

MEDIA RELEASE

T U E S D A Y 5 F E B R U A R Y



NEW SCHOOL YEAR IS TIMELY VACCINATION REMINDER FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

In coming weeks many children around the country will be returning to school or will start school for the very first time. But it's not just new shoes and textbooks Tasmanian parents need to remember when sending their children off to school.

General Practice Tasmania immunisation spokesperson Dr Leanne Jones said making sure a child's vaccination is up-to-date is critical before they begin school or return for the new school year.

“The recent outbreak of Rubella in Sydney that has affected many babies highlights the importance of vaccination. Rubella (sometimes called German Measles) can cause severe problems for pregnant women as well as illness in young children.

“There are different vaccinations for different ages of children and unfortunately immunisations are sometimes forgotten. When children start school they engage with a much larger group of people, making them more at risk of coming into contact with contagious diseases.

“For our four-year-olds starting school for the first time there are a number of vaccinations required to ensure the childhood immunisation program is up-to-date.

“Completion of the four-year-old immunisation schedule protects children against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps and rubella,” Dr Jones said.

Parents should also be aware that there are a number of vaccines recommended for children at various stages between the ages of 10 and 18. These include vaccines for hepatitis B, the new HPV vaccine for girls, varicella (chicken pox) for those children who haven't had the virus or the vaccine before, and a booster dose for tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough.

These vaccines are usually provided through council and school programs but some children miss doses if they are away or unwell on the day the vaccine is given at their school.

Dr Jones said that children and adolescents who miss doses through the school program are eligible for a ‘catch up’ vaccine from their GP.

“If parents have school age children they should check every year and remember that immunisation is not just for babies and young children”.

“Completing the childhood immunisation program will help ensure all of our children in Tasmania are protected”.

“I would encourage parents to visit their GP and talk about the required immunisations before sending their children off to school,” Dr Jones said.

For more information please phone General Practice Tasmania spokesperson Dr Leanne Jones on (03) 6331 2722 or mobile 0418 384 078

Photograph/footage opportunities will be available at 1pm on Tuesday 5 February at the Caledonian Centre, 56 Invermay Road, Invermay.

The General Practice Tasmania network is a unique statewide infrastructure that supports contemporary general practice in Tasmania by linking GPs with each other, by supporting all members of the general practice team and, increasingly, by employing or supporting allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, dieticians and psychologists to be part of the primary care team. General Practice Tasmania is also a proud member of the Australian General Practice Network.

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