

2021 Year 10 School Immunisation Program

Meningococcal B and ACWY vaccine

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian

All students in **Year 10** will be offered free vaccines for both meningococcal B and ACWY through State and Commonwealth government funded immunisation programs.

Meningococcal B and ACWY vaccines are recommended for adolescents even if they have already received the childhood dose of meningococcal C vaccine.

A trained vaccination team will visit your child's school to offer these vaccinations.

Included with this letter is the **Year 10 Consent Card**. Please read the all the information on both sides of this page before completing the **Year 10 Consent Card**. Keep this information for future reference.

It is important that you complete the Consent Card and return it to the school, even if you DO NOT consent for your child to be vaccinated at school.

If your child has had any previous doses of meningococcal B or ACWY vaccine, please make note of these details in the space provided on the Consent Card.

Consent may be withdrawn at any time prior to vaccination by contacting your **School Immunisation Program provider**. It is very important to contact the School Immunisation Program provider if the student has received the vaccine/s elsewhere before the school visit or if other information provided on the Consent Card needs to be updated.

In South Australia, students may consent for themselves if they are 16 years of age or older.

Students will receive a vaccination record to take home. You are encouraged to keep this record. Vaccination records may be needed for future employment, study or travel.

If you have provided consent and your child is unwell or not at school on vaccination day, the School Immunisation Program provider will provide you with information about how to receive the missed vaccines.

Parents/legal guardians of students aged less than 14 years can access an immunisation history statement either from their **Medicare online account** through **myGov** or by using the **Express Plus Medicare** mobile app.

Due to privacy laws, anyone aged 14 years of age or older needs to get their own statement or give permission to the Department of Human Services for their parents/legal guardians to access their history statement.

Further information is available at:

- Parent and student high school vaccination videos: health.gov.au/news/school-based-vaccinations-for-teens
- SA Health – School Immunisation Program: sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation
- SA Health – Meningococcal B Immunisation Program: sahealth.sa.gov.au/menbprogram
- Australian Government Department of Health: health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation
- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance: ncirs.edu.au

Privacy

- The information you provide on the *Consent Card*, and information related to vaccines administered will be stored electronically and/or in hard copy as a medical record. This information will be disclosed to staff involved in the provision of an immunisation service for SA Health and local government councils and their immunisation providers. The immunisation records will be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register where it will be stored on your child's Medicare account.
- If you are concerned that personal information has been misused or subject to unauthorised access, contact your school immunisation program provider. If the issue remains unresolved, contact SA Health Immunisation Section on 1300 232 272.

For more information

Immunisation Section
Communicable Disease Control Branch
sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation

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Year 10 School Immunisation Information

Meningococcal B and ACWY

- caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis* (meningococcus)
- although rare, meningococcal infection is serious and potentially life threatening
- there are several different strains of meningococcus; A,B,C,W and Y are the most common
- meningococcal B is the most common type of meningococcal disease in South Australia
- meningococcal B vaccine can protect against most, but not all circulating meningococcal B strains
- meningococcal ACWY vaccine can protect against the ACW and Y strains
- highest incidence of disease is in young children, particularly those aged less than 2 years of age
- adolescents and young adults are also at higher risk of meningococcal disease
- meningococcal B and ACWY vaccines are recommended for these groups as they are at increased risk of meningococcal disease
- some people may carry the bacteria in the nose and throat without developing disease (carriers)
- spreads through infected droplets or through close contact with contaminated nose and throat secretions
- invasive meningococcal disease occurs when the bacteria 'invade' the body from the throat or nose
- usually causes meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and / or septicaemia (infection of the blood)
- may also cause pneumonia (lung infection) septic arthritis (joint infection) or conjunctivitis (eye infection)
- **invasive meningococcal disease can cause death within hours from onset of symptoms**
- **5-10% of people with invasive meningococcal disease die despite rapid treatment**
- **30-40% of children and adolescents who survive the disease have permanent complications**

Complications include:

- loss of limbs
- skin scarring
- vision problems
- limb deformity
- deafness
- learning difficulties

Meningococcal B vaccine (Bexsero®)

- Bexsero® can protect against most of the circulating meningococcal B strains
- is recommended for all adolescents aged 15-19 years of age due to their higher risk of meningococcal B disease
- for Year 10 students, is given as a 2 dose course with at least 8 weeks between doses
- can be given at the same time as the meningococcal ACWY vaccine

Common side effects of Bexsero® vaccine

- pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- fever
- headache
- painful muscles and joints
- nausea/decreased appetite
- generally feeling unwell

Meningococcal ACWY vaccine (Nimenrix®)

- Nimenrix® can protect against meningococcal ACW and Y strains
- is recommended for all adolescents aged 15-19 years of age due to their higher risk of meningococcal disease caused by types A, C, W and Y
- for Year 10 students, is given as a single dose
- can be given at the same time as the meningococcal B vaccine

Common side effects of Nimenrix® vaccine

- pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- headache
- fatigue
- fever
- nausea/decreased appetite

Severe reactions to vaccines are very rare. If you need further information on the safety of vaccines, please contact your school immunisation provider or visit SA Health: sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation



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Government of South Australia
SA Health