

# Media Release

SA Health

Friday 23 April 2010

## **FIVE AND UNDER FLU VACCINATION PROGRAM SUSPENDED**

SA Health has issued a public health alert to GPs and immunisation providers to inform them of the Commonwealth Government's decision to suspend the seasonal influenza vaccination program for children aged 5 years and under.

This follows Western Australia's decision to suspend vaccination among the same age range after a reported increase in adverse reactions among young children.

The matter is being urgently investigated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and immunisation experts.

SA Health's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Paddy Phillips, said South Australia always monitors the number of children experiencing adverse reactions following all vaccinations.

"The numbers of adverse reactions to flu shots are always low. They include local redness and swelling at the injection site as the most common but a few get fever and/or vomiting.

"We have not seen a similar spike in the number to WA in the number of South Australian children experiencing febrile convulsions after having the seasonal flu shot this year," Professor Phillips said.

"However, vaccination of children aged five and under has been temporarily suspended as a precautionary measure. There is no change to the recommendations for children over 5 or adults."

"SA Health is continuing to work with the Commonwealth Government, Therapeutic Goods Administration and the other States and Territories to resolve the issue.

"Children older than five and adults can still receive seasonal flu vaccinations and the more of these groups who are vaccinated, the fewer people will get the flu and that means less risk to others including young children.

"Influenza remains a serious illness, particularly for the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

"People in high risk categories, such as pregnant women, people over 65 years of age, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people with chronic medical conditions, should still make sure they get vaccinated against seasonal flu."

The vaccination program for H1N1 (swine flu) remains unaffected by the suspension, and is available to children and adults free of charge.

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### For more information

Call the SA Health Media Line  
Telephone: 08 8226 6488