

Monday, June 15, 2009

FREE WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE FOR NEW PARENTS

New parents will be provided with free pertussis vaccine for a limited time under Brumby Government moves to curb an increase in cases, Health Minister Daniel Andrews said today.

“Victoria has experienced a sharp increase in pertussis or whooping cough notifications in recent months and there is a pertussis outbreak occurring nationwide,” Mr Andrews said.

“What we are doing is offering the vaccine to parents as soon as possible after the birth of their child, starting today.

“It is anticipated the free vaccine will be available for around three months.

“Vaccination will be made available through maternity hospitals and general practitioners who have already been notified of the program and are ordering the vaccine.

“Local government and maternal and child health nurses have also been informed of the initiative so that they can bring it to the attention of their new parent clients.”

Mr Andrews said babies were at risk from pertussis because no protection was passed from the mother to the newborn infant. Infants do not develop sufficient pertussis protection until the three dose course of pertussis containing vaccine is completed.

“Pertussis is most serious in babies less than six months of age and around one in every 200 infants under six months of age who catches pertussis will die,” he said.

“There have been two infant deaths in Australia in this outbreak. All immunisation providers are encouraged to remind parents of the importance of timely vaccination for their children.”

There have been 946 confirmed cases of pertussis in Victoria up until the end of May this year. To the same period last year there were 449 notified cases. In 2008, 1,647 cases were notified, compared to 1,053 in 2007.

Increased notifications of whooping cough have been reported across the country.

“Whooping cough is often a distressing illness causing bouts of coughing lasting a few months. In some cases it can cause serious illness, and is particularly dangerous in children under one year of age.

“It is a highly contagious disease spread by droplets from coughing and sneezing. Initial symptoms can be similar to the common cold, but these progress to a severe cough. In children a whooping sound may be made at the end of a bout of coughing.”

**** Refer below to order Vaccine



Pertussis Prevention for New Parents

Free Time Limited Program

Order Boostrix® vaccine specifically for the new parent program using this form.

Boostrix® vaccine order form

Fax to 1300 768 088

Doctor Name:	DHS Account No.:
*Registration No.:	Expiry:

OR

LGA / Centre Name:	DHS Account No.:
*Health Services Permit No.:	Expiry:

*LGA's are not required to complete Registration No. or Health Services Permit No.

LGA / Doctor / Centre Delivery address (not post office box):

Date: _____

Tel: _____

Fax: _____

In order to receive Government funded vaccines, I agree that:

- (1) The vaccines will be provided for Medicare Card holders only*
- (2) This centre complies with the recommended vaccine cold chain storage of 2°–8°C as stated in the National Vaccine Storage Guideline, Strive for 5: www.immunise.health.gov.au and*
- (3) In the event of a cold chain breach I will call the Immunisation Program **before** discarding any vaccines.*

Signature of authorised person:

Print name:

Fax to: 1300 768 088		Number of doses in stock	Number of doses required	Send 10 pack if available
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis	Boostrix			<input type="checkbox"/>



Pertussis Prevention for New Parents Free Time Limited Program

The Department of Human Services is making available a limited supply of free pertussis containing vaccine (Boostrix®) for new parents. Offer Boostrix vaccine to parents as soon as possible after the birth. Victoria has experienced a sharp increase in pertussis notifications in recent months and the pertussis outbreak is occurring nationwide.

The supply of Boostrix® vaccine is a time limited measure in response to the current outbreak of pertussis and will be reviewed regularly to manage the end of the time limited program. The program commences for parents of infants born from 15 June 2009. Maternity services have the opportunity to participate in this program with other immunisation providers.

Babies are at risk from pertussis as no protection is passed from the mother to the newborn infant. Infants do not develop sufficient pertussis protection until the three dose course of pertussis containing vaccine is completed. Pertussis is most serious in babies less than six months of age and around one in every 200 infants under six months of age who catches pertussis will die. There have been two infant deaths in Australia in this outbreak. Immunisation providers are encouraged to remind parents of the importance of timely vaccination for their children.

Please find enclosed the pamphlet, Protect your baby from whooping cough (pertussis). Further copies can be ordered for new parents from the following web link:
http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ideas/resources/online_order

Summary

- Free Boostrix vaccine for new parents only
- Commences for parents of infants born from 15 June 2009
- Time limited program
- Program reviewed regularly for further advice
- Order Boostrix vaccine by using form over page
- Infant immunisation should be given on time

Thank you for your ongoing support in the prevention and control of pertussis in the community. If you require further information regarding Boostrix vaccine ordering, please call the Immunisation Program on 1300 882 008. If you require information about pertussis disease please call the Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit on 1300 651 160.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rosemary Lester
Acting Chief Health Officer