

Adolescent meningococcal ACWY vaccine

Information for GPs and other immunisation providers



- ✓ Adolescents from 15 years of age are at increased risk of meningococcal disease and are more likely to spread the bacteria to others.
- ✓ A single dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine (Nimenrix®) is available for adolescents aged 14–19 years through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) from 1 April 2019.
- ✓ The vaccine is free to all students in year 10 aged 14–16 years, and as an ongoing catch-up for young people 15–19 years of age through their GP or other immunisation provider.
- ✓ The vaccine will primarily be delivered through school-based vaccination programs, but will also be provided in general practice for patients who have missed receiving the vaccine at school.
- ✓ Parents and adolescents should be informed of the meningococcal types covered in the vaccine and that it does not include meningococcal B type. Advice should be provided on how to access meningococcal B vaccine if requested.

Why vaccinate young people against meningococcal ACWY?

- Adolescents from 15 years of age are at an increased risk of meningococcal disease and are more likely to spread the bacteria to others.
- Although meningococcal disease is rare it can become life-threatening very quickly even with early treatment.
- The meningococcal ACWY vaccine provides protection against four types of meningococcal disease (A,C,W and Y), so provides protection against meningococcal disease caused by types W and Y bacteria, both of which have become more common in Australia in recent years. Meningococcal W is associated with a higher fatality rate, compared with other types of meningococcal disease circulating in Australia.

NIP Eligibility

- Adolescents in year 10 aged approximately 14–16 years through school-based vaccination programs.
- Adolescents 15–19 years of age who have not received the vaccine at school can receive it from their GP or other immunisation provider through an ongoing catch-up program.
- Patients who do not meet NIP eligibility criteria and wish to be vaccinated can obtain the meningococcal ACWY vaccine (and also the meningococcal B vaccine) via private prescription.

Effectiveness of the vaccine

- A single dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine is very effective in providing protection against the meningococcal types A,C,W and Y.
- For patients who have a condition associated with an increased risk of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD), for example, patients with functional or anatomical asplenia or complement disorder, additional doses are recommended, however these are not funded through the NIP. For risk factors and schedules for those at increased risk of IMD, refer to the online Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Vaccine safety

- Meningococcal conjugate vaccines are generally considered safe and well tolerated. Common adverse reactions include pain, erythema and swelling at the injection site, fever, chills, headaches, rash, nausea and loss of appetite. Side effects generally resolve within 48–72 hours.
- All adverse events following immunisation, should be notified through the usual reporting mechanisms in your state or territory.
- It is safe for adolescents to receive the meningococcal ACWY vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, including the HPV and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccines at different injection sites.

Contraindications

- The only absolute contraindications to meningococcal vaccines are:
 - **anaphylaxis** after a previous dose of any meningococcal vaccine
 - **anaphylaxis** after any component of a meningococcal vaccine (see product information for ingredients).
- Previous meningococcal disease, regardless of the type, is **not a contraindication** to receiving any meningococcal vaccine.

Repeat doses of meningococcal vaccine

- If a NIP eligible person received a dose of meningococcal C vaccine in childhood, they are 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.
- NIP eligible adolescents who have previously received a conjugate meningococcal ACWY vaccine (Menactra®, Menveo® or Nimenrix®), for example via private prescription can receive another dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine, even if the previous dose was within the past five years. There should be at least a four week interval between doses. Repeat vaccination carries no additional risk of adverse reactions.

Recording vaccine doses given

- The Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) accepts data on vaccines administered to people of all ages. Providers are required to submit data to the AIR on all the vaccines administered, including the meningococcal ACWY vaccine.
- Information on recording meningococcal ACWY doses given is available on Medicare Online Services at the AIR for health professionals website.
(humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register-health-professionals)

Further information and contacts

- Advice on the use of meningococcal ACWY vaccines can be found in:
 - The Australian Immunisation Handbook (immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au)
 - The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) clinical statement on the administration of the adolescent meningococcal ACWY vaccine. (health.gov.au/immunisation)
 - The Department of Health's immunisation website (health.gov.au/immunisation)
 - NCIRS meningococcal ACWY fact sheet (ncirs.org.au)

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Contact your state or territory health department or see the **Australian Immunisation Handbook** for further information health.gov.au/immunisation