

**1 August 2018**

## **It's time to Immunise Melbourne**

MORE BABIES BETWEEN 12 AND 18 MONTHS NEED A VITAL VACCINE BOOST

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network today launched a new campaign hoping to encourage more parents to vaccinate their babies and toddlers to help protect them and others in the community from potentially life-threatening disease.

'It's time to immunise Melbourne' is directly targeted at helping parents to remember that when their babies are aged between 12 to 18-months, it's still a vital time for them to stay on track with their immunisations.

Nearly 95% of parents in Melbourne's north and west are fully immunising their newborns, but this drops to just over 90% for the vaccines given between 12 to 18 months.

Immunisation expert and Royal Children's Hospital paediatrician Dr Margie Danchin said our busy lives make it all too easy to miss vital immunisations.

"Vaccination is lower for these age groups because in the second year of life parents may be back at work or there may be a new baby in the house," Dr Danchin said.

"But children need to receive their vaccines on time according to the schedule because this is when they are most vulnerable to the vaccine preventable diseases contained in the vaccines."

With catchphrases such as; "He may be a darling but he's not immune," and "She may be a cutie pie, but she's not immune," 'it's time to Immunise Melbourne,' NWMPHN is making a heartfelt appeal to parents.

NWMPHN CEO Adjunct Associate Professor Christopher Carter added: "We would walk to the end of the earth to protect our children, especially when they are vulnerable and need our protection and guidance but somehow we forget a vitally important moment in their life between 12 and 18 months.

"The vaccines given at this time protect against diseases including meningococcal, chickenpox, flu, measles and more – all diseases which can cause serious illness or even death for vulnerable little ones."

"We're here to try and change this behaviour because we want to protect all the children in our community and the health of their families."

NWMPHN is concerned that parts of inner Melbourne have some of the lowest vaccination rates in the state. All Local Government Areas in the north and west fall under the 95% target immunisation rate set by State Government.

“Vaccinating your children is one of the most important things you can do to keep them safe and well, so it’s time to make time to immunise,” A/Prof Carter added.

Help is also available for parents struggling to keep track of when immunisations are due – the Vax on Time app makes it easy to keep up to date for all your children.

Newport GP Dr Akaash Goyal said recent changes to the vaccination schedule, such as the introduction of the new meningococcal vaccine, make it even more important to ensure that the 12-18 month old age group are up to date.

“This is an age when most children are starting in childcare, so it’s critical that their vaccinations are up to date to protect both themselves and the rest of the community,” Dr Goyal said.

You can get the Vax on Time app through either the Android or Apple app stores on your phone or other device. Families can also visit <http://immunisemelbourne.org.au> to gain further insight on why it’s so important to find the time to immunise.

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## Visit Immunise Melbourne



**Web:** [immunisemelbourne.org.au/](http://immunisemelbourne.org.au/)



**Facebook:** [facebook.com/immunisemelbourne/](https://facebook.com/immunisemelbourne/)



**Instagram:** [instagram.com/immunisemelbourne/](https://instagram.com/immunisemelbourne/)

## Fact Sheet:

- Children in Australia are eligible for 16 free rounds of shots from birth to four years old, including a hepatitis B injection after they are born, and a combined injection with diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio at two months.
- Crucial vaccines given between 12-18 months include Meningococcal ACWY, Chickenpox, Flu and MMR. Vaccinations need to be given on time to give children the best protection.
- Having you children fully immunised is a requirement to receive many federal government benefits, and children who are not immunised are not allowed to attend childcare or kindergarten in the state of Victoria.
- Research and testing is an essential part of developing safe and effective vaccines. In Australia, every vaccine must pass strict safety testing before the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will register it for use. Approval of vaccines can take up to 10 years.
- There is no established link between vaccines and autism. Medical information from nearly 1.5 million children living around the world was able to confirm that vaccination does not cause autism. Immunisation allergy and asthma. Wide and varied studies show no increase in allergy or asthma due to childhood vaccines.



## ABOUT PHNs

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, PHNs began operation on 1 July 2015 and are responsible for coordinating primary health care and facilitating improved health outcomes in their local community. Melbourne Primary Care Network operates the North Western Melbourne PHN.

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We acknowledge the peoples of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which our work in the community takes place. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



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