

Immunisation saves lives



Key facts

- Vaccination means getting a vaccine. It makes your body immune to some diseases. Vaccination is also known as immunisation.
- Immunisation is a safe and effective way of protecting you against serious diseases.
- All vaccines used in Australia are safe.
- Missing or delaying vaccinations puts your child and those around you at risk of getting serious diseases.
- The protection through immunisations does not always last a lifetime, extra vaccinations are needed for children, teenagers and adults throughout their life.
- If you or your children have no immunisation records, your doctor can plan a schedule of vaccinations to get you and your children up-to-date ('catch-up').
- Childhood vaccines are free.

Not only babies and children need to be vaccinated against common childhood diseases – parents, grandparents and carers do too. They could pass on a serious disease to their child if they are not up-to-date with their immunisations. Even if they were fully vaccinated when they were a child, those immunisations often will not last for their whole life.

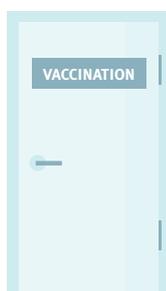
It is also important for pregnant women or those planning pregnancy to check their immunisations are up-to-date. Influenza and whooping cough vaccinations are recommended and free for pregnant women.

If you travel outside Australia (including to your country of birth), you might need vaccinations to protect you from getting sick. Your doctor (also called general practitioner or GP) can tell you what vaccinations are needed before your travel. This will depend on when and where you are going, your age, whether you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, other medical conditions and your vaccination history.

Speak to your doctor about your vaccinations to help protect you, your family and your community.

Why is immunisation important?

Immunisation is a safe and effective way of protecting you and your community against serious diseases, such as whooping cough and measles, which can cause disability and even death. When a large majority of children, teenagers and adults are vaccinated, it is more difficult for these diseases to spread in the community.



Why is immunisation for children so important?

Young children and particularly babies are at risk of serious and life-threatening diseases such as whooping cough. This is because their immune system (their bodies' defence mechanism) is not yet fully developed. For the best protection, children need to receive every vaccine on time as outlined in the Queensland immunisation schedule. Being fully up-to-date with immunisations keeps not only your children, but also your family members and your community protected.



Immunisation schedule for Queensland

The immunisation schedule outlines which free vaccines are given at what age from birth to adulthood. The schedule is available at www.vaccinate.initiatives.qld.gov.au/schedule.

A schedule of vaccinations to catch-up

If you and your children have missed vaccinations, catching up as soon as possible is important. Your doctor can plan a schedule of vaccinations to get you and your children up-to-date ('catch-up').

You and your children might need to get many vaccinations over a number of weeks or months to complete the recommended schedule and to be fully protected.

There are laws in Australia about vaccination, Centrelink payments and attendance at child care services. In Australia, children must be up-to-date with their immunisations for parents to receive Centrelink payments. Check with your child care service or kindergarten about immunisation requirements for your children.

Are vaccines safe?

All vaccines available in Australia have been tested and are safe and effective. Like all medications, vaccines can cause some reactions. Common reactions to vaccines are generally mild and go away within a few days without medical treatment. Reactions include mild fever for a short time and soreness, redness or swelling where the needle was given. Major side effects are extremely rare. The risk to your health from getting the disease is far more serious than the risk from vaccine side effects.



Where to get vaccinated?

You can get vaccinated at your GP clinic. Some local government councils also provide immunisation clinics for children. Check your council's website for more information.

Children attending Year 7 or Year 10 at secondary schools in Queensland can also get free vaccinations at school.

How much do vaccinations cost?

Childhood vaccines are free. Some extra vaccines for children, teenagers, pregnant women, people with some medical risk factors and the elderly are also free.

Check with your doctor if you are eligible for free vaccines. While some vaccines are free, some doctors might charge a fee for the vaccination.

How to access immunisation records?

All vaccinations given to people in Australia are recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) by the doctor giving the vaccination.

To get a copy of your own and your child's immunisation record (if they are under the age of 14) you can:

- ask your doctor to print a copy from AIR for you
- call AIR on 1800 653 809
- visit a local Medicare service centre
- go to the myGov website <https://my.gov.au> to create an account and link it to Medicare.

The record is called an immunisation history statement. Your child's vaccination may also be recorded in your child's Personal Health Record booklet ('red book') if you have one.

Make sure you bring all your immunisation records, including those from overseas, to your medical appointments. The doctor or nurse can use these records to decide which vaccinations you need, and to record vaccinations you had overseas on the Australian Immunisation Register. This will help keep your immunisation records up-to-date.

More information

- Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) for health advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 if you need an interpreter.
- For more information about immunisation, visit www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/immunisation or www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation
- For information in other languages, visit www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/information-in-your-language or www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au

