

MEDIA RELEASE

The mission to improve lagging childhood vaccination rates on the Gold Coast

Coinciding with World Immunisation Week (24-30 April), Gold Coast Primary Health Network (GCPHN) is shining a light on declining childhood vaccination rates in the Gold Coast region and calling for parents to act.

Childhood vaccination rates for fully immunised five-year-old children on the Gold Coast have been below the Department of Health and Aged Care target of 95% since 2018, with vaccination rates under the national average for all childhood cohorts (one, two and five years).^[1]

CEO of GCPHN Matt Carrodus said that reaching for a population that is 95% immunised is a priority to prevent the spread of disease and protect ourselves and those most vulnerable in the community.

“Concerningly, the rate of fully vaccinated one-year-old children has declined by 2% since 2021, which may reflect increased issues around vaccination fatigue and hesitancy arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery,” said Mr Carrodus.

“Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting children against harmful and preventable diseases, using the body’s natural defences to build resistance to specific infections and strengthen the immune system.”

Immunisation prevents 3.5-5 million deaths yearly and protects children from diseases like diphtheria, polio, chickenpox, mumps, and measles.^[2]

At this time of year, often called Flu season, people should protect themselves and their loved ones against Influenza. Influenza (the flu) is a highly contagious viral infection that is very serious for young children, especially those under five years of age, which can result in hospitalisation or even death.^[3]

“It is essential for children aged six months to under five years to be vaccinated annually, as flu strains used in seasonal vaccines can change each year depending on which viruses are circulating in the community,” said Mr Carrodus.

P: 07 5635 2455 | F: 07 5635 2466 | E: info@gcphn.com.au | www.gcphn.org.au



“Building one world class health system for the Gold Coast.”

Gold Coast Primary Health Network gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Primary Care Gold Coast Limited (ABN 47152953092), trading as the Gold Coast Primary Health Network.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the land and the traditional practices of the families of the Yugambeh Language Region of South East Queensland and their Elders past, present and emerging.

“Parents with children over six months need to ensure their child receives an influenza vaccine before the start of flu season – typically June to September with the peak in August for Queensland.”

Research and testing are essential parts of developing effective vaccines, and all are thoroughly tested for safety and effectiveness and continually monitored to ensure this continues once administered.^[4]

Serious reactions to vaccines are extremely rare, and minor symptoms range from short-term redness, swelling, pain and mild fever.

Based on eligibility, the [National Immunisation Program](#) provides routine immunisations for all children in Australia, free of charge, and free catch-up vaccinations if they were missed in childhood for people under 20 years old, refugees and humanitarian entrants of any age.

Parents can book a children’s vaccine appointment at various health services, such as local general practices and community health centres.

It's a good idea to check your or your child's [immunisation history](#) before you book an appointment.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

1. [Needs-assessments-2020-immunisation-communicable-disease-1.pdf \(gcphn.org.au\)](#)
2. [World Immunization Week 2023 - 24 to 30 April. \(who.int\)](#)
3. <https://vaccinate.initiatives.qld.gov.au/what-to-immunise-against/influenza/>
4. [Vaccines and immunization: What is vaccination? \(who.int\)](#)

Gold Coast Primary Health Network aims to identify the health needs of Gold Coast communities. It funds and improves primary health services to keep people well and out of hospital. GCPHN is an independent, not-for-profit company, one of 31 Primary Health Networks established by the Australian Government on 1 July 2015.

Media contact: Toby Smithson, GCPHN Communications Manager, 0417 779 345, tobys@gcphn.com.au

P: 07 5635 2455 | F: 07 5635 2466 | E: info@gcphn.com.au | www.gcphn.org.au



“Building one world class health system for the Gold Coast.”

Gold Coast Primary Health Network gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Primary Care Gold Coast Limited (ABN 47152953092), trading as the Gold Coast Primary Health Network.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the land and the traditional practices of the families of the Yugambeh Language Region of South East Queensland and their Elders past, present and emerging.