

Routine Childhood Immunisation - health professionals' kit

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Boosting childhood immunisation rates

Australia has one of the world's most comprehensive national immunisation programs. However, despite maintaining relatively high routine vaccinations among children in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a concerning downward trend in childhood immunisation coverage rates over the past 2 years, particularly for First Nations children.

The NIP provides free vaccines at scheduled times to infants and children between birth and the age of 4 to protect them against serious diseases.

To maintain support for routine childhood immunisation, the Department of Health and Aged Care undertakes promotional activity to remind parents of the importance of childhood immunisation by:

- Highlighting the importance of vaccinating children according to the National Immunisation Program (NIP) schedule.
- Reassuring parents about the benefits of routine childhood immunisation.
- Encouraging parents to seek information from trusted sources.

How you can help

Even though most Australian parents and carers vaccinate their children, it's natural for them to have questions about immunisation.

While parental decisions around routine childhood immunisation are made based on a range of factors, misinformation on the internet and social media about the safety of vaccines is an increasing cause for concern.

Research has shown that a consistent recommendation from a healthcare professional plays an important role in parents' decisions about childhood vaccination. Health professionals are vital for communicating the benefits and safety of routine childhood immunisation and to counter misinformation.

You can play a key role in improving childhood immunisation coverage by:

- Promoting routine childhood immunisation in your practice by downloading and displaying materials and communication tools to provide accurate information during your consultations with parents and carers.
- Providing information and education. Providers can address concerns or questions parents and carers may have and provide information about the benefits of childhood immunisation.
- Following up on children who have missed scheduled vaccines. Providers can identify children who are due and overdue for vaccines and contact their parents or carers to schedule appointments.
- Using reminder systems, such as phone calls, text messages or postcards to notify parents or carers when their child is due for a vaccine.

About the health professionals' kit

The resources in this kit are designed to support you in conversations with parents and carers about childhood immunisation.

Resources included in this kit:

- key messages
- answers to common questions from parents and carers
- support for conversation approaches to childhood immunisation
- following up on children who have missed scheduled vaccines
- immunisation clinical support
- communication resources
- newsletter article.

Further information

For more information, visit: www.health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation.

For any queries about the resources in this kit, please contact publichealthcomms@health.gov.au

Information for parents, resources and campaign materials can be found at:
www.health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisaion

Key messages

Topic	Message
Routine childhood immunisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childhood immunisation is a safe, effective, and free way to protect your kids from serious diseases. Immunisation helps children stay healthy by preventing serious infections. The National Immunisation Program provides free vaccines at scheduled times to infants and children between birth and the age of 4 to protect them against serious diseases.
The National Immunisation Program Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timing of each dose of every vaccine in the childhood immunisation schedule is carefully planned to safely protect babies and children from as young as possible and when they need it most. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children with certain medical conditions are recommended to receive extra vaccines for free.
Timing and catch up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccinating on time in line with the National Immunisation Program schedule gives the best protection. Delaying vaccines means your child is unprotected for longer. It's easy to catch up on missed vaccinations. There is no need to repeat the doses already received and there is no need to get extra doses.
Side effects and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost all reactions are minor and usually go away within a few days. These are mostly injection site reactions and show the immune system is responding to the vaccine. Serious side effects from immunisation are very rare. All childhood vaccines have been carefully tested and continue to be monitored to ensure the highest safety standards are maintained.
Common questions and more information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For more information, including how to check if your child's vaccinations are up to date, visit health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation. You can also talk to your trusted doctor, nurse or other health professional. Visit the Your Questions Answered page on our website for further frequently asked questions and answers. When looking online for vaccine information, be sure to use reliable sources based on scientific evidence, such as the Childhood vaccinations Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation SKAI

Common questions from parents and carers

Although most Australian parents and carers choose to vaccinate their children, it's natural to have questions about vaccination. Visit the [Your Questions Answered](#) page on our website for further frequently asked questions and answers covering:

- [How vaccines work](#)
- [Vaccine safety](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Vaccine-preventable diseases](#)
- [Vaccination schedule](#)

Conversation approaches to childhood immunisation

There is a range of evidence-based resources available to support health professionals with the conversations they have with parents and carers about childhood immunisations.

The Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation (SKAI) communication support tools are designed to aid and inspire conversations about vaccinating pregnant women, parents of young children, and families. They were developed by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, in partnership with the University of Sydney and other collaborators.

