

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).

When will the program end?

The program will cease on 31 December 2017.

Consent and communication

What consent is required to administer the vaccine?

In the secondary school program, 15, 16 and 17 year olds need consent from a parent or guardian to receive the vaccine. Eligible young people receiving the vaccine at school will have been provided with a parent/guardian consent form by which parent/guardians indicate consent in writing.

In a clinical setting such as a medical centre the parent/guardian of an eligible 15, 16 or 17 year old can provide consent to the immunisation provider. An immunisation provider can determine 'mature minor' consent where applicable.

Eighteen and 19 year olds can provide their own consent.

What resources are there for eligible young people and/or parents/guardians to assist in communication regarding the program?

The Victorian Governments' consumer health information website, the Better Health Channel, provides [frequently asked questions](#) about the free meningococcal vaccine program.

What resources are there for school communities to assist in communication regarding the program?

The Victorian Government's Immune Hero website provides a [range of resources for secondary schools](#) regarding the free meningococcal vaccine program and other vaccinations delivered in secondary school.

Vaccine presentation, safety and administration

What vaccine is supplied under the program?

The Meningococcal A,C,W,Y vaccine brand supplied is Menactra®. Menactra® is an inactivated quadrivalent conjugate vaccine.

How is the Menactra® presented?

Menactra® presents as a liquid form in a single dose vial. Immunisation providers supply the syringe and needles.

How is Menactra® administered?

Menactra® is administered by intramuscular injection into the deltoid muscle.

What strains does this vaccine protect against?

Menactra® provides protection against the A, C, W, and Y strains of meningococcal disease.

If an eligible young person received a dose of Meningococcal C vaccine in childhood (due at 12 months of age), do they still require a free dose of Menactra® vaccine?

Yes. A single dose of Menactra® provides protection against A,C,W,Y strains and will boost adolescents' protection with the C strain they received as a baby.

If an eligible young person did not receive a dose of Meningococcal C vaccine in childhood (due at 12 months of age), do they require a free dose of Menactra® vaccine?

Yes. They should receive a single dose of Menactra® vaccine now as it contains protection against the meningococcal C strain.

If an eligible young person misses their free dose of the Menactra® vaccine at school, can they still receive it later?

Yes. If an eligible young person misses their free dose of Menactra®, they are eligible to receive this dose up to 31 December 2017.

If an eligible young person has previously received a dose of polysaccharide quadrivalent meningococcal vaccine (Menomune® or Mencevax®), do they still require a free dose of Menactra® vaccine?

Yes. Eligible young people are recommended Menactra®, the conjugate quadrivalent meningococcal vaccine, for long term protection.

Are there any timing interval considerations for administration of Menactra® vaccine and other meningococcal vaccine products?

The recommended minimum interval is eight weeks between doses of any conjugate meningococcal C containing vaccine and six months between the polysaccharide quadrivalent vaccine and Menactra®.

There is no interval requirement for Meningococcal B vaccine.

If an eligible young person receives the free Menactra® vaccine, is a booster dose required later in adolescence?

The current recommendation is that booster doses are not usually required. Booster doses may be recommended for some individuals, including those with high risk medical conditions and those traveling to areas with high rates of meningococcal disease based on individual risk assessment. Refer to [NCIRS Meningococcal fact sheet](#) for further information.

Can Menactra® be safely administered to an eligible young person who is pregnant or breastfeeding?

Pregnancy - Meningococcal vaccines are not routinely recommended for pregnant women, but can be given where clinically indicated for women with an increased risk of meningococcal disease. Refer to the current [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

Breastfeeding - Inactivated vaccines, such as conjugate meningococcal vaccines like Menactra® may be administered to women who are breastfeeding.

Can Menactra® be administered with other vaccines offered free to young people on the National Immunisation Program schedule?

Yes. Multiple vaccines can be administered on the same day at different injection sites.

Ordering

How can the vaccine be ordered?

To order vaccine use the Government funded vaccine [order form online](#).

How many doses of Menactra® vaccine should I order?

Immunisation providers not involved in delivery of the vaccine through secondary schools are encouraged to order small quantities of Menactra® for eligible young people who do not access the vaccine through the secondary school vaccine program.

Reporting

Should I report administration of Menactra® vaccine to the Australian Immunisation Register?

Yes. Menactra® should be reported to the Australian Immunisation Register in the usual way.

More information

- [Download frequently asked questions for young people and parents/guardians.](#)
- [Read the invasive meningococcal disease national surveillance report with a focus on meningococcal serogroup W.](#)
- [Order the vaccine for age eligible adolescents.](#)
- [Read the most current information about meningococcal disease and vaccination for Australians.](#)
- [Read the Australian Immunisation Handbook.](#)
- [Find out more about the Australian Immunisation Register.](#)

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