

January 17, 2014

## Immunise children for the new school year

As a new school year approaches, parents are reminded to make sure their children are fully immunised before beginning primary school.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Director of Public Health Dr Leena Gupta said it was important that all primary school-aged children were up to date with vaccinations to help protect against preventable diseases.

“Parents are reminded that all children should have two booster needles between three and a half and four years of age. These cover a range of diseases, including measles and whooping cough,” Dr Gupta said.

“When enrolling a child in school, parents are asked to provide evidence of their child’s immunisation to date.

“They can do this by obtaining an Immunisation History Statement, issued by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR).

“In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, unimmunised children may be required to stay at home for the duration of the outbreak,” she said.

Dr Gupta said immunisation programs in NSW have been extremely effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases.

“Important causes of meningitis like Haemophilus influenza type B and meningococcal C are now rare,” Dr Gupta said.

“However, vaccine preventable illnesses like whooping cough, rubella and measles, continue to occur in the community.

“Vaccination is the best way to protect a child from these serious diseases. If most children are vaccinated this also protects those who are too young to be vaccinated, or those who can’t be vaccinated because of medical conditions,” Dr Gupta said.

Parents can check their child’s immunisation status by calling ACIR on 1800 653 809 or visiting their local Medicare office.

For more information contact the **Public Health Unit** on 9515 9420 or visit <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/default.aspx>