- The health professional tools (www.skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals) are designed to help you meet the needs of all parents, whether they are ready to vaccinate, have questions, or intend to decline vaccination altogether.
- The parents page (www.skai.org.au/childhood) provides information and resources to support parents in making vaccination decisions for their family.

Following up on children who have missed scheduled vaccines

Reports from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) can be accessed to assist in identifying children at your practice who have missed scheduled vaccines at a certain age (AIR010A report). Reports covering due and overdue children by locality and by vaccination provider (AIR011A and AIR011B) are also available.

Health professionals can use these reports to track the vaccination status of children, implement reminder and recall systems, and consider opportunities to deliver more accessible and flexible vaccination services for harder-to-reach children.

Further information about AIR reports can be accessed from the Services Australia website: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/australian-immunisation-register-for-health-professionals.

Immunisation clinical support

There is a range of information, resources and tools available on the [Department of Health and Aged Care's website](#) to support clinical practice and the delivery of immunisation services. This includes:



- [The Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)
- [The National Immunisation Program schedule](#)
- [Catch-up vaccination resources](#)
- [Reports from the Australian Immunisation Register](#)
- [Program advice for providers](#)
- [Influenza vaccination resources](#)
- [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance tools, resources and services](#)


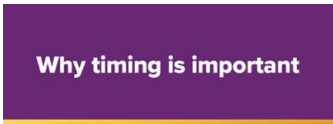



For more information visit [Immunisation clinical support](#).




Contacts for state and territory immunisation health services can be found [here](#).

Communication resources

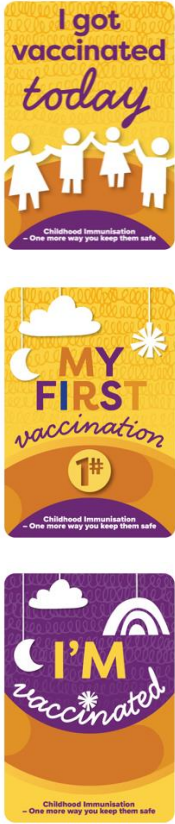
The table below outlines the resources available to support childhood immunisation communication and engagement.

Resource	Preview	Link	Suggested use
Poster		Download here .	Print and display poster in reception or waiting areas.
Brochure		Download here . Order free hard copies of this resource by contacting National Mailing and Marketing: Email: health@nationalmailing.com.au Phone: 02 6269 1080 Quote the order ID IT0329, the quantity of the resource you wish to order and provide your delivery address. A factsheet version is also available in 10 languages for download and print from the Department's website: Translated resources Childhood Immunisation and Aged Care (health.gov.au) The translated languages are: Arabic, Assyrian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Karen, Korean, Persian/Farsi, Thai, Vietnamese	Display brochures in reception or waiting areas. Hand out to parents and carers.


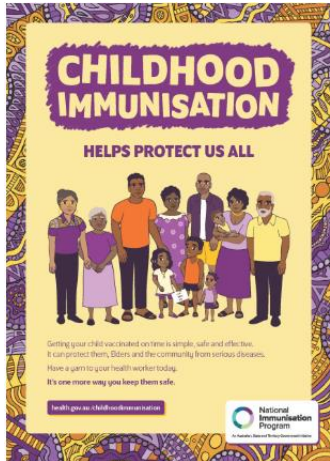
<p>Magnet</p>		<p>Download here.</p> <p>Order free copies of this resource by contacting National Mailing and Marketing:</p> <p>Email: health@nationalmailing.com.au Phone: 02 6269 1080</p> <p>Quote the order ID IT0302, the quantity of the resource you wish to order and provide your delivery address.</p>	<p>Hand out to parents and carers.</p>
<p>Animation 1</p>	<p>Why timing is important</p> 	<p>View on the website.</p> <p>Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Animation 2</p>	<p>How vaccines work</p> 	<p>View on the website.</p> <p>Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Animation 3</p>	<p>Simple and safe</p> 	<p>View on the website.</p> <p>Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Video</p>	<p>Health professionals on the importance of routine childhood vaccination</p> 	<p>View on the website.</p> <p>Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	

<p>Video</p>	<p>Health professionals on the safety of routine childhood vaccination</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Case study</p>	<p>Parents speak about routine childhood vaccination</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Frequently Asked Questions</p>	<p>www.health.gov.au/childhood-immunisation/your-questions-answered</p>	<p>A factsheet version is also available in 10 languages for download and print from the Department’s website: Translated resources Childhood Immunisation and Aged Care (health.gov.au)</p> <p>The translated languages are: Arabic, Assyrian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Karen, Korean, Persian/Farsi, Thai, Vietnamese.</p>	<p>Refer parents to the FAQs available on the website.</p>
<p>Milestone stickers</p>		<p>Download here.</p>	<p>Print these on sticky labels using your office printer and peel off to give to parents/children when they receive their vaccination.</p>



<p>Milestone cards</p>		<p>Download here.</p>	<p>Print these on cards to provide to parents to take a photo with their child after their vaccination appointment.</p>
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Communication resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Resource	Preview	Link	Suggested use
Poster 1		Download here .	Print and display poster in reception or waiting areas.
Poster 2		Download here .	Print and display poster in reception or waiting areas.

