

Adolescent meningococcal ACWY vaccine

Meningococcal disease is serious, but you can be protected.

- Available free in schools for young people in year 10.
- If you did not receive the vaccine at school, you are still eligible for the free vaccine up to 19 years of age.



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For more information visit:
health.gov.au/immunisation



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What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease occurs when meningococcal bacteria, commonly found in the nose or throat, invades the body and causes serious disease.

Older teenagers and young adults are most likely to carry the bacteria and spread it to others.

There are a number of different types of meningococcal bacteria. Worldwide, the main types which cause meningococcal disease are A, B, C, W and Y.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease include fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck or sore muscles, sometimes followed by a red or purple rash.

The disease can cause complications including permanent disabilities through loss of limbs, deafness and blindness, scarring and kidney or liver failure.

Five to ten per cent of patients with meningococcal disease die, sometimes even with early treatment.

Why get vaccinated?

Meningococcal disease is rare but very serious and can quickly become life-threatening.

The meningococcal ACWY vaccine provides protection against four types of meningococcal disease, including two types which have become more common in Australia in recent years, caused by the type W and Y bacteria.

There is a separate vaccine that provides protection against meningococcal B type. Speak to your GP or other immunisation provider for more information about this vaccine.

Repeat doses of meningococcal vaccine

If an eligible person received a dose of meningococcal C vaccine in childhood, it is still recommended to receive the meningococcal ACWY vaccine in adolescence. The meningococcal ACWY vaccine provides protection against A, W, Y types and in addition will boost immunity against the C type.

How do you get vaccinated?

The vaccine is free for all students in year 10 aged 14–16 years through school-based immunisation programs. Even if your child is aged 14–16, they won't receive the vaccine at school if they are not in the eligible year level.

Students in the eligible year level will receive a consent form from their school. This consent form must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school before a vaccination is provided.

Adolescents aged 15 to 19 years of age, who have not received the vaccine at school, can receive it through their GP or other immunisation provider.

How can I find out if my child is immunised?

The Australian Immunisation Register keeps a record of vaccinations given in Australia.

Parents or guardians of children under 14 years of age can access their child's immunisation history statement at any time by using your Medicare online account through myGov (my.gov.au).

Adolescents aged 14 years or older can view their own immunisation history statement, or give the Department of Human Services permission to provide you with access to their statement.

Where can I get more information?

- Speak to your GP or other immunisation provider.
- health.gov.au/immunisation

How effective is the vaccine?

The meningococcal vaccine is a safe and effective way to help protect young people from meningococcal disease.

A single dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine is very effective in providing protection against these four types of meningococcal disease.

How safe is the vaccine?

The meningococcal vaccine is safe. Meningococcal ACWY vaccination programs have been in place for adolescents in the UK since 2015 and in the US since 2005.

As with all vaccines, some people may have a reaction.

These are usually mild and can include:

- soreness, swelling or redness at the injection site
- headaches, fatigue and fever
- nausea and decreased appetite.

Serious side effects from the vaccine are extremely rare. If you are worried about your child's reaction seek medical advice.

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You can learn more about the safety of meningococcal vaccines at the Therapeutic Goods Administration website tga.gov.au

health.gov.au/immunisation