



**- Please immediately bring to the attention of all doctors -**

Date: 23 April 2010

Contact telephone number: **8226-7177 (24 hours/7 days)**

### ***Suspension of paediatric seasonal influenza vaccination program***

The Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer has today announced the suspension of the seasonal influenza vaccination program for children aged 5 years and under until further notice. Neither the paediatric formulation or the adult vaccine should be used for children in this age group until further notice.

This is a precautionary measure due to reports of an apparent increase in numbers of young children experiencing fever and febrile convulsions following seasonal influenza vaccinations. The matter is being urgently investigated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and immunisation experts.

At this stage it is not clear whether reported adverse events represent a true increase or whether the apparent spike is due to increased numbers of children being vaccinated this year, with the inclusion of young children in the eligible at risk cohort, or due to some other factor.

It is also possible that reported adverse events may be partly due to underlying infections, and it will be helpful if a throat swab could be collected for respiratory viral PCR testing on all children presenting with these symptoms following vaccinations.

It is extremely important that all adverse reactions to vaccinations are reported as soon as possible to the Immunisation Section on 8226 7177. Alternatively, a report form can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/immunisation/vaccinesafetyreportingform-pehs-sahealth-100329.doc>. This form can be faxed or emailed to the number/address given on the form. Please ensure that the batch number of the vaccine is included. Any reactions which have occurred but not been reported should be faxed to 8226 7197.

Children 5 years and under due for their second dose should wait until further notice, but children 6 to 9 years of age who require a second dose may receive it. This may include some children who have experienced reactions to the first dose. Clinical trials data suggests that reactions to the second dose of the 2010 seasonal influenza vaccine are greatly reduced, but this is yet to be demonstrated by post-licensure surveillance data.

At this stage that this is a pause in the program while more detailed data collection and analysis can be carried out. People aged over 5 years can continue to receive seasonal influenza vaccination, and pandemic H1N1 vaccine can continue to be given to anyone older than 6 months. We emphasise that this suspension applies only to the seasonal influenza program, and not to the entire childhood immunisation program.

**Dr Stephen Christley – Chief Public Health Medical Officer**

*Information contained within this advice should be treated as confidential and is for the intended recipient only.*

**PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT**