



**Under embargo until 15<sup>h</sup> April 2017, 1.00 am**

## **Immunisation Coalition: Influenza Vaccination for Kids could be a game changer!**

**The Latest survey results published by the Immunisation Coalition today, show that only 10% of Australians believe that kids are part of the groups that should be immunised. Yet children and young adults can get influenza severely. In 2017 children less than 15 years accounted for 27% of all influenza notifications. And 32% of all hospitalisations were in children less than 2 years.**

**15 April 2019, Melbourne** – Australia's leading voice in whole-of-life immunisation calls for action: It is important for parents to understand that the influenza vaccine gives you a two for one benefit: You protect kids from influenza, which can cause severe complications and even death. At the same time the immune system of the young shows the best response to the influenza vaccine, which can dramatically help to prevent the spread of disease in the community.

In a national survey last week only 10% of Australians believe that kids are part of the groups that should be immunised. The figures are published amid a surge in influenza cases across the country. The experts at the Immunisation Coalition call for more kids across the country to get vaccinated to help stop the spread in the community.

Vaccinating infants, children and young adults has a twofold benefit. Prof Robert Booy, Chairman of the Immunisation Coalition explains: "A lot of parents seem to underestimate how dangerous influenza can be for kids. We know that children less than 15 years accounted for 27% of all influenza notifications in 2017! The influenza vaccine not only protect this vulnerable group, but it also helps to stop the spread in the community."

Many parents underestimate the risk of severe complications and even death, when kids and young adults contracting influenza. 32% of all hospitalisations in 2017 were children less than 2 years old.

And there is another side to the story. Kids are 'super spreaders', which means they readily spread the influenza virus in the community. Not only to other kids but also to grandparents and other vulnerable people.

Professor Booy points out, "Kids have a much more effective immune system than adults and respond very well to vaccines. The human immune system is thought to start declining from the age of 14. The good news is that influenza vaccine is free for children under 5 years of age across Australia. Book an appointment as soon as you can!"

The Immunisation Coalition's mission is to reduce the public health impact of vaccine preventable diseases in Australia. Our experts recommend, that you book your influenza vaccine now and recommend for everyone older than 6 months to get vaccinated against influenza.



You can check here if you are eligible for a free flu shot:

<http://www.immunisationcoalition.org.au/immunisation/whos-at-risk/>

All influenza vaccines available in Australia this year have been updated to better protect against the circulating virus strains!

People who get vaccinated are at lower risk of contracting influenza than those who are not. They are less likely to be laid up in bed with sweats, shivers and muscle aches, and take time off work or their usual activities, or to be hospitalised with complications. Professor Booy wants to be clear: "If you are vaccinated, you're less likely to get the flu. But that's not the whole story! If you are healthy, your decision is about considering the cost for the flu shot and a few moments of discomfort against the possibility that you'll need to take time off work and endure days of misery due to infection."

For more information please visit: [www.immunisationcoalition.org.au](http://www.immunisationcoalition.org.au)

Or join the conversation at <https://www.facebook.com/immunisationcoalition/> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/immunisationgap>

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#### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

**If you would like to talk to one of our experts,**

**please send a text message with your details to: 042089 6976**

Susanne Sperber, Immunisation Coalition: Susanne @immunisationcoalition.org.au

#### **About Immunisation Coalition**

The Immunisation Coalition is a not for profit advocacy group with a mission to create awareness about the importance of immunisation. Immunisation still provides the best protection against infectious diseases. We work with consumers, health professionals and organisations with an interest in immunisation and government health agencies, ensuring that the information provided to consumers through our website and other communication channels is current, easily understood and scientifically informed.

#### **Facts from the 2019 Immunisation Coalition Influenza Survey 2019**

- 39% of adults intend to get an influenza vaccination
- 61% of adults do not intend to get an influenza vaccination
- Women 55+ have the highest intention: 72% of this age group intend to have the influenza vaccine
- Young men have the lowest intention – only 19% have the intent to get the influenza vaccine
- 20% get the vaccine to protect themselves – only 10% of people get the vaccine to protect others
- Only 10% of Australians believe that Kids are part of the groups that should be immunised against influenza