

MEDIA RELEASE

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Swine flu vaccine trial in children set to start

Children are being recruited for a pandemic H1N1 swine flu vaccine trial set to begin in Melbourne next week.

About 100 Victorian children aged between 6 months to eight years are needed for the study, which will be run by the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and the University of Melbourne from as early as next week.

They will be among 400 children recruited across five states for the Federal Government required trials of the vaccine, produced by Australian biopharmaceutical company CSL.

A trial testing the vaccine in adults has already begun in Adelaide. Satisfactory review of the initial data from this adult trial will trigger final approval for the children's trial to commence.

Chief investigator Professor Terry Nolan said the trials would test the appropriate dosage and safety of the vaccine in children.

"The reason for doing this is we need to have information on what dose to give children because the immune system of a child is different to that of an adult," Professor Nolan said.

"The H1N1 virus predominantly affects young people and although it's mild in the majority of the population, it is capable of causing severe illness in fit and healthy children and adults."

The vaccine is similar to the one used to prevent seasonal flu, except the strain has been updated to the H1N1 virus causing swine flu.

In the trial, children will be given two doses of the vaccine three weeks apart. Researchers are hoping to have results on dosage by October.

Families interested in taking part in the study should contact the research team on (03) 8344 9325.

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