

# Immunisation for children

---

 [health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/immunisation-for-children](http://health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/immunisation-for-children)

October 24,  
2017



Australian Government

Department of Health

## About vaccines for children

---

Children need immunisations against many diseases. This protects them while their immune systems are still developing, and prevents them from getting serious diseases. To confirm your child's specific needs, speak to your doctor or vaccination provider.

The information provided below is a general guide to immunisations for children.

Some recommended vaccines are funded through the [National Immunisation Program \(NIP\)](#), or [state and territory programs](#). Other vaccines are available for some [international travel](#), or in the event of specific or medical risk. You can also buy other vaccines privately with a prescription.

## Children aged 4 years old or under

---

The following routine immunisations are free through the NIP for children aged 4 years or under:

View the [NIP Schedule](#) for more information.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

---

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get additional free vaccines through the NIP. See [immunisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#).

## Medically at-risk children

---

Medically at-risk children require an additional dose of pneumococcal vaccine (13vPCV) at 6 months of age and a booster dose of pneumococcal (23vPPV) at 4 years of age. Your doctor or vaccination provider will advise you if your child is medically at-risk.

## Influenza

---

See the [influenza vaccination section](#) below.

## Children aged 5 to 9 years old

---

### Catch-up vaccines

---

All children aged 5 to 9 years should receive any missed routine childhood vaccinations. Check the [NIP Schedule](#) and talk to your doctor if your child has not had all the recommended immunisations.

People up to 19 years old get the recommended vaccines free under the NIP. This is if they did not receive the vaccines in childhood. This is called catch-up vaccination.

### Influenza

---

See the [influenza vaccination section](#) below.

## Children and teenagers aged 10 to 19 years

---

### Catch-up vaccines

---

All children aged 10 to 19 years should receive any missed routine childhood vaccinations. Check the [NIP Schedule](#) and talk to your doctor if your child has not had all the recommended immunisations.

People up to 19 years old get the recommended vaccines free under the NIP. This is if they did not receive the vaccines in childhood. This is called catch-up vaccination.

### Diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis) booster

---

A booster dose of [diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough \(pertussis\)](#) is recommended for 10 to 15 year olds. A booster is an extra dose of a vaccine that you have had before. It 'boosts' the immune system. It is free and provided through school vaccination programs.

Contact your [state or territory health department](#) for details.

### HPV (human papillomavirus)

---

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a common sexually transmitted virus that affects both females and males. It can cause genital warts and some types of cancer. It is preventable by vaccination.

HPV vaccination requires a course of two doses over the school year to develop immunity.

The HPV vaccine is free for children aged 10 to <15 years through school immunisation programs.

People who do not receive the vaccine at school are eligible for two free catch up doses up to 19 years of age.

Contact your [state or territory health department](#) for details.

Visit the [HPV immunisation service](#) page for information on receiving the HPV vaccine.

## Meningococcal disease

---

[Meningococcal disease](#) is a very serious infection that can cause severe scarring, loss of limbs, brain damage and death. There are five main types of meningococcal disease – A, B, C, W and Y.

The meningococcal ACWY vaccine is provided free through the [National Immunisation Program \(NIP\)](#) for people aged approximately 14 to 16 years through school based immunisation programs.

People aged 15 to 19 years who do not receive the vaccine at school can get a free catch up vaccine through GPs and other immunisation providers.

Teenagers in some states and territories may also be able to receive meningococcal B vaccines as part of [state and territory immunisation programs](#). Contact your [state or territory health department](#) for details.

Visit the [Meningococcal immunisation service](#) for information on receiving the meningococcal vaccine.

## Influenza

---

See the [influenza vaccination section](#) below.

## Getting your child immunised at school

---

Parents or guardians must complete a consent form giving permission for their child to get a vaccination at school. Consent forms are either issued in class or, in some cases, mailed to you. They have information about the vaccine being given to your child at school. Completed consent forms should be returned to the school office, your child's teacher or the immunisation provider.

It is important that your child attends school on vaccination days. Some vaccines require multiple doses throughout the school year. Schools often advertise the dates of immunisation sessions in their newsletters or on their websites. Contact your school or your [state or territory health department](#) to confirm dates for vaccination in your child's school.

## Tips for parents

---

Some older children can get very concerned about the thought of having a vaccination at school. It is important to talk to teenagers openly about the importance of immunisation. Explain how a little pain now will provide them with a lifetime of protection.

Some useful tips for preparing older children for school-based immunisation include:

- giving them a good breakfast
- making sure they wear a loose shirt
- ensure they are feeling well on the day
- making sure they let the teacher or nurse know if they are feeling nervous or unwell.

## Influenza

---

Influenza can be a serious illness for young children. Influenza vaccination every year is recommended for everyone aged 6 months or more.

Yearly influenza immunisation is free through the NIP for people aged 6 months old or more with medical conditions that makes them more likely to get severe influenza. These conditions include:

- heart disease
- chronic lung disease (including people with severe asthma who require frequent hospital visits)
- chronic neurological conditions
- impaired immunity
- blood disorders caused by genetic changes (haemoglobinopathies)
- diabetes
- kidney disease.

Speak to your doctor if you think your child has a medical condition that makes them more likely to get influenza.

All children aged 6 months to under 5 years in all states can receive a free influenza vaccination as part of state and territory immunisation programs. Contact your state or territory health department for details.

Visit the influenza immunisation service page for information on getting the influenza vaccine.

Last updated:

28 June 2019

Tags: