

## **Flu vaccine not ruled out in 2yo's death**

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<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/flu-vaccine-not-ruled-out-in-2yos-death-20100910-15491.html>

An influenza vaccine may have played a part in the death of a toddler found in her cot after receiving the jab, a Queensland coroner says.

Brisbane coroner John Lock began an investigation after two-year-old Ashley Jade Eparara was found dead in her cot on April 9, just 24 hours after receiving the seasonal flu vaccine, Fluvax.

Mr Lock on Friday advised he had finished his investigation and could not rule out a link between the drug and the unexplained death.

"At the conclusion of the autopsy, a cause of death could not be ascertained," the coroner said in a statement.

"There was no finding to causally connect the young child's death with the flu vaccine.

"However, I have concluded that a link between the vaccination and the death cannot be absolutely excluded."

Mr Lock said an inquest would not be held as he did not believe it would uncover anything further.

The child's parents have been informed of the result.

The toddler's death occurred in the same month as the vaccine was implicated in a rash of child sickness around the country.

The possibility of a bad batch of medicine was ruled out by the vaccine's manufacturer, Melbourne-based pharmaceutical company CSL Biotherapies.

On April 23, the vaccine's administration to children aged under five was stopped due to the risk of febrile convulsions.

"We are aware of the coroner's statement and that a cause of death could not be found," a CSL spokeswoman told AAP on Friday.

"We extend our sympathies to the family at what is, obviously, a very difficult period."

A spokeswoman for the federal Department of Health and Ageing said the department understood the coroner's conclusion was that "a causal connection between the sad death of this child and vaccination with the CSL seasonal influenza vaccine, Fluvax, could neither be established nor absolutely excluded".

But the suspension of the seasonal flu vaccine in children aged under five was not prompted by the death of the child, the department said.

"(The suspension) followed an apparent increase in the expected number of febrile convulsions related to the use of seasonal influenza vaccine in all children under five years of age," the spokeswoman said.

"This increase was initially observed in Western Australia, but also identified in other jurisdictions."

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