

**Policy statement by the Chiropractic and Osteopathic College of Australasia (COCA)
regarding Vaccination & Immunisation in Chiropractic & Osteopathic Practice**

The Chiropractic and Osteopathic College of Australasia (COCA) endorses the Government of Australia's policy and position on immunisation as a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases. (1) This support is underpinned by overwhelming evidence of the risk/benefit profile of mass immunisation. (2) It is supported by governments throughout the world and the World Health Organisation as one of the most important public health interventions. (3)

COCA supports the right of the individual to refuse vaccination but as primary contact practitioners, chiropractors and osteopaths have a special responsibility to themselves, their patients and the public at large, in the prevention and control of vaccine preventable diseases. Therefore, COCA endorses the Guidelines for the Control and Prevention of Infection in Healthcare (2010) of the National Health & Medical Research Council, (4) including the recommendations on immunisation for health workers.

Other than in the context of the promotion of public health, vaccination and immunisation are outside the scope of chiropractic and osteopathic practice. Patients or members of the public who seek advice from a chiropractor or osteopath on specific aspects of vaccination and immunisation should be referred to an appropriately trained health professional, such as a general medical practitioner. Further, patients who enquire with their chiropractor or osteopath about the risks and benefits of immunisation should also be directed to the Australian Academy of Science website for the latest information on the science of immunisation <http://www.science.org.au/policy/immunisation.html>

*Endorsed by the Board of the Chiropractic & Osteopathic College of Australasia - 5th September 2011
Amended by the Board of the Chiropractic & Osteopathic College of Australasia – 15th January 2013*

References

1. Immunise Australia Program. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, July 2007. Available at: <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/> [Accessed September 4, 2011]
2. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine Safety and Adverse Events.](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/safety/default.htm) Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/safety/default.htm> [Accessed September 4, 2011]
3. World Health Organisation (WHO). Immunization safety, 2009. Available: http://www.who.int/immunization_safety/en/ [Accessed September 5, 2011]
4. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare, 2010. Available: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2010/c2-2-2-immunisation> [Accessed September 5, 2011]