

Immunisation saves lives



Key facts

- Vaccination means getting a vaccine. It makes your body immune to some diseases. Vaccination is also known as immunisation.
- Vaccines can protect you against measles, meningococcal disease or some cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV).
- If you are not vaccinated, you and those around you may be at risk of getting serious diseases.
- All vaccines in Australia are safe.
- In Queensland you can get vaccinations for free at school in Year 7 and Year 10.
- If you have no immunisation records, your doctor can plan a schedule of vaccinations to get you up-to-date ('catch-up'). These vaccines are free if you are between 10 to 19 years of age.

Why is immunisation important?

Immunisation is a safe and effective way of protecting you and your community against serious diseases. Human papillomavirus (HPV), for example, is a common virus easily passed on to others. It can cause certain cancers in men and women. Without vaccination, 90 per cent of adults will have a HPV infection in their life.

There is no treatment to get rid of HPV infection. In most people the virus causes no symptoms and usually goes away after time. Sometimes it can persist and cause cancer of the mouth, throat and reproductive organs. The HPV vaccine is very effective and can prevent almost all HPV infections that cause cancer.

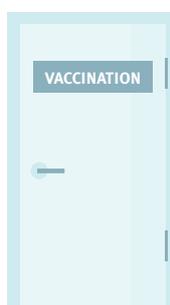
Immunisation schedule for Queensland

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 have missed vaccinations, catching up as soon as possible is important. Your doctor (usually called a general practitioner or GP) can plan a schedule of vaccinations to get you up-to-date ('catch-up'). You might need 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.



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. Talk to your parents and doctor. If you are attending Year 7 or Year 10 at a secondary school in Queensland you can receive free vaccinations at school.

Year 7 students get:

- HPV vaccine.
- diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccine (one vaccination).

Year 10 students get:

- meningococcal ACWY vaccine (one vaccination).

To get the free vaccinations at school, parents need to sign the consent forms and return them to school by the deadline.

If you are between 10 to 19 years of age and do not have an immunisation record, you can get free vaccines from your doctor against:

- diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough (three vaccinations)
- poliomyelitis (three vaccinations)
- measles, mumps, rubella (two vaccinations).

Remember, to be fully protected, many vaccinations might need to be given over time.

How much do vaccinations cost?

Catch-up vaccines for 10- to 19-year-olds given by your doctor and vaccines given at school are free.

Check with your doctor if you are eligible for free vaccines and if your doctor charges a fee for the vaccination.

How can I access my immunisation records?

All vaccinations given to people in Australia are recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) by the doctor giving the vaccination. If you are over 14 years of age, you can access your own immunisation record (called an immunisation history statement).

To get a copy of your record 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.

Make sure you bring all your immunisation records, including those from outside Australia, to your medical appointments. The doctor or nurse can use these records to decide which vaccinations you need, and to record vaccinations you had outside Australia 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

