

Childhood vaccinations

Information about free vaccines to protect against harmful diseases

health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation

Routine childhood vaccinations

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

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

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

Getting vaccinated

Most childhood immunisations are given as an injection in the arm or leg, except rotavirus vaccine, which is given by mouth.

A vaccine dose may protect against one specific disease, or several diseases using a combination vaccine which helps reduce the number of injections your child needs.

There is no need to skip or delay a vaccination visit due to a mild illness such as a runny nose or slight cold.

During the visit, your vaccination provider will ask some questions to check there are no concerns in vaccinating your child.

Vaccinate on time

It is important to vaccinate on time to give your child the best protection against harmful diseases. Follow the childhood immunisation schedule and set a reminder to book your child's next appointment.

If your child is overdue or has missed a scheduled vaccination, speak to your vaccination provider about catching up.

A range of catch-up vaccines are available for free if they were missed in childhood.

Vaccines are safe

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) assesses all vaccines available in Australia to ensure they are safe and effective before approval 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 get vaccinated than get the disease.

National Immunisation Schedule (childhood)

Age	Diseases
Birth	Hepatitis B (usually offered in hospital)
2 months (can be given from 6 weeks of age)	- Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B, polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) - Rotavirus - Pneumococcal - Meningococcal B—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
4 months	- Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B, polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) - Rotavirus - Pneumococcal - Meningococcal B—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
6 months	- Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B, polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) - Pneumococcal—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
6 months to under 5 years	Influenza (annually)
12 months	- Meningococcal ACWY - Measles, mumps, rubella - Pneumococcal - Meningococcal B—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
18 months	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) - Measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox - Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough - Hepatitis A—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in WA, NT, SA and Qld
4 years	- Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio - Hepatitis A—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in WA, NT, SA and Qld

Childhood vaccinations

Where to get vaccinated

Babies and young children can get their vaccinations from the following vaccination providers:

- local general practices
- community health or local council clinics in some areas.

While vaccines are free, your vaccination provider may charge a consultation fee for the visit. Check when you make the appointment.

Multiple vaccinations

It is safe to give babies and children several vaccines at a single visit. Combination vaccines reduce the number of vaccines needed. Their immune systems are very strong and can handle multiple vaccines.

In fact these will strengthen your baby's immunity to protect them from diseases when they are most at risk.

Side effects

Your child 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 and redness where the needle went in
- being unsettled, clingy or crying
- mild fever.

Manage mild reactions with simple steps, such as giving paracetamol, extra fluids, removing layers of clothing or placing a cold wet cloth where the needle went in.

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

Children with certain medical conditions

Children with certain medical conditions may also be eligible for extra doses or additional vaccines for free such as pneumococcal.

Talk to your vaccination provider to see if your child is recommended to get these vaccines.

Starting childcare or school

To enrol in childcare or school, you may need to provide an Immunisation History Statement to show your child has received all vaccinations required for their age.

Visit your state and territory health website for more information on No Jab, No Play requirements.

Family assistance payments

To receive some family assistance payments (No Jab, No Pay), your child must:

- be up to date with their immunisations
- be on an approved catch-up schedule, or
- have an approved exemption.

Visit the Services Australia website for more information on No Jab, No Pay requirements.

Vaccination records

Your child's vaccinations should be recorded in their Personal Health Record booklet given at birth.

Your vaccination provider will also record their vaccinations on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

You can get your child's Immunisation History Statement from the AIR by:

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

Children vaccinated overseas

If your child was vaccinated overseas, take their immunisation records in English to a vaccination provider in Australia so they can:

- check immunisations against the National Immunisation Program Schedule
- organise a catch-up program for missing vaccinations
- add overseas vaccinations to the Australian Immunisation Register.

MORE INFORMATION

- talk to your vaccination provider
- visit **health.gov.au/childhoodimmunisation**
- contact your state or territory health department.



Australian Government
Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing



National
Immunisation
Program

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Initiative