



From the desk of Dr Harry

## Rotavirus Vaccine

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Viral gastroenteritis is very common. In children less than 5 years of age, it has been responsible for about 10 000 hospitalisations, 22 000 emergency department presentations and 115 000 general practice consultations annually in Australia. More than ½ of gastroenteritis is due to Rotavirus.

Evidence is now emerging that rotavirus oral vaccine, which has been in use since in Australia since 2007, has had a favorable impact on these figures. There has been a sharp fall in reported cases with notifications having dropped by more than 50%.

There is very little doubt in my mind that rotavirus immunization should be administered to all infants at 2, 4 and 6 months of age, unless there is a specific contraindication, for instance, an immune compromised family member/infant (e.g. on chemotherapy for cancer).

Although some diarrhoea may occur for the week following vaccination, side effects of the vaccination are uncommon. It's always a question of benefits versus risks, upsides versus downsides, but with the rotavirus oral vaccine, the *upside wins hands down*.

### Research Abstracts:

<http://immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/immunise-rotavirus>

[http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/191\\_03\\_030809/lam10091\\_fm.html](http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/191_03_030809/lam10091_fm.html)

### Dr Harry's Blog on Gastroenteritis:

<http://okidokiebaby.com/blog/tag/gastroenteritis/>

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