

# Doctors' Voice

May-June 2015



## Immunisation and Pregnancy

Immunisation can protect a pregnant woman and her unborn baby from infectious diseases. Some infectious diseases can cause serious harm to pregnant women or their unborn babies. Ideally, women would be up to date with their immunisations before they become pregnant and some vaccines are recommended during pregnancy. Vaccines can protect against many infectious diseases such as chickenpox, influenza (Flu), measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis), pneumococcal disease and hepatitis B.

Serious side effects or allergic reactions to vaccines are rare.

### Things to remember

- Immunisation can protect a woman and her unborn baby against many infectious diseases.
- If possible, check your vaccination status before you become pregnant.
- The influenza vaccine can be given at any time during pregnancy and is free during pregnancy under the National Immunisation Program.
- The vaccine containing whooping cough should be given in the third trimester of every pregnancy (recommended 28-32 weeks)

## Whooping Cough

Whooping cough (pertussis) is a serious, contagious, respiratory infection caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. The disease begins like a cold and then the characteristic cough develops. This cough may last up to three months, even after antibiotic treatment is completed and the person is no longer infectious. The 'whoop' (which is not always obvious) is due to a deep breath at the end of a bout of coughing. Vomiting after coughing is common. Whooping cough is particularly dangerous for babies less than six months of age. They are affected more seriously by the disease than older children or adults, and are more likely to develop complications. One in every 200 babies who contract whooping cough will die. Immunisation is the best way to reduce the risk of whooping cough.

Source: Better Health Channel

## Free whooping cough vaccine for pregnant women and their partners

From 1 June 2015 the Department of Health and Human Services is funding whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine for all pregnant women from 28 weeks gestation and their partners.

This provides two-for-one protection with the mother passing antibodies to the baby in utero. Additionally, all parents/guardians of newborn babies born on or after 1 June 2015 will be eligible to receive free vaccine while their baby is still less than six months of age.

The following groups will become eligible for free pertussis vaccine from 1 June 2015:

- Pregnant women from 28 weeks gestation during every pregnancy
- Partners of women who are at least 28 weeks pregnant if the partner has not received a pertussis booster in the last 10 years
- Parents/guardians of babies born on or after 1 June 2015, if their baby is under 6 months of age and they have not received a pertussis booster in the last 10 years

Speak to your Doctor or Practice Nurse to find out more.

Source: Department of Health



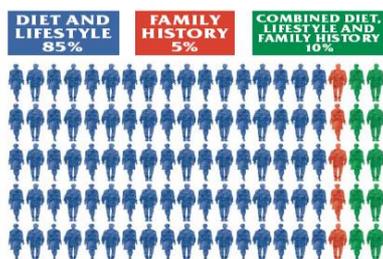
# Doctors' Voice

## Finding and Preventing Bowel Cancer

Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world and bowel cancer is the second biggest cancer killer in Australia (after lung cancer)

However, more than 90% of bowel cancers can be cured if found early.

**What causes bowel cancer?** More commonly relates to diet and lifestyle rather than family history. Bowel cancer can develop with very few, if any, warning symptoms.



### BOWEL CANCER RISK FACTORS

- \* Age 50+ years
- \* Inflammatory bowel disease
- \* Family history of bowel cancer or polyps (family member under 55 yrs with bowel cancer or more than one relative on same side of family)
- \* Diet, smoking, obesity, high alcohol intake, physical inactivity, Diabetes (type2)

### Signs and Symptoms

Bowel cancer often develops without symptoms but see your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:

- blood after a bowel motion
- unexplained and persistent change in bowel habits,
- unexplained tiredness
- lower abdominal pain or a persistent feeling of fullness

### Reducing the chance of getting bowel cancer

There are a number of steps that can be taken to reduce the chance of getting bowel cancer

**Do a bowel kit test**



**Eat a healthy diet**



**Maintain a healthy weight**



**Exercise**



**Quit smoking**



**Limit alcohol intake**



If you have any questions or concerns, speak with your doctor or practice nurse or contact Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20

Source: Cancer Council Victoria

## National Heart Week 2015

### 'Move More, Sit Less!'

Heart Week provides a great opportunity to shine the spotlight on heart health issues in Australia. This year the focus is physical inactivity and the importance of being active. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that 60 per cent of Australians aged 15 yrs and over participated in physical sport and recreation in 2013-14, down from 65 per cent in 2011-12. Despite seeing ourselves as a nation of rugged outdoors or beach-loving people, we have increasingly become a nation that sits anchored behind computer screens or lazing on the couch, oblivious to the very real harm we are doing to our health.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Being active can reduce the risk of heart disease by 35%
- Physical inactivity accounts for more than 5 million deaths per year in the world
- More than half of Australian adults aren't active enough
- Walking for at least 30 minutes a day provides a range of heart health benefits including maintaining a healthy weight, increased fitness and strength, and improved self-esteem and mental health

### ACTIVE IDEAS:

Any increase in physical activity can improve your health, and the benefits begin as soon as you get started. You don't have to join a gym or buy expensive equipment, and you don't have to be sporty to be active. The easiest way to be more active is to make it a part of your daily routine!

- Stand up to change the TV channel rather than using the remote
- Park your car further away and walk
- Swap the lift for the stairs
- Stand up while talking on the phone
- Walk with a buddy – motivate each other!
- Talk to your work colleagues rather than send an email

Any increase in physical activity can improve your health and the benefits begin as soon as you get started. Contact the Heart Foundation for more information 1300 362 787

Source: Heart Foundation

For more information on any of the topics raised in this newsletter please speak with our wonderful GPs at either of our 2 clinics: **The Cottage Medical Centre in Grovedale** or **Myers St Family Medical Practice in Geelong**.