



Enquiries to: Linda Bertram
A/Director
Immunisation Unit
Telephone: (07) 3328 9701
File Ref: C-ECTF-23/12210

Queensland Health

Dear Principal

I write to inform you about an important change regarding meningococcal vaccination for Year 10 students.

Meningococcal disease is a rare but serious infection caused by bacteria that can enter the body through the nose or throat. Around one-third of children and adolescents who survive meningococcal disease develop permanent complications.

Students in Year 10 are routinely offered free vaccination to protect against meningococcal strains A, C, W, and Y through the Queensland School Immunisation Program (SIP). This vaccine is given in a single dose.

Starting in the 2024 school year, the Queensland SIP will also provide Year 10 students vaccination against meningococcal B (menB). The menB vaccine will be delivered in two doses with a minimum of eight weeks between doses to ensure effective protection.

This change is in response to the emergence of menB as the most common cause of illness and death from meningococcal disease in Queensland.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends menB vaccination for several at-risk groups, including adolescents aged 15-19 years.

Previously, funded menB vaccine was only available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and individuals with specific medical risk factors.

The Queensland Meningococcal B (MenB) Vaccination Program will now make the menB vaccine available free of charge to all eligible infants, children, and adolescents in Queensland. This change signifies an important step in safeguarding the health of young people against this serious infection.

Some planned SIP clinics at your school may be affected. Your SIP provider will be able to provide you with more information.

It is important to notify parents of Year 10 students in 2024 about this change. Please draw upon content provided in the attached information sheet to communicate the details of the change to relevant parents via your school's established channels (e.g. newsletters, emails).

Please note:

- Parents of each Year 10 student will receive a pack containing an information sheet about both meningococcal vaccines and a consent form. Students will not be vaccinated unless a signed consent form has been returned to the school.
- Parents who did not receive, or misplaced the vaccination consent form, can download it at <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/school-based-vaccination-program>

- Parents can be reassured that both meningococcal vaccines are safe and effective at preventing meningococcal disease.
- People with certain conditions may require extra doses of meningococcal vaccines; they should talk to their doctor about their individual circumstances.
- Adolescents aged 15-19 years who are not vaccinated through the school program can get catch-up vaccines free of charge through a network of more than 2,000 Queensland Health registered vaccine service providers, including GPs, community vaccination clinics, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services.

Questions about this change can be directed to your School Immunisation Program provider or the Queensland Health Immunisation Program at immunisation@health.qld.gov.au.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/immunisation/meningococcal-b>

Thank you for your support of this important public health program.

Yours sincerely



Dr John Gerrard
Queensland Chief Health Officer
28 September 2023

Attachment A: Information for parents/legal guardians of parents of Year 10 students.