

Dear Parent/Carer

ACT Government funded meningococcal ACWY vaccine for adolescents

Meningococcal disease is a rare but severe infection that occurs when meningococcal bacteria invade the body from the throat or nose and enter the bloodstream. The disease can progress very quickly and can lead to death or permanent disability.

Young adults and older teenagers are at increased risk of meningococcal disease. They are more likely to carry the bacteria in their nose and throat, and more likely to spread the bacteria to others.

In December 2017, the ACT Government announced funding of a free meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) vaccine for Year 10 students with a one year catch-up program only during 2018 for 16-19 year olds. The free vaccine for the catch-up program has been available from February 2018 through general practitioners and will finish on 31 December 2018.

While the vaccine for the catch-up program is provided free by the ACT Government, doctors may charge a consultation fee.

To facilitate better access for 16 to 19 year-olds to the MenACWY vaccine, the ACT Schools Health Team will be visiting ACT colleges and independent and Catholic high schools during the second semester of 2018. The vaccine will be offered at school to Year 11 and 12 students by trained nurse immunisers.

You will receive a consent form for the MenACWY vaccine. We request your support in completing the form, so your child can present this to the immunisation team on the day they visit your child's school. Year 11 and 12 students who do not return a signed parental consent form may lawfully provide their own consent for vaccination. This will only occur if an immunisation nurse deems that the student is able to understand the information provided and is competent to make an informed decision.

To learn more about meningococcal disease and the MenACWY vaccine, visit:
<http://www.health.act.gov.au/our-services/immunisation/high-school-immunisation-program>.

If you would like further information about the program please contact the Immunisation Unit, Health Protection Service on 6205 2300 during normal business hours.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PKelly". The letters are cursive and connected, with a small loop at the end of the "y".

Dr Paul Kelly
Chief Health Officer
ACT Health

August 2018