

NSW School Vaccination Program



NSW Health works with schools to offer human papillomavirus (HPV) and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (dTpa) vaccines to Year 7 students in a school-based vaccination program. These vaccines are recommended by the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and funded under the National Immunisation Program.

- Information about the vaccines and the diseases they protect against are included in this Parent Information Sheet.
- For your child to be vaccinated, your consent must be provided online or on the enclosed consent form. The vaccines are only provided free at school if you either provide online consent or complete, sign & return the Consent Form while your child is in Year 7.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time by following the advice on page 2.
- If you do NOT wish your child to be vaccinated against a disease, do NOT sign your name next to that vaccine.
- A Privacy Statement that explains how the information you provide is collected and used is also included on page 4.

To provide online consent visit
<https://engage.health.nsw.gov.au/engage>



For more information, please contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055 or visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation.

Frequently asked questions

Q. 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, preventing the disease developing or greatly reducing its severity.

Q. 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). In addition, the TGA monitors the safety of vaccines once they are in use.

Q. 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. For example, NSW parents who were followed up in the days after HPV vaccination reported that 9.7% of students experienced mild side effects while only 0.5% required medical attention. More information about side effects is available in the Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) for the vaccine available from [health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/schoolvaccination)

Parents concerned about side effects after vaccination should contact their GP who should also make a report to the local public health unit.

Q. 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.

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

The vaccines can be safely administered to someone who has asthma regardless of which medications they are taking.

Q. 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.

The student will be urged to immediately discuss the issue with her parent/guardian and to seek medical help. She will also be provided with contact details for a health referral service that will provide advice, support and guidance.

Q. Can I withdraw consent?

Consent can be withdrawn at any time:

- where consent has been given online, please log-in at <https://engage.health.nsw.gov.au/engage> and follow the prompts to withdraw consent for your child
- where consent has been given on the physical consent form, please provide the school with written notification of the withdrawal of consent or telephone the school to withdraw consent prior to the clinic.

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

These vaccines can only be provided at school by you returning 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 or pharmacist immuniser. Please note, there may be costs involved.

Q. What if my child missed out on the vaccine at school?

Every effort will be made to vaccinate your child at subsequent school clinics during the Year 7 school year. Where this is possible, you will be advised of arrangements for catch-up vaccination. Alternatively, free catch-up vaccine is available through your local GP and pharmacist immunisers. Please note the GP and Pharmacist immunisers may charge a consultation or administration fee.

Q. Can students with physical and/or intellectual disabilities be vaccinated at school?

Most students with physical and/or intellectual disabilities can be vaccinated at school. However, some students may require additional support on the day of the clinic at school, or a referral to a specialist immunisation clinic that offers vaccinations under close observation.

If you believe your child requires additional support or a referral, please contact your local public health unit (PHU) on 1300 066 055 to discuss further.

Q. How can I access a record of the vaccinations?

Information about your child's vaccinations will be uploaded to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) so 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.servicesaustralia.gov.au/express-plus-mobile-apps
- calling the AIR General Enquiries Line on 1800 653 809.

Female students receiving HPV vaccine –by signing the Consent Form, you are agreeing to disclose your child's health information for linkage to the National Cervical Screening Program Register in the future.

Q. Where can I find more information about school vaccination?

More information is available:

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

Information about each of the vaccines

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

What is the disease and how is it spread?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus affecting both men and women. HPV is spread through genital contact during sex with someone who has the virus. The virus passes through tiny breaks in the skin and is not spread through blood or other body fluids. Condoms offer limited protection, as they do not cover all of the genital skin.

Not all types of HPV will cause visible symptoms. Many people with HPV infection will not be aware of it.

Some HPV types can cause warts on any part of the body. This includes the genital area (vulva, vagina, cervix, penis, scrotum, anus, and perineum). Warts are usually painless, but sometimes cause itching or discomfort. The types of HPV that cause warts are called 'low-risk' because they are not linked to cancer.

Other HPV types are called 'high-risk' because they can cause pre-cancerous cells to grow. These cells may turn into cancer if left untreated.

High-risk HPV is responsible for 5% of all cancers worldwide, including:

- almost all cases of cervical cancer
- 90% of anal cancers
- 78% of vaginal cancers
- 60% of oropharyngeal cancers (cancers of the back of the throat, tongue, and tonsils)
- 25% of vulva cancers
- 50% of penile cancers

Vaccinating males will prevent cancers and genital warts and will also help to protect females from cervical cancer.

Which vaccine will be used?

An HPV vaccine that protects against 9 types of HPV (6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58).

How many HPV doses does my child need?

International research shows that one dose of any HPV vaccine provides the

same protection as a two-dose course. Based on this evidence, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommended that Australia transition to a one dose HPV vaccine schedule in 2023.

Some adolescents who are significantly immunocompromised are recommended to have three doses of HPV vaccine at their GP or pharmacist immuniser. A 3 dose schedule requires an interval of 2 months between dose 1 and dose 2, and 4 months between dose 2 and dose 3.

Significant immunocompromise is defined as those with:

- primary or secondary immune-deficiencies (B lymphocyte antibody and T lymphocyte complete or partial deficiencies)
- HIV infection
- people with cancer
- organ transplantation
- autoimmune disease
- significant immunosuppressive therapy (excluding asplenia or hyposplenia).

Who should be vaccinated?

All students in Year 7 should receive a single dose course of HPV vaccine.

Regular cervical screening (previously called Pap smears) is still important for vaccinated women, as the HPV vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

All women from 25 years of age who have ever been sexually active should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years, regardless of their HPV vaccination status.

