

Adolescent Vaccinations

Information about free vaccines to protect against harmful diseases

Routine vaccinations for adolescents

The National Immunisation Schedule outlines recommended vaccines that are available for free under the National Immunisation Program.

Adolescents can receive **free** vaccines as long as they have a Medicare card or are eligible for one.

Adolescent vaccines are most often delivered through school-based vaccination programs or from a health professional through a range of health services including pharmacies.

Missed vaccinations

It is important to vaccinate on time and in line with the National Immunisation Schedule for best protection against harmful diseases.

Adolescents who missed vaccines at school may be able to catch up at extra school clinics. If this is not possible, they can catch up for free through their health professional up until they turn 20 years of age, or up until age 26 for the HPV vaccine. While the vaccine is free, the health professional may charge a consultation or administration fee.

Consent

Students in the eligible year level will receive a consent form from their school. This must be completed by a parent or guardian and returned to school before vaccinations are given.

A mild illness such as a runny nose or slight cold is usually not a reason to miss your vaccination.

During the visit, you will be asked some questions to check there is no concern in vaccinating you on the day.

Vaccines are safe

All vaccines available in Australia have been assessed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration to ensure they are safe and effective before they are approved for use. Their safety continues to be monitored once in use.

All vaccines used in Australia provide benefits that far outweigh any risks. It is safer to be vaccinated than get the disease.

National Immunisation Schedule (Adolescent)

Age/risk condition	Disease
12–13 years (Year 7 or age equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Human papillomavirus (HPV)Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough)
14–16 years (Year 10 or age equivalent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Meningococcal ACWY
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Influenza annually (through your health professional)
People with specified medical conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Influenza annually (through your health professional)Pneumococcal

Extra vaccines may be available free under State and Territory Government programs.

Adolescents with specified medical conditions

Adolescents with specified medical conditions may also be eligible for additional vaccines for free such as pneumococcal and influenza.

Talk to your health professional to see if you are recommended for these vaccines.

Adolescent Vaccinations

Side effects

You may experience mild side effects following vaccination. Most side effects last no more than a couple of days and are part of the immune system's natural response to the vaccine.

Common reactions include:

- Pain, swelling or redness at the injection site
- headaches, fatigue
- mild fever
- decreased appetite
- feeling faint and fainting
- muscle / body aches.

Serious reactions to vaccines are rare. If you have a reaction you think is severe or unexpected, seek medical advice straight away.

Vaccination records

Routine vaccinations given at school or through another health professional will be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register. You may also be given a take home record of vaccinations given at school.

For children aged under 14, parents can get their child's Immunisation History Statement from the AIR by using their own Medicare online account through myGov or the myGov mobile app.

Young people aged 14 years or older can access their Immunisation History Statement from the AIR by:

- going to **my.gov.au** and signing in to access their Medicare online account or using the myGov mobile app
- calling Services Australia on **1800 653 809** to request a copy
- asking their health professional to print a copy for them.

Young people aged 14 years or older can give Services Australia permission for their parents to get their Immunisation History Statement.

Meningococcal ACWY

Meningococcal disease is rare but very serious and can quickly become life-threatening. Meningococcal bacteria can cause serious complications including permanent disabilities through loss of limbs, deafness and blindness, scarring and kidney or liver failure. Older teenagers and young adults are most likely to carry the bacteria and spread it to others.

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

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is a common sexually transmitted virus that can cause cancers and diseases in both men and women.

The HPV vaccine prevents the main types of HPV infection that cause cancers (such as cervical, anal, throat, penile) and genital warts.

Only one dose is needed and works best when given at a younger age and before exposure to HPV.

Females should also participate in cervical screening for best protection against cervical cancer.

Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough)

Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough) are serious diseases that can be prevented with vaccination.

Adolescents are likely to have received vaccination against diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis at their last childhood immunisation, around the age of four. The adolescent dose of the vaccine is an additional booster dose to maintain effective immunity into early adulthood.

MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions you can:

- talk to your health professional
- visit **health.gov.au/immunisation**
- contact your state or territory health department.

