

2023 Year 10 School Immunisation Program

Meningococcal B and meningococcal ACWY vaccine

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian

All students in **Year 10** will be offered free vaccines for both meningococcal B and meningococcal ACWY.

Both meningococcal B and meningococcal ACWY vaccines are recommended for adolescents even if they have received a previous dose of meningococcal C vaccine or meningococcal ACWY vaccine.

A trained vaccination team will visit your child's school to offer these vaccinations. Your child will receive two injections at the first school visit: one meningococcal B vaccine and one meningococcal ACWY vaccine, with the second meningococcal B vaccine two months later.

Included with this letter is the **Year 10 Consent Card**. Please read all information on both sides of this page before completing the consent card and discuss these vaccines with your child.

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 meningococcal 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Consent may be withdrawn at any time prior to vaccination by contacting your **School Immunisation Program provider**.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 aged 16 years or over.

Students will receive a vaccination record to take home. This contains important information regarding possible side effects after vaccination.

If you have provided consent and your child is unwell or not at school on vaccination day, the School Immunisation Program provider will advise how your child can access the missed vaccine.

All immunisations administered to children and adolescents are recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register. 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 or older needs to access their own statement or give permission to the Australian Government Department of Human Services for their parents/legal guardians to access their history statement.

Further information about immunisation is available at:

- Parent and student high school vaccination videos: health.gov.au/resources/collections/vaccination-videos-for-high-school-students
- SA Health – School Immunisation Program: sahealth.sa.gov.au/school-immunisations
- 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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Government
of South Australia

SA Health

Year 10 School Immunisation Information

Meningococcal B and meningococcal 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 and meningococcal ACWY vaccines are recommended for adolescents and young adults 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
- limb deformity
- skin scarring
- deafness
- vision problems
- learning difficulties

Meningococcal B vaccine (Bexsero®)

- can protect against most of the circulating meningococcal B strains
- is recommended for all adolescents aged 15-19 years 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

There is no current recommendation to repeat a course of meningococcal B vaccination if a previous valid course of meningococcal B vaccination has been given. A valid course according to the Australian Immunisation Handbook is two doses of meningococcal B vaccine given at least two months apart.

If the interval between the two doses given was less than two months, then it is recommended one further dose is given now.

Please document any previous doses on the consent card.

Meningococcal ACWY vaccine (Nimenrix®)

- can protect against meningococcal A,C,W and Y strains
- is recommended for all adolescents aged 15-19 years 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 Bexsero® vaccine

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

Common side effects of Nimenrix® vaccine

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

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