Who should not be vaccinated?

HPV vaccine should not be given to people who:

- are or may be pregnant
- have had anaphylaxis following a previous dose of vaccine
- have a history of anaphylaxis to yeast
- have had anaphylaxis following any of the vaccine additives (see below)

What additives does the vaccine contain?

The vaccine contains additives in very small amounts to either assist the vaccine to work or to act as a preservative. These include yeast, aluminium adjuvant, sodium chloride, L-histidone, polysorbate and sodium borate.

How effective is the vaccine?

The vaccine protects against high-risk HPV types that cause over 90% of cervical cancers in women and also protects against additional HPV types that cause cancers in men. The vaccine provides best protection when given at a younger age and when it is given to someone before they become sexually active.

Since the introduction of the National HPV vaccination program (in 2007 for females and 2013 for males) the incidence of:

- high-grade cervical abnormalities in vaccine eligible age groups decreased by nearly 50%
- genital warts in young people (under 21) reduced by 90%.

The latest research shows that the vaccine still offers close to 100% protection more than 10 years after it was given. As cervical cancer usually develops over 10 or more years, the role of the vaccine in reducing cervical cancer will not be evident for some time.

Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (dTpa)

What is the disease and how is it spread?

Diphtheria is a contagious and potentially life threatening bacterial infection that causes severe breathing difficulties, heart failure and nerve damage. People can get diphtheria by breathing in the bacteria after an infected person has coughed or sneezed, or from close contact with discharges from an infected person's mouth, nose, throat or skin.

Tetanus is a severe, often fatal disease of the nervous system. The person suffers severe painful muscle spasms, convulsions and lockjaw. Even with modern intensive care about 1 in 10

Information

people will die. Tetanus is caused by bacteria found in soil and infection may occur after major injuries or minor injuries (sometimes unnoticed punctures to the skin that are contaminated with soil, dust or manure).

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a highly infectious bacterial disease that causes bouts of coughing. Adolescents and adults can have an annoying cough for up to 3 months. Severe bouts of coughing can cause vomiting, rib fractures, rupture of small blood vessels and hernias. About 1 in 125 babies aged less than 6 months who catch whooping cough from an infected person die from pneumonia or brain damage. Whooping cough is spread to other people by droplets from coughing or sneezing. Untreated, a person with whooping cough can spread it to other people for up to 3 weeks after the onset of cough.

Which vaccine will be used?

A combination diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough vaccine (dTpa) will be offered as a single dose to provide protection against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. This booster dose is essential for maintaining immunity into adulthood after the previous diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough vaccines given in childhood. Children who have previously received a diphtheria-tetanus vaccine (ADT) should receive the dTpa vaccine to also protect them against whooping cough.

Who should be vaccinated?

All students in Year 7 should receive 1 booster dose of dTpa vaccine.

Who should not be vaccinated?

dTpa vaccine should not be given to people who:

- have had anaphylaxis following a previous dose of vaccine
- have had anaphylaxis following any of the vaccine components (see below)

What additives does the vaccine contain?

The vaccine contains aluminium hydroxide and phosphate, traces of formaldehyde, polysorbate 80 and glycine and was exposed to bovine derived materials during manufacture.

How effective is the vaccine?

The vaccine is very effective in preventing diphtheria and tetanus and about 80% effective in preventing whooping cough.

Privacy statement

Our obligations

We are committed to treating your personal information in accordance with privacy law.

This statement explains how and why we collect personal information about you and your child, how you can access your information and how your information may be used within the NSW public health service or disclosed to other parties. Your personal information includes personal details about you and your child and personal health information relating to your child's immunisation.

Collection

Personal information is collected so that your child can be provided with the appropriate immunisation services.

Only information that is relevant and necessary for your child's immunisation and to manage immunisation services is collected.

Information is collected directly from you and your child, wherever possible. Information may need to be collected from your child's school and other health professionals who have treated your child. In an emergency, information may also need to be collected from another family member, friend, carer or other person who can help us to provide your child with the best care.

Security of information collected

Personal information may be held in a variety of ways. Most commonly, information may be held as a paper medical record, and/or an electronic medical record forming part of a secure computerised database. We follow strict rules and policies regarding the secure storage of personal information in all formats in order to protect your information from loss, unauthorised access and misuse.

Use and disclosure

Your personal information or that of your child may be used by the NSW public health service, or disclosed outside the health service, to enable appropriate care and treatment to be provided to you. For example, your information may be used or disclosed to your GP, to your child's GP, to another

treating health service or hospital, to the Ambulance Service of NSW, to a specialist for a referral, or for pathology tests. Personal information may also be used or disclosed for purposes relating to the operation of the NSW health service and the treatment of our patients, including funding, planning, safety, and quality improvement activities.

Personal information must be disclosed to State and Commonwealth government agencies to comply with laws regarding the reporting of notifiable diseases, to provide Medicare details and immunisation statistics. HPV vaccination data will be uploaded to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) and linked to your child's existing immunisation history, and included on future AIR Immunisation History Statements. Data relating to female students will also be disclosed to the National Cervical Screening Program Register in the future. We may also use your personal information to contact you regarding client satisfaction surveys and to monitor vaccine safety. Participation is voluntary and non-participation does not affect the health care provided.

Access to your information

You are entitled to request access to your personal information held by us, and to that of your child. You may be charged a fee if you request copies of your personal information or medical record.

Further information and contact us

For further information on how your personal information is managed, please see the NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information: health.nsw.gov.au/patients/privacy

If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055.