

### Media statement

1 February 2019

#### **Parents, look out for school immunisation consent cards!**

With the start of the school year, parents will soon receive consent cards for their child's free school immunisation.

State and non-state high schools in the Sunshine Coast and Gympie regions are now sending information packs and consent cards home with students for parents to complete.

Public health physician Dr Andrew Langley said in the 2019 School Immunisation Program:

- Year 7 students receive three vaccinations: two vaccinations protect against HPV (human papillomavirus) and one is to protect against whooping cough, diphtheria and tetanus
- Year 10 students receive one vaccination to protect against meningococcal disease (ACWY strains)

"Queensland's School Immunisation Program is a safe, convenient and free way for your child to receive these important and potentially life-saving vaccinations," Dr Langley said.

"HPV causes genital warts and a range of cancers in men and women. The current vaccine covers nine HPV strains (four more strains than the earlier vaccine). These nine strains are responsible for 90 per cent of genital warts, and 90 per cent of cervical, vulval and anal cancers.

"Whooping cough is always circulating in the community. Vaccination in high school is important, as immunity from vaccination as a young child drops off over time. Good community immunity is also important to protect those (such as newborns) who cannot be vaccinated," Dr Langley said.

"Tetanus and diphtheria are severe but thankfully rare conditions nowadays due to our high vaccination coverage. Cases do though occur in unvaccinated people.

Dr Langley said Year 10 students are provided the Meningococcal vaccine because some of the highest rates of carriage of the Meningococcal disease bacteria occur in 15 to 19-year-olds

"Meningococcal disease is rare, but severe infection can cause death within 24 hours. . Even if your child was vaccinated as an infant, this vaccination is important as it provides protections against 3 more strains," he said.

"To allow your child to receive a free vaccine, simply complete the consent cards and return to your school.

# Sunshine Coast

## Hospital and Health Service

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“GPs can also provide these vaccinations.”

For reliable information about the School Immunisation Program, see <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/immunisation/adolescents>

**ENDS**

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