

MEDIA RELEASE

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HEALTH CHECK FOR CHILDREN IS AS IMPORTANT AS CHECKING THEIR BAGS

Tasmania's GPs are urging parents and carers of four-year-old children to ensure that their children are fully immunised as they get ready to start school for the first time this year.

General Practice Tasmania Immunisation spokesperson, Dr Leanne Jones said the start of schooling for children was also an opportune time for parents to book them for a Healthy Kids Check which has been introduced for four-year-olds.

The Healthy Kids Check was established by the Australian Government to promote the early detection of lifestyle risk factors in children as well as to identify any potential developmental issues or illnesses and to provide information for parents on healthy lifestyles.

"Parents can ask about booking their child in for a Healthy Kids Check at the same time as the four-year-old's immunisation. In this way, parents can be confident that their children are ready to start the school year in the best and healthiest way possible," Dr Jones said.

An important part of the new Health Check, introduced by the government in July last year and which is rebatable under Medicare, is ensuring that four-year-olds are up-to-date with their immunisations.

"Immunisation provides protection against diseases such as chickenpox, meningitis C, hepatitis B, whooping cough, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps and rubella. Vaccines for these diseases are provided free to children in certain age-groups under the National Immunisation Program," she said.

Dr Jones said parents would be providing the best possible start for their children by protecting them from infectious diseases and having them checked out by their doctor or nurse before they go to school for the first time.

"Although there is a perception that we don't have diseases like measles and mumps in Australia anymore, the fact is that these diseases do still occur and vaccination is the best way to stop them spreading in our community."

"Having the required immunisations as well as the Healthy Kids Check is a great start for young children as they start school for the first time ensuring that their time at school is enjoyable, fun, and importantly that their formative learning years are kept as disease-free as possible," Dr Jones said.

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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