

# Free Meningococcal A,C,W,Y vaccine program in Victoria

Information for immunisation providers

**From 18 April 2017 until 31 December 2017 immunisation providers in Victoria can offer a free Meningococcal ACWY vaccine to young people aged 15 to 19 years old.**

**Most young people will receive the free vaccine through the secondary school immunisation program, however some may choose to access the free vaccine in a clinical setting.**

**This information has been designed to assist GPs and other health professionals to determine if the free vaccine is appropriate for their patients.**

## Key points

### Eligibility

The vaccine is free to young people in Years 10, 11 and 12 of secondary school or age equivalent 15 to 19 years between 18 April 2017 - 31 December 2017.

### The vaccine

Menactra® is an inactivated quadrivalent conjugate vaccine, given as a single dose. The vaccine protects against four strains; A,C, W and Y. The vaccine effectiveness has been estimated at 80 to 85 per cent.

### The disease

Young people are at increased risk of meningococcal disease and more likely to spread the disease to others. Although uncommon, meningococcal disease can become life-threatening very quickly.

### Ordering

[Order vaccine online](#) using the Government funded vaccine order form.

### Reporting

Report vaccine doses administered to the Australian Immunisation Register.

## Rationale

**Why has the free vaccine program been introduced?**

In recent years the Meningococcal W strain has increased across Australia, with Victoria experiencing 48 cases in 2016, compared to 17 cases in 2015, four cases in 2014 and one in 2013. It is now the predominant strain in Victoria.

Although uncommon, meningococcal disease can become life-threatening very quickly.

View the Chief Health Officer Advisory: [Update: Increase in Meningococcal W disease in Victoria](#)

**Why has the 15 – 19 year old cohort been chosen?**

Young people in this age group are at increased risk of meningococcal disease and more likely to spread the disease to others. Immunisation experts have advised that immunising this age group can prevent spread to other age groups.

## Eligibility

**Who is eligible to receive the vaccine for free?**

The vaccine is free to all young people aged 15 to 19 years between 18 April 2017 and 31 December 2017.

**Who can administer the free vaccine?**

Most eligible young people will receive the vaccine as part of the secondary school vaccine program. Nurse immunisers employed by local councils attend every secondary school in the municipality. If an eligible young person cannot or does not receive the vaccine through the secondary school program, they can receive the vaccine from a GP or the local council community immunisation service.

**When will the program start?**

The program commenced 18 April 2017 (the start of Term 2 in Victorian secondary schools).