Government of Western Australia
Department of Health

BE WISE
IMMUNISE

Yarning about immunisations

Immunisations help protect individuals, families and communities from serious diseases. The goal is for everyone to have access to recommended vaccines throughout life. However, some vaccines are prioritised for groups at higher risk of serious illness and complications from vaccine-preventable diseases, including Aboriginal people.

The WA Aboriginal Immunisation Schedule outlines the vaccines recommended at key stages of an Aboriginal person's life. In addition to the routine vaccines recommended for all Australians, Aboriginal people are eligible for extra immunisations that help protect against diseases they may be at higher risk of developing. These additional immunisations are recommended during pregnancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and older age.

Tips for discussing immunisation with Aboriginal people

Start the conversation

- Introduce yourself
- Ask, 'How are you today?'
- Ask all clients, 'Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?'

When discussing vaccination

- Take time to build rapport and understand any concerns the person may have.
- Listen respectfully and acknowledge what is important to the person, their family and community.
- Repeat back what you have heard to show that you understand and to ensure the person feels listened to.
- Ask permission before sharing information. For example: 'Would it be okay if I shared some information about the additional immunisations recommended for Aboriginal people and how they protect you, your family and community?' You can find simple explanations on the following page. Reassure people that it is safe to catch up on missed immunisations and support them to develop a plan to get up to date.
- Empower individuals and families to make informed decisions by providing clear, respectful and culturally safe information. Useful resources include:
  - HealthyWA
  - Sharing Knowledge About Immunisations
  - National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance.

Talking points

- 'Vaccination helps protect not only you, but also your family, Elders and community.'
- 'These additional vaccines can help prevent serious illness and reduce the risk of hospitalisation.'
- 'Because some infectious diseases affect Aboriginal people at higher rates, additional immunisations are recommended to provide extra protection.'

Additional immunisations recommended for Aboriginal people

Pneumococcal vaccine

Helps protect against common illnesses like pneumonia (a chest infection), and ear and sinus infections.

Hepatitis A vaccine

Helps protect against a virus that can make you sick with tummy and liver infections.

Hepatitis B vaccine

Helps protect against a virus that can cause serious liver problems.

Meningococcal B vaccine

Helps protect against a serious infection that can affect the brain and blood. It may start with flu-like symptoms but can become life-threatening very quickly.

Meningococcal ACWY vaccine

Helps protect against 4 types of meningococcal disease (A, C, W and Y) that can affect the brain and blood. It may start with cold or flu-like symptoms but can quickly become very serious.

Annual influenza vaccine

Helps protect against the flu, which can cause serious illness and chest infections, especially in babies, young children, Elders and people with certain health conditions.

Shingles vaccine

Many people had chickenpox when they were younger. Later in life, the virus can cause shingles, which can lead to a painful rash and long-lasting nerve pain. The vaccine helps protect against shingles.

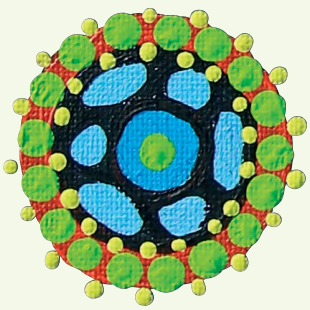
RSV vaccine

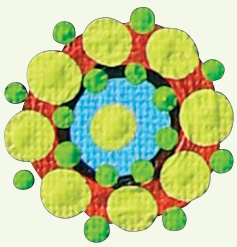
Helps protect against a virus that can cause coughs, chest infections and breathing problems. RSV can lead to serious illness and is one of the top leading causes of hospitalisation for babies, young children, older adults and people with certain health conditions.

Disease outbreak response vaccines

During a disease outbreak, additional vaccines may be recommended to help protect individuals and communities. They may be offered when there is an increased risk of infection or severe illness.







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