

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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VACCINATIONS VITAL TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE

The Victorian Government is encouraging all parents to ensure their children's vaccinations are up to date, with health services finding new and safe ways to immunise kids as the coronavirus fight continues.

Victoria's landmark No Jab No Play laws continue to make a real difference in protecting children against preventable diseases – with Victorian immunisation rates still the best in Australia.

However, recent research has shown our strong record is at risk – with families delaying vaccinations during the pandemic. Surveys show that the most common reason for delaying vaccinations was because parents were concerned that they or their child would catch coronavirus.

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Immunisation Service has seen a concerning decrease in presentations since June, with almost two out of three families delaying or cancelling their appointment.

Public health advice shows that disruptions to routine childhood immunisations put individual children at increased risk of getting an infectious disease that is vaccine-preventable. If too many families miss their vaccination appointments it poses a crucial risk to the level of herd immunity amongst Victorian children – putting other kids at risk too.

Whilst following the rules and staying apart will keep our community safe – medical care is one of the four reasons to leave the home, with health services and hospitals developing new ways for kids to get vaccinated as the coronavirus pandemic continues.

Responding to the concerns of Victorian families, the RCH now has a new drive-through clinic, meaning families can make sure their kids keep up to date with their immunisations outside of the hospital environment.

Vaccinations aren't the only thing medical appointments are delaying, with fewer families presenting at hospitals during the pandemic across the state. The Royal Children's Hospital has seen less than 60 per cent of the normal activity since the pandemic began.

Families can feel confident in visiting hospitals and clinics – and every Victorian is urged to make and keep medical appointments when needed, no matter the stage of restrictions. To help reduce movement and make some of these appointments easier, the RCH is now undertaking around 700 appointments a day remotely.

Bookings are essential for the RCH immunisation clinic, which is open on Tuesday and Wednesdays and is available to all members of the public and for all vaccinations. To book a vaccination visit your local GP or the Royal Children's Hospital service - <https://blogs.rch.org.au/forms/booking-form/>.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Our hospitals have measures in place to keep our families safe, so there is no need to delay seeking medical care – especially when it comes to keeping up to date with our kids' immunisations."

"When we do begin to gradually open back up, our kids will start moving throughout our community. It's vital they've been vaccinated to keep them and other kids safe."

Quote attributable to Director of RCH National Child Health Poll Dr Anthea Rhodes

"We know this is a challenging time for Victorian families – that's why we've adapted our immunisation service to become a drive-through clinic, to provide a reassuring alternative as our community continues to fight coronavirus."