

Year 7 School Vaccinations



What is the School Vaccination Program?

NSW Health works with schools to offer vaccines recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The vaccines are given at schools by registered nurses.

Which vaccines are being offered?

The following vaccines will be offered free of charge to Year 7 students:

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in two doses, six months apart.
- dTpa vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis (whooping cough) as a single dose.

Why is the HPV vaccine important for young people?

HPV is a common sexually transmitted virus. It can sometimes cause serious illness in both men and women. It causes almost all cases of cervical cancer, some other forms of cancer and genital warts.

If young people are vaccinated against HPV before they become sexually active they will have the highest possible level of protection.

Young people in the target age group naturally produce more antibodies than older teens and adults so they require fewer doses of the vaccine - two instead of three.

Why is the dTpa vaccine important for young adolescents?

Diphtheria is a contagious and potentially life-threatening bacterial infection, tetanus is a severe and often fatal disease of the nervous system, and pertussis (whooping cough) is a highly infectious bacterial disease that can be fatal in babies.

The combination vaccine for Year 7 students is a booster dose, essential for maintaining immunity into adulthood after the previous diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough vaccines given in childhood.

How do I ensure that my child gets vaccinated?

Schools will provide parents/guardians with a link to an online consent system. You can also request a paper consent form from the school.

Your school will let you know the dates for the vaccination clinics.

In case your child is away on the day, students will be offered any missed doses later in the year where possible.

Parents and guardians will be told in advance of any additional vaccination opportunities at school.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines work by triggering the immune system to fight certain infections. If a vaccinated person comes into contact with these infections, their immune system is able to respond more effectively, stopping the disease developing or greatly reducing its severity.

How safe are vaccines?

Vaccines used in Australia are safe and must pass strict safety testing before being approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). The TGA also monitors the safety of vaccines once they are in use.

What are the side effects of vaccination?

Side effects are commonly mild and usually involve pain, swelling and redness at the injection site. Serious side effects are extremely rare.

You can read more information about side effects in the Consumer Medical Information for the vaccine available from www.health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination

Parents concerned about side effects after vaccination should contact their GP.

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that may result in unconsciousness and death if not treated quickly. It occurs very rarely after any vaccination. The school immunisation nurses are fully trained in the treatment of anaphylaxis.

Any history of anaphylaxis may mean that a student should not receive a certain vaccine. The online consent system has an area to let us know of any allergies.

What if my child has asthma and takes cortisone or prednisone by a “puffer”?

The vaccines can be safely given to someone who has asthma. It is not affected by the medications they are taking.

Can I withdraw consent?

Consent can be withdrawn at any time through the online consent system, or if a paper consent form has been used, by contacting the school.

Should the vaccine be given to a female student who is or thinks she may be pregnant?

No. Any female student who is, or thinks she may be pregnant should not be vaccinated.

On the day of the clinic the vaccination nurse will ask female students if they are or could be pregnant. If a student answers yes to this question, she will not be vaccinated.

What if I prefer to wait until my child is older?

These vaccines can only be provided at school by you submitting the original consent form while your child is in Year 7. If you choose to wait until your child is older you will need to make arrangements with your GP and there may be costs involved.

How can I access a record of the vaccinations?

Information about your child's vaccinations will be uploaded to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). It can be linked to your child's existing immunisation history.

Parents can request a copy of their child's AIR Immunisation History Statement at any time up to their child being 14 years of age, and students aged 14 years and over can request their own immunisation history statement, as follows:

- Using the Medicare online account through myGov:

<https://my.gov.au/>

- Using the Medicare Express Plus App:

www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/expressplus-mobile-apps

- calling the AIR General Enquiries Line on 1800 653 809

Where can I find more information about school vaccination?

- by visiting the NSW Health website at www.health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination
- by contacting your local public health unit on 1300 066 055

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