



MEDIA RELEASE

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STUDY SHEDS LIGHT ON PARENTS' USE OF SMARTPHONES

New app prompts parents to immunise

Parents are turning to smartphone technology to help them manage their children's busy schedules with everything from birthday parties to doctor's appointments being tapped into smartphone calendars.

A new survey conducted of 576 parents with young children* has revealed that 46% of participants use their smartphone to help manage their children's activities.

Dads were more likely to use a smartphone to manage their kids' appointments and activities (51%) than mums (43%), but it is the mums who are managing the health and wellbeing of the family with their smartphone. More mums than dads are currently using smartphone calendars to manage vaccination reminders (18% compared to 11%).

Importantly, 15% of parents surveyed already use smartphones to remind them when immunisations are due. Overall 80% of parents surveyed indicated they would find a smartphone app useful for this purpose.

This insight to parents' use of smartphones is good news for a new healthcare app launched today by the Meningitis Foundation.

VaxiMate, an immunisation reminder app developed by Pfizer, will support parents to manage their child's scheduled immunisations.

VaxiMate is FREE for both Android and iPhones. It lets parents know via their smartphone that their child's immunisation is due. Parents can be alerted to the immunisation due date, check their child's immunisation record and read up on the vaccines available on the National Immunisation Schedule.

The app is able to push a reminder to some smartphones when the user is within 100 metres of the designated doctor's surgery to prompt parents to make an appointment. By syncing VaxiMate with the smartphone calendar, immunisation dates are simply appear with all of their other day-to-day commitments. Parents are also able to receive alerts regarding changes to the National Immunisation Schedule.

VaxiMate is also able to record other age-related milestones such as weight and height – and even has a game to keep toddlers occupied or distracted while being immunised.

Speaking at today's launch, **Director of the Meningitis Foundation, Paul Gilbert**, said: "Parents are under significant time pressures and are increasingly using smartphone technology to manage family health. The Meningitis Foundation proudly supports

* Parental Use of Technology Poll, February 2015. Curia Market Research for Pfizer New Zealand.

initiatives to achieve better health outcomes and welcomes initiatives such as VaxiMate that promote the prevention of disease through immunisation.

“Ensuring access to vaccines and the on-time immunisation of all newborn babies and children up to 12 years is critical in achieving Ministry of Health targets for improved health outcomes for New Zealand children,” Paul said.

Paediatrician and Senior Clinician at Kidz First Children’s Hospital in Auckland, Dr Adrian Trenholme, said: “While overall immunisation rates in New Zealand are high, there is still work to be done to ensure kids are immunised on time, every time. We know from previous research that some parents are still waiting months beyond the recommended due date to get their child immunised.

“It is really important to stick to the National Immunisation Schedule,” Dr Trenholme said.

“Parents and carers need relevant tools that make it easy for them to get their infants and children immunised on time. In many instances, the smartphone is the tool of choice for parents in helping to manage the family’s timetable. It’s appropriate that we utilise technology including text message, alerts, and apps as a way of communicating with parents about their child’s immunisation status,” added Dr Trenholme.

Speaking on the development of the app, **Australia and New Zealand Medical Lead for Pfizer Vaccines, Dr Scott Williams** said: “Pfizer is excited by the potential for VaxiMate to support immunisation compliance. We hope that this new app can build on the ongoing momentum and interest around improving on time immunisation.”

-ENDS-

VaxiMate is available FREE via the App Store and Google Play.

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