

# VACCINATION ADVICE FOR NEW & PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

Many infectious diseases still occurring in our communities could be prevented by vaccination, and many adults are leaving themselves at risk by being inadequately immunised. Vaccination not only provides protection for parents, it confers some protection on new babies. This happens in two ways – firstly by allowing the mother to pass on, during pregnancy, some temporary immunity to her newborn baby, and secondly, by reducing the chances of a parent bringing one of these diseases into the home.

All those planning a pregnancy and all new parents should consider the following vaccinations:

## MEASLES, MUMPS, REBELLA

- Until 1966, regular measles epidemics occurred in Australia, so most adults **born prior to 1966** have been in contact with measles and are likely to be immune.
- All adults **born after 1983** should have received a dose of MM(R) vaccine in infancy, **and** been offered a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose in grade 6 or 7. If you missed this dose, you need it now.
- Adults born **between 1966 and 1983** were not offered this 2<sup>nd</sup> dose at school, and this age group is experiencing repeated measles outbreaks. They should receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of MMR vaccine.
- Measles is still endemic in many countries and many measles outbreaks in Australia now occur after travelers import the disease from overseas. It is especially important to ensure your MMR vaccinations are complete before overseas travel.

## DIPHTHERIA-TETANUS-PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH): BOOSTRIX / ADACEL

- All adults should receive a dose of Pertussis vaccine which comes in the form of a combination vaccine with tetanus & diphtheria, even if they have previously been vaccinated **or had the disease**. It is especially important for prospective & new parents to receive this vaccine to protect themselves & their babies. Others in close contact with babies including grandparents & child carers should ensure they have received an adult dose of this vaccine.

## CHICKENPOX (VARICELLA)

- Adults who do not recall having chickenpox should probably have a blood test to check their immunity. If they are not immune, they need 2 doses of Varicella vaccine, 4-8 weeks apart.

## HPV

- Not recommended. However, where vaccine has inadvertently been given during pregnancy, further doses should be deferred until after delivery.

## INFLUENZA

- Annual flu vaccination is recommended for all adults, and especially smokers, those with chronic diseases, those over 65 yrs of age, pregnant women, and those in contact with the very young or the very old. Flu vaccine can and should be given during pregnancy.

Please take the time to read this information and make an appointment with your doctor to discuss any specific concerns you may have, **and to be immunised**.