

About the National Immunisation Program (NIP)

The National Immunisation Program (NIP) provides free vaccines to protect eligible people against a range of diseases.

The NIP was established in 1997 by the Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, to increase national immunisation rates and reduce vaccine-preventable diseases.

The NIP offers free essential vaccines to eligible people such as infants and children, adolescents, pregnant women, adults and seniors, First Nations people, and people with medical conditions that put them at greater risk of serious illness.

To find out which vaccines you or your family are eligible to receive for free and when, you can check the NIP schedule at www.health.gov.au/nipschedule or speak to your health professional.

The NIP schedule

The NIP schedule is a series of immunisations given at specific times throughout your life, from birth to adulthood. Vaccinating on time according to the schedule gives the best protection.

To be eligible for a free NIP vaccine, you must hold or be eligible for a Medicare card.

The program also offers free catch-up vaccinations if they were missed in childhood for:

- people up to age 20
- people under 26 years who have missed human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination
- refugees and humanitarian entrants of any age.

Where to get free NIP vaccines

You can get NIP vaccines from a range of vaccination providers, such as:

- general practices
- local council immunisation clinics (available in some states and territories)
- community health centres
- Aboriginal Medical Services
- pharmacies
- schools (for adolescents).

All vaccines listed on the NIP schedule are free, however, your health professional may apply a consultation fee or service charge. Check if there are any fees when making your appointment.



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Ensuring vaccine safety

Before a vaccine is approved for use in Australia, it goes through extensive clinical trials and a rigorous assessment by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

Only vaccines that meet strict safety, quality and efficacy standards are approved.

This is part of the comprehensive process required before vaccines can be listed on the NIP.

Once a vaccine is available, its safety continues to be closely monitored, and any concerns are taken seriously and investigated promptly.

Vaccine governance

The Australian Government is responsible for the NIP and the purchase of vaccines covered by the program. State and territory governments are responsible for the coordination and oversight of immunisation service delivery and distribution of vaccines. A range of committees and advisory bodies oversee the development and delivery of the NIP.

Australia has one of the most comprehensive publicly funded immunisation programs in the world.

Impact of vaccination

As a result of successful vaccination programs, many diseases have either been eradicated or are extremely rare in Australia, such as tetanus, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) and poliomyelitis (polio).¹

High vaccine uptake also creates herd immunity because when enough people are vaccinated there are fewer opportunities for diseases to spread. Herd immunity is achieved when vaccination rates are at about 95%.



For more information and resources about childhood immunisation including videos, frequently asked questions and factsheets, visit health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation.



¹ <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/about-the-handbook>
All information in this fact sheet is correct as of June 2026.