- Jane Sanders is the SBO Immunisation Coordinator for GP Queensland. Jane will report on the joint venture of Queensland Health and GPQ developing the Kiss Guide to Vaccine Management.
- Dr Jonathan Anderson has a busy inner Melbourne practice and was involved with the Victorian Department of Human Services in developing the pandemic flu plans for the state and in particular for general practices.
- Meredith Cameron is the Communication Adviser for the National Institute for Clinical Studies (NICS) and is presenting on the plans for flu seasons.
- Vince Rettura is an officer with the WA Department of Health and has developed an effective and inexpensive training package for practice nurse immunisers.
- Professor Peter Macintyre is the Director of the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS), an organisation which has recently celebrated its 10th birthday. Peter will speak about those 10 years of the NIP and where we go from here.

For those who have not yet registered for the 2007 National Divisions Immunisation Workshop, this is your last chance. Accommodation places are running out so first in best dressed.

Please note: registration for the NDIW is separate to the Nursing in General Practice forum and your registration forms need to be returned to Leah Parker at AGPN: email: lparker@agpn.com.au, fax: 02 6228

Back to top

0899. Also important to note is accommodation bookings are subject to availability. To make sure you don't miss out, book now!

Non-divisional people are more than welcome to attend. A registration fee of \$75 (GST incl) per person is charged to cover costs. To register, complete the regular registration form and AGPN will invoice you for the amount.

For more details and registration forms go to: <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=24698>

AGPN Forum – Detailed program now available!

The 9th Annual General Practice Forum will be held in Hobart from **15-18 November 2007**. This Forum will host a range of keynote speakers, guaranteed to challenge and inspire delegates. There are two focal themes, firstly, 'Doing Division Business Better' and secondly the 'Future Focus and Profile of the Network'. The focus on divisional work will include; sustainability of team-based care, building strategic relationships, making best practice easy practice and the overall future direction of the Network.

For the program, registration forms and other information about the forum visit the website at: <http://www.gpnetworkforum.com.au/site/index.cfm>

[Back to top](#)