

# Year 10 School Vaccinations



## What is the School Vaccination Program?

NSW Health works with schools to offer vaccines recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). The vaccines are given at schools by registered nurses.

## Which vaccines are being offered?

The Meningococcal ACWY vaccine will be offered free of charge as a single dose to all Year 10 students.

## What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a rare but serious infection that usually leads to meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and/or septicaemia (blood poisoning).

Symptoms may include sudden onset of fever, headache, neck stiffness, joint pain, a rash of red-purple spots or bruises, dislike of bright lights, nausea and vomiting.

Up to 10 per cent of meningococcal infections are fatal even with appropriate antibiotic treatment, and survivors may be left with long-term complications.

## How is meningococcal disease spread?

Meningococcal is spread through close and prolonged contact with a person carrying the bacteria who is usually completely well. An example of 'close and prolonged contact' is living in the same household or intimate (deep) kissing.

## How effective is the meningococcal ACWY vaccine?

A single dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine is very effective in providing protection against these four types of meningococcal disease (A, C, W and Y).

The vaccine does not protect against meningococcal disease caused by type B.

## How do I ensure that my child gets vaccinated?

Schools will provide parents/guardians with a link to an online consent system. You can also request a paper consent from the school.

Your school will let you know the dates for the vaccination clinics.

In case your child is away on the day, students will be offered any missed doses later in the year where possible.

Parents and guardians will be told in advance of any additional vaccination opportunities at school.

## How do vaccines work?

Vaccines work by triggering the immune system to fight certain infections. If a vaccinated person comes into contact with these infections, their immune system is able to respond more effectively, stopping the disease developing or greatly reducing its severity.

## How safe are vaccines?

Vaccines used in Australia are safe and must pass strict safety testing before being approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). The TGA also monitors the safety of vaccines once they are in use.

## What are the side effects of vaccination?

Side effects are commonly mild and usually involve fever, headache, dizziness or pain, swelling and redness at the injection site. Injection site reactions generally resolve within 2-3 days. Serious side effects are extremely rare.

More information about side effects is available in the Consumer Medical Information for the vaccine, available from [www.health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination).

Parents concerned about side effects after vaccination should contact their GP.

## What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that may result in unconsciousness and death if not treated quickly. It occurs very rarely after any vaccination. The school immunisation nurses are fully trained in the treatment of anaphylaxis.

Any history of anaphylaxis may mean that a student should not receive a certain vaccine. The online consent system includes a section to record any allergies.

## What if my child has asthma and takes cortisone or prednisone by a “puffer”?

The vaccine can be safely given to someone who has asthma. It is not affected by the medications they are taking.

## Can I withdraw consent?

Consent can be withdrawn at any time through the online consent system, or if a paper consent form has been used, by contacting the school.

## Should the vaccine be given to a female student who is or thinks she may be pregnant?

No. Any female student who is or thinks she may be pregnant should not be vaccinated.

On the day of the clinic the vaccination nurse will ask female students if they are or could be pregnant. If a student answers yes to this question, she will not be vaccinated.

## How can I access a record of the vaccinations?

Information about your child's vaccinations will be uploaded to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). It can be linked to your child's existing immunisation history.

Parents can request a copy of their child's AIR Immunisation History Statement at any time up to their child being 14 years of age, and students aged 14 years and over can request their own immunisation history statement, as follows:

- Using the Medicare online account through myGov:  
<https://my.gov.au/>
- Using the Medicare Express Plus App:  
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/express-plus-centrelink-mobile-app>
- calling the AIR General Enquiries Line on 1800 653 809

## Where can I find more information about school vaccination?

- by visiting the NSW Health website at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination)
- by contacting your local public health unit on 1300 066 055