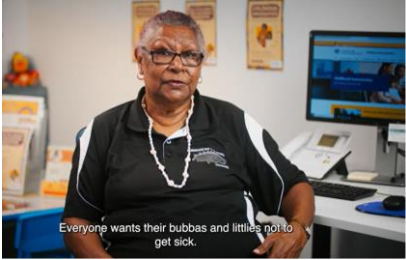




<p>Adaptable poster</p>		<p>Download here</p>	<p>This poster for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health services and clinics can be adapted to promote local clinic vaccination information</p>
<p>Height chart</p>		<p>Download here</p> <p>Order free copies of this resource by contacting National Mailing and Marketing: Email: health@nationalmailing.com.au Phone: 02 6269 1080</p> <p>Quote the order ID IT0331, the quantity of the resource you wish to order and provide your delivery address.</p>	<p>This height chart is for display in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health services and clinics to promote local vaccinations</p>
<p>Animation 1</p>	<p>This animation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families explains all you need to know about childhood vaccinations.</p>  <p>As mums and dads, aunts and uncles, and nans and pops.</p>	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	



<p>Animation 2</p>	<p>This short animation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families explains that vaccines have been carefully tested, to protect us from diseases.</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Animation 3</p>	<p>This short animation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families explains how vaccination provides protection against diseases that can make little ones very sick.</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Video</p>	<p>Health worker Irene talks about how getting immunised can protect your children.</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	



<p>Video</p>	<p>Health worker Florianna talks about why children need to be immunised.</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Video</p>	<p>Nurse Kristy addresses common questions from parents.</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	
<p>Video</p>	<p>Nurse Tisha explains why childhood immunisations are so important.</p> 	<p>View on the website. Share on your social media channels from YouTube.</p>	

Newsletter article

The article below can be published on your website or in newsletters.

Are your child's vaccinations up to date?

From the moment they're born, most babies can fight the germs they encounter every day, but there are some serious and life-threatening diseases they are not protected from. The free vaccines available through the National Immunisation Program are a simple, safe, and effective way to protect children from preventable diseases, such as measles and whooping cough.

The timing of each dose of every vaccine in the Childhood Immunisation Schedule is carefully planned to safely protect babies and children from as young as possible and when they need it most. Vaccinating on time gives the best protection from preventable diseases. Delaying a vaccine appointment means your child is unprotected for longer than they need to be.



But if your child has fallen behind it's easy to catch up.

You can check the Childhood Immunisation Schedule to see which immunisations are recommended at specific times and you can also view your child's immunisation history through your Medicare online account.

For more information, including answers to common questions and how to check if your child's vaccinations are up to date, visit health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation. You can also talk to your trusted doctor, nurse or other health professional.

Social posts

The posts and image tiles below can be published on your preferred social channels.

Post	Image
<p>Australia’s National Immunisation Program provides free vaccines to protect children against serious diseases.</p> <p>Find out more about the childhood immunisation schedule at health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation</p>	
<p>The National Immunisation Program provides free vaccines at scheduled times to infants and children between birth and the age of 4 to protect them against serious diseases.</p> <p>For the best protection, babies and children need to get their vaccinations on time.</p> <p>For more information, including how to check if your child’s vaccinations are up to date, visit health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation. You can also talk to your trusted doctor, nurse or other health professional.</p> <p>#ChildhoodImmunisation #Vaccination #NationalImmunisationProgram #Immunisation</p>	
<p>Did you know that the National Immunisation Program provides free vaccines to protect children against serious diseases such as measles and diphtheria? We don’t see these diseases often in Australia because of our high vaccination rates.</p> <p>If your child is overdue for their vaccinations, talk to your trusted doctor, nurse or other health professional about catching up. For more information, visit health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation</p> <p>#ChildhoodImmunisation #Vaccination #NationalImmunisationProgram #Immunisation</p>	