



Guide for parents

Adolescent immunisation – Year 7

**Adolescent
Immunisation**
protection for everybody

Immunisations offered in high school

In Year 7, your child will be offered free, routine immunisations to protect them against vaccine-preventable diseases. An immunisation nursing team will visit your child's school.

Year 7 students are offered 2 immunisations:

- **Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough)**
– (one injection) boosts immunity from a similar immunisation usually received during early childhood
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)**
– (one injection) protects against some strains of HPV and related types of cancer.

Information on these diseases is available [here](#) or at the end of this guide.

What you need to do

Complete the form (consent or decline)

Your child cannot be immunised at school without your consent. Whether you consent or decline, it is important to complete the form ahead of the nursing team's visit.

The form can be completed:

- **Online** (preferred method) – health.wa.gov.au/adolescentconsent
- **Hard copy** – If you are unable to complete the online form, download a copy from healthywa.wa.gov.au/adolescentimmunisation and return the completed form to the school.

Note: If your child attends a school on **Cocos Islands** or **Christmas Island**, complete and return the paper form provided by the school. If your dependent is a **child under the care of the Department of Communities**, contact your dependent's case worker to complete a form and return it to their school.

What to expect

When will the nursing team visit my child's high school?

The nursing teams visit high schools across WA throughout the year. Your school will let you know before immunisation day via the school's preferred communication method. If you're unsure, check directly with the school.

How to make sure your child is prepared for immunisation

While the immunisation itself is very quick, the anticipation may cause stress for some students.

Nursing teams work extensively with high school students and are skilled at making sure your child is informed, comfortable and cared for. However, there are simple things you can do to make sure your child is prepared:

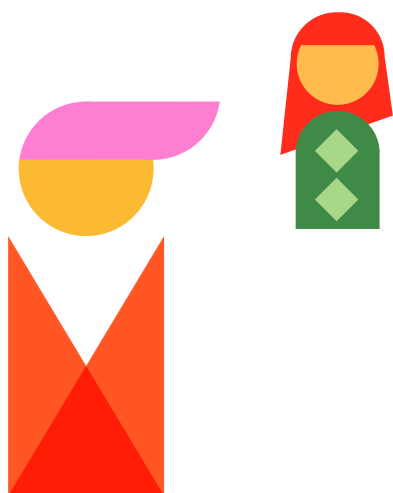
- Talk to your child about how they are feeling about immunisation and let them know what to expect.
- Share with your child why immunisation is important: it helps to protect them and others in the community who may be more vulnerable to disease.
- Walk your child through the diseases they'll be protected against by receiving the immunisations.
- Reassure with facts.
- Make sure your child has eaten their regular meals and has water to remain hydrated.



Before your child is immunised

Let the nursing team know if your child:

- has had a severe reaction following any past immunisation
- has a history of severe allergy where immunisation is not recommended
- has had a live vaccine within the last month e.g. tuberculosis, measles, yellow fever
- has had an injection of immunoglobulin or whole blood transfusion in the last 3 months
- has a disease that lowers immunity, (e.g. leukaemia, cancer, HIV/AIDS) or is having treatment which lowers immunity (e.g. steroid drugs such as hydrocortisone or prednisolone, radiotherapy, chemotherapy)
- lives with someone who has a disease that lowers immunity or who is having treatment that lowers immunity.



After immunisation

Students are required to sit and stay at the place of immunisation for at least 15 minutes to check they are doing well. After school, make sure they are feeling well and talk to them about the experience. Your child will be given an aftercare card and you can ask them to share it with you.

Immunisations, like any other medicines, can cause side effects. Most side effects are usually mild and short lasting and do not need treatment. Most people experience few to no side effects and serious side effects are very rare. Common reactions may include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, fever, irritability, drowsiness, decreased appetite, headaches, rash and nausea.

Serious immunisation reactions are possible, but rare. Learn more at healthywa.wa.gov.au/adolescentimmunisation

Paracetamol can help reduce mild fever or pain and a cool damp cloth can help with pain at the injection site.

Seek medical advice or go to the local emergency department if your child has any side effects that may be serious or unexpected such as swelling of the face or throat or difficulty breathing. You can also call *Healthdirect Australia* on 1800 022 222 for non-urgent queries. You can report concerns about any serious reactions after immunisation – visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/reportingsideeffects or call 6456 0208.

If your child is unwell or misses immunisation day

In most cases, if your child has a mild, common illness, such as a cold with a low-grade fever, they can still be safely immunised.

On the day, the nursing team will assess your child before giving the immunisation. If for any reason they decide your child shouldn't be immunised, your child will bring home information with further advice.

It is recommended your child is immunised as close as possible to the recommended age, however if your child does miss their immunisation at school there are options to catch up. You can visit any participating:

- community pharmacy
- general practice
- community immunisation clinic
- Aboriginal Medical Service.

Note: While the immunisation is free, some providers may charge for consultations.

More about diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and HPV immunisations

Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (dTpa) immunisation

The dTpa immunisation is a 3-in-1 injection that helps protect against 3 potentially serious diseases – diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough). Getting this immunisation in high school helps to maintain effective immunity into adulthood. This immunisation protects young people and also the broader community from diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough, and particularly vulnerable people such as babies by helping to stop the spread of these diseases.

Diphtheria is a contagious and potentially life threatening bacterial infection causing difficulty breathing, heart failure and nerve damage. It is spread by breathing in the bacteria after an infected person coughs or sneezes.

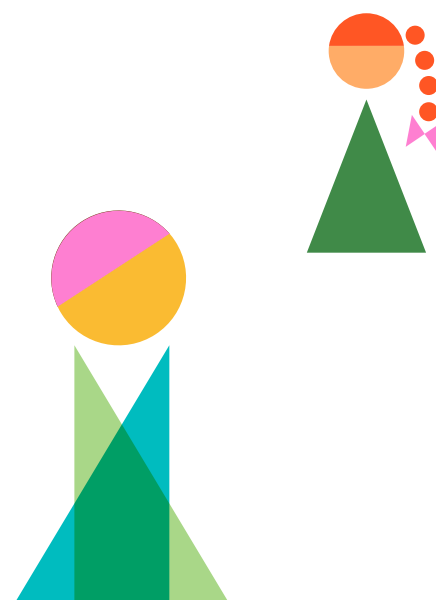
Tetanus is not spread from person to person, rather it is a bacterial infection that can enter the body from an injury caused by a break in the skin. It can cause painful muscle spasms and heart failure.

Fully immunised young people will be protected for many years but may require a booster dose in the future for protection against pertussis or if an injury places them at risk of tetanus.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation

This HPV immunisation is equally important for all young people to protect against the risk of HPV virus infection that can lead to certain types of cancers. HPV is a common virus and up to 90 per cent of people who are sexually active will be infected at some point. Usually, your body clears the infection and there are no symptoms. However, some types of HPV can stay in the body for a long time, and cause cancers of the anus, vagina, cervix, mouth and throat. Almost all anal and cervical cancers are linked to HPV infection.

The HPV immunisation is over 85 per cent effective in preventing the main types of HPV infection causing cancers and genital warts. It is most effective when offered before your child participates in any sexual activity.



More information

For health advice or immunisation outside of school, speak with your GP, pharmacist, community health centre or Aboriginal Medical Service.

This document is available in various languages and can be made available in alternative formats on request.

For more information about adolescent immunisation or for help completing the consent form scan the QR code or go to healthywa.wa.gov.au/adolescentimmunisation

