Contraindications to vaccination

The purpose of this document is to provide a ready-reference for health care workers, medical practitioners, immunisation providers and education providers on contraindications to vaccination as referred to in the Immunisation for Health Care Workers in South Australia, Policy Directive, 2017 (Policy Directive).

This short document summarises the contraindications to vaccination detailed in the online Australian Immunisation Handbook which should be referred to for definitive advice on contraindications to vaccination.

Contraindications to vaccination

See the Vaccination Procedures section of the online Australian Immunisation Handbook.

There are only two absolute contraindications applicable to all vaccines:

- anaphylaxis following a previous dose of the relevant vaccine
- anaphylaxis following any component of the relevant vaccine.

There are two further contraindications applicable to live (parenteral and oral) vaccines:

- Live vaccines should not be administered to persons who are significantly immunocompromised, regardless of whether the immunocompromise is caused by disease or treatment (with the exception that measles-mumps-rubella, varicella and zoster vaccines can be administered to persons with HIV in whom immunocompromise is mild).
- In general, live vaccines should not be administered during pregnancy, and women should be advised not to become pregnant within 28 days of receiving a live vaccine.

The online Vaccination Procedures section also provides a list of false contraindications to vaccination.

Contraindications for specific vaccines

Diphtheria - there are only the two absolute contraindications as noted above.

Hepatitis A - there are only the two absolute contraindications as noted above.

Hepatitis B - there are only the two absolute contraindications as noted above, and in particular hepatitis B vaccines are contraindicated in persons with a history of anaphylaxis to yeast.

Influenza - there are only the two absolute contraindications as noted above.

Measles - in addition to the two absolute contraindications noted above, measles vaccine is contraindicated in persons who are immunocompromised, and in persons who are pregnant.

Mumps – same contraindications as for measles vaccine

Pertussis - there are only the two absolute contraindications as noted above.

Poliomyelitis - there are only the two absolute contraindications as noted above for inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine (IPV).

Rubella - same contraindications as for measles vaccine
**Tetanus** - there are only the two absolute contraindications as noted above.

**Varicella** - in addition to the two absolute contraindications noted above, varicella vaccine is contraindicated in persons who are immunocompromised, and in women who are pregnant.

**Precautions for specific vaccines**

**Influenza** – people with egg allergy, including a history of anaphylaxis, can be safely vaccinated with influenza vaccines. People with anaphylaxis egg allergy can be vaccinated with full age-appropriate dose in a medical facility with staff experienced in recognising and treating anaphylaxis. Precautions also apply for persons with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome.

**Measles** - precautions apply for persons infected with HIV, and persons with a history of thrombocytopenia.

**Additional useful references**

Refer to this Table of the Immunisation Handbook for advice on any person with the following conditions or circumstances, identified through the pre-vaccination screening checklist:

- has a disease that lowers immunity or is receiving treatment that lowers immunity
- has a severe allergy to a vaccine component
- is planning pregnancy or anticipating parenthood
- is pregnant
- has a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome
- has a severe or chronic illness
- has a bleeding disorder
- identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- does not have a functioning spleen
- lives with someone who is immunocompromised.

The online Immunisation Handbook provides details of vaccination for special risk groups. Of particular relevance to the Policy Directive are the following groups:

- Vaccination of persons who have had an adverse event following immunisation
- Vaccination of women who are planning pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding
- Vaccination of immunocompromised persons
- Vaccination of persons with bleeding disorders
- Vaccination of persons at occupational risk (including health care workers).

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**For more information**

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