



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC**

Postal: PO Box 134 North Adelaide SA 5006
First Floor Newland House 80 Brougham Place North Adelaide SA 5006
Phone: (08) 8267 4355 Fax: (08) 8267 5349
Email: admin@amasa.org.au Web site: www.amasa.org.au

**AMA(SA) President Urges Parents to Act
Against Whooping Cough**

AMA(SA) president Dr Andrew Lavender is urging South Australian parents to ensure that they are vaccinated against whooping cough (pertussis).

“Whooping cough can be a severe and sometimes fatal disease in young children, so it is important that parents and carers of young children do what they can to ensure that they are protected,” he stated.

“Babies have little or no natural immunity to whooping cough, and cannot be vaccinated until they are six to eight weeks old. This means that there is a period in which they are particularly vulnerable, if exposed. Exposure at this age occurs mainly through contact with close family members.”

The AMA(SA) has commended the State Government’s move to provide the whooping cough vaccine for free to new parents and grandparents who are health-card holders or pensioners. The Association is advocating strongly for this vaccine to be supplied free of charge to all parents and grandparents of young children as part of the national vaccination program.

SA Health reports that we have had 1030 more recorded cases of whooping cough this year than at the same time last year (3991 cases, compared to 2961 cases).

“Vaccinations for babies and young children are free, and the AMA(SA) strongly encourages parents to ensure that their children are vaccinated,” Dr Lavender stated.

“Some parents can feel hesitant about vaccination, and many are not aware of the benefits of vaccination – what it can mean, not just for families, but for whole communities, if vaccination rates fall. If parents have any questions about vaccination for themselves or their children, we would urge them to discuss these with their GP, and get the facts.

“We have the power to prevent or at least very significantly reduce the transmission of potentially fatal infections such as whooping cough via vaccination. It is therefore disappointing when transmission rates actually increase, and is a real reminder that we need to do everything we can to protect those who are most vulnerable to infection.”

28 September 2010

Contact: Dr Andrew Lavender (08) 8361 0109 or after-hours (08) 8361 0100