

Health Professionals – Frequently Asked Questions

Meningococcal B Immunisation Program (State funded)

What is the program?

The State Government funded Meningococcal B (MenB) Immunisation Program commenced on 1 October 2018, providing free meningococcal B vaccinations for eligible children and young people in South Australia. Meningococcal B vaccine is recommended for these age groups as they are at increased risk of invasive meningococcal B disease.

Childhood Program:

For children commencing the course aged 6 weeks to 12 months of age:

- > **3 doses** Bexsero® vaccine (GlaxoSmithKline) in total (2 dose primary course + 1 booster).
- > Routinely administered with other National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines at 6 weeks, 4 months and 12 months of age, aligning with the usual schedule points for NIP vaccines.

School Program:

For students in Year 10

- > **2 doses** Bexsero® vaccine with a **minimal interval of 8 weeks** between doses.

If individuals were eligible as part of the childhood or school programs, but have not received Bexsero, can they receive funded vaccines?

Yes. Like with other NIP vaccines, individuals eligible as part of these programs (born on or after 1 October 2017, or in Year 10 from 2019 and less than 20 years of age), can receive funded vaccines if they decide to now be vaccinated.

NB: Those commencing the vaccine schedule 12 months of age or older require 2 doses in total. There is a minimum interval of 8 weeks between doses.

Always check the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) and a person's immunisation records prior to vaccination.

Ensure all doses of Bexsero vaccine administered are correctly reported to the AIR.

Can Bexsero be administered with other NIP vaccines?

Yes, Bexsero can be safely administered with other NIP vaccines.

- > If administering 2 vaccines at the same site, separate by 2.5 cms.
- > Never mix separate vaccines together.
- > Vaccines must only be reconstituted with the diluent supplied.



What are the recommendations for administration of multiple vaccines at the 12 month schedule point?

A set of principles has been developed to guide the administration of multiple vaccines at the 12 month schedule point. The recommended guidelines are, where possible:

- > Administer Bexsero and Prevenar 13 in the deltoid muscