

Meningococcal Vaccination

Information Sheet

The Queensland School Immunisation Program offers every Year 10 student in Queensland **free** immunisation against meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease is a rare but severe infection that can cause death within 24 hours or profound life-long disability (brain damage, hearing loss, limb loss).

Some of the highest rates of meningococcal disease occur among 15 to 19 year olds and year 10 students are offered two vaccines against meningococcal disease. One vaccine covers strains A,C,W and Y and one vaccine covers strain B. These vaccines are designed to protect young people from severe outcomes when they are most likely to get sick.

Signed parent/legal guardian/authorised person consent for the vaccines is required.

To make sure all Year 10 students are offered the opportunity to participate, the *Public Health Act 2005* authorises school principals to disclose student and parent information to the school immunisation provider so they can follow up with a parent/legal guardian or authorised person of students who do not return a consent card.

What do I need to do?

- ☐ Read this information and discuss it with your child
- ☐ **Read and complete the Vaccination Consent card making sure you sign and date your consent to vaccination**
- ☐ **Return the completed and signed Vaccination Consent card to your child's school as soon as you have completed it**
- ☐ If you **do not** want your child to be vaccinated through the school program, complete the 'No to Vaccination' section on the consent card
- ☐ If you do not return a consent card to your child's school or the consent card is incomplete, you may be contacted by the immunisation provider to check that you have been offered the opportunity for your child to participate in the free program
- ☐ Look out for and record the vaccination clinic date
- ☐ After the vaccination clinic, your child will bring home a **Record of Vaccination** card. Keep this with their other medical details and/or notify your doctor that the vaccines have been given
- ☐ Keep this Information Sheet for future reference

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to sign the consent card for my child to be vaccinated?

YES. A completed consent card signed by a parent/legal guardian/authorised person *MUST* be returned to school for a child to be vaccinated. After both the student and parent/legal guardian or authorised person have read this information sheet, please complete the consent card, sign 'Yes' to vaccination in the consent section and return the card to school.

What if I don't want my child to be vaccinated through the School Immunisation Program?

If you do not want your child to be vaccinated through the school program, complete and sign the 'No to vaccination' section of the consent card, indicate why your child is not receiving the vaccination and return the consent card to the school.

What happens if I don't return the consent card?

Your child will not be vaccinated without a completed and signed consent card.

If you don't sign and return the consent card, you may be contacted by your school's immunisation provider to check that you have been offered the opportunity for your child to be vaccinated. The *Public Health Act 2005* authorises the school principal to provide your contact details to the school immunisation provider so they can follow up with the parent/legal guardian or authorised person of students who don't return a consent card.

Can I withdraw my consent?

Yes. Please request the contact details of the immunisation provider from your child's school. If you wish to withdraw consent, if there are significant changes in your child's health, or if you are no longer the child's legal guardian, contact the immunisation provider in writing.

What can I do if my child can't be vaccinated at school or misses a dose at the school clinic?

- Your child can attend a catch-up session if offered by the school immunisation provider, OR
- You can take your child to your doctor, community pharmacy, or other immunisation provider.

If you decide to take your child to your doctor, the vaccines will be free, however a doctor's consultation fee may apply.

Please note:

The *Child Protection Act 1999* (Section 97) authorises delegated officers to make immunisation arrangements for **children and young people in the custody or guardianship** of Child Safety Services. Additionally, **carers of children and young people under the guardianship** of Child Safety Services are authorised to make immunisation arrangements for children and young people in out of home care.

A copy of their *Authority to Care* form **must be provided** with the consent to vaccination. Please see the *Child Safety Practice Manual* for further information at cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au

What should my child do on the day of vaccination?

On the day of vaccination, your child should have an adequate breakfast. Please remind your child to bring the Record of Vaccination card home to you for your records.

Will I receive a record of the vaccinations?

Yes. Your child will be given a **Record of Vaccination** card. Advise your doctor that the vaccinations have been given the next time you visit. Please keep this card in a safe place for future reference. This information will also be directly provided to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

What should I do if a reaction occurs after vaccination?

1. If your child complains of tenderness at the injection site, put a cold damp cloth on the area to relieve the pain.
2. Give paracetamol (as per directions) if pain and fever are present.
3. If your child has an unexpected reaction that you are concerned about please contact your doctor or seek medical attention.

Will my child's vaccination details be kept private?

The School Immunisation Program consent card is collected by the Department of Health, a Hospital and Health Service, or a school health program provider engaged by a Hospital and Health Service (for the purpose of this Program referred to collectively as 'Queensland Health'). Personal information contained in the card is handled in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

As part of participation in the School Immunisation Program, Queensland Health collects details such as the student's name, contact information, Medicare number and relevant health information. Contact details for the parent/legal guardian or authorised person of the student are also collected. This information is needed to correctly deliver vaccinations and to record vaccination details on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). This information may be used by Queensland Health for recall, reminders, clinical follow up, or disease prevention, control, and monitoring. Your information will not be disclosed to other third parties without your consent, unless the disclosure is authorised or required by or under law.

For information about how Queensland Health protects your personal information, or to learn about your right to access your own personal information, please refer to the respective health agency's privacy policy:

Department of Health Privacy Policy

Hospital and Health Services website

Where can I get more information?

- ☐ Call **13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)**
- ☐ Contact your doctor
- ☐ Visit Queensland Health's Immunisation website: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/immunisation/adolescents>
- ☐ Visit the Australian Immunisation website: www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation

Meningococcal Disease

About	Meningococcal disease is a rare but severe infection that occurs when meningococcal bacteria invade the body from the nose or throat. Meningococcal bacteria are carried in the nose and throat of a small proportion of healthy people (about 10%) and are spread through close prolonged contact. The bacteria are more commonly found in young children, teenagers and young adults. There are a number of different strains of meningococcal bacteria. Worldwide, the main strains that cause meningococcal disease are A, B, C, W and Y. Most people with meningococcal infection fully recover, but some people who survive can develop long-term health complications including limb deformity, skin scarring, deafness and possible loss of brain function.
How is it spread?	It is not easy to catch meningococcal disease. While the bacteria can be spread via droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person during coughing or sneezing, close and prolonged contact (such as living in the same household or intimate kissing) is usually needed for the bacteria to spread. As meningococcal bacteria cannot live long outside of the body, the infection can not be picked up from water supplies, swimming pools, bed linen or pillows. After exposure to the bacteria, it usually takes from three to four days to become ill, although sometimes it can be as little as one day or as long as 10 days.
Symptoms	Meningococcal disease occurs in two main forms (or a combination of these two forms): • meningococcal meningitis - when the bacteria infect the lining around the brain and spinal cord • meningococcal septicaemia - when the bacteria invade the bloodstream and cause blood poisoning. In older children and adults, symptoms of meningitis can include headache, fever, vomiting, neck stiffness, drowsiness and confusion, and discomfort looking at bright lights. There may also be a rash, particularly with meningococcal meningitis where there is often a characteristic purplish-red rash which does not fade under pressure. If anyone has the above symptoms, seek urgent medical attention. Early treatment can prevent serious complications.
Complications	Meningococcal infections can progress rapidly to serious disease or death in previously healthy persons and long term effects may include limb deformity, skin scarring, deafness or loss of brain function.
Vaccination can prevent disease	Some types of meningococcal disease can be prevented with immunisation and these include meningococcal A, B, C, W, and Y. There is no single vaccine that provides protection against all strains of meningococcal disease. This School Immunisation Program is offering free meningococcal ACWY and meningococcal B vaccinations to all Year 10 students. Free meningococcal vaccines are also available for 15 to 19 year olds from your GP or other vaccination provider.
How many doses?	For teenagers, one dose of meningococcal ACWY is required. Two doses of meningococcal B vaccine are required.

Meningococcal Vaccination

Are the vaccines safe?	Meningococcal vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect against meningococcal disease. Talk to your doctor or call 13HEALTH if you have any concerns.
What do the vaccines contain?	Meningococcal ACWY vaccine contains the antigens of four strains (A, C, W and Y) which are conjugated to a carrier protein. Meningococcal B vaccine contains protein antigen components of meningococcal B bacteria. The vaccines also contain other additives in very small amounts to either assist the vaccine to work or to act as a preservative.
Are there any side effects?	Serious side effects from the vaccines are extremely rare. Minor side effects that may be experienced include tenderness, redness or swelling at the site of injection and low grade fever.
Why is meningococcal vaccine being offered to Year 10 students?	Some of the highest rates of meningococcal carriage occur among 15 to 19 year olds and this age group can transmit the meningococcal bacteria to people who are at increased risk of infection, including young children. Vaccinating this group will protect these people and help reduce the number of cases of meningococcal disease in the future.
What if my child has already been vaccinated against meningococcal C?	People who have been vaccinated against meningococcal C in childhood are still recommended to receive the meningococcal ACWY vaccine in adolescence. Vaccination against meningococcal C has been included in the National Immunisation Program Schedule since 1 January 2003. From 2003 to June 2008, meningococcal C vaccine was provided in a catch-up program for all children aged 1 to 19 years. This means that some Year 10 students will have received meningococcal C vaccine in childhood.
What if my child has already been vaccinated against meningococcal ACWY?	All children are offered a dose of ACWY vaccine through the school program regardless of having received a previous dose. This will boost their protection during their higher risk period.
What if my child has already been vaccinated against meningococcal B?	Even if your child received the meningococcal B vaccine when they were younger, it's still recommended that they get vaccinated again during adolescence to maintain strong protection against the disease. To access the free meningococcal B vaccines through the School Immunisation Program, simply tick "yes" on the consent form. It's safe to receive the meningococcal B vaccine course again, provided there's at least an 8-week interval between any previous doses of meningococcal B vaccine. If you have any concerns or questions about your child's vaccination needs, you can discuss them with your vaccination provider.
Where can I get more information about meningococcal disease and vaccination?	Visit the the Queensland Health website at: https://www.qld.gov.au/health/condition/infections-and-parasites/bacterial-infections/meningococcal-disease Visit the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance at: www.ncirs.org.au/ncirs-fact-sheets-faqs/meningococcal-vaccines-australians Visit the Australian Government website at: www.health.gov.au/diseases/meningococcal-disease-invasive Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) Make an appointment with your doctor