

# Immunisation for people who work with children

## Advice from the Department of Health

### Why get immunised?

People who work with children are at an increased risk of catching and passing on infectious diseases. Immunisation is recommended because:

- Young children and babies are more prone to illness as their immunity develops.
- Children are often less likely to practise good hygiene (for example washing their hands, covering their mouth when they cough and using tissues) and more likely to expose you to their bodily fluids!
- Some infectious diseases can be very serious. For example, whooping cough (also called pertussis) can be deadly for young babies, but will often be a mild illness in adults.
- Many infectious diseases, such as measles, are highly infectious several days before any symptoms appear.

Staying up-to-date with immunisations is the most effective way you can protect yourself and the children and babies you work with from vaccine-preventable diseases.

### What immunisations may\* be recommended?

#### Disease/ vaccine

- whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine
- measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine
- chickenpox (varicella) vaccine
- hepatitis A vaccine
- Seasonal influenza vaccine

\*Your doctor will consider your individual situation and advise you.

### Who should consider these immunisations?

People working closely with children, including:

- childcare and preschool staff
- school staff (including teachers, school nurses, out-of-school carers, welfare coordinators)
- youth and children's service workers (including child protection workers)
- health and allied health workers
- correctional staff working where children cohabit with mothers

- health and allied health workers
- vocational students on placement.

### Who gives these immunisations and how?

Your doctor or nurse will give you an injection into the muscle of your upper arm.

### Are there any side effects?

Serious side effects from these immunisations are extremely rare. For more information visit the website [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation)

### How often are they needed?

It varies for each immunisation. Some provide lifelong immunity, while others, like whooping cough, require booster doses as immunity fades. The seasonal influenza vaccine is recommended every year. Your doctor can advise you.

### How do I know if I need an immunisation?

If you are unsure if you have already been immunised, require a booster or already have immunity to these diseases, talk to your doctor.

Try to keep an accurate record of all your immunisations so you know what you are protected from and when you need a booster.

For tips on clarifying your immunisation status visit [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) and search for 'immunisations catch up'.

### Who pays for the immunisations?

Your employer may cover part or all of the cost of staff immunisations or you may need to pay. The cost of immunisations vary from \$20-\$60 each, not including the cost of the visit to the doctor.

### Where can I find out more?

Talk to your doctor or visit:

- [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation)
- [www.betterhealth.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.gov.au)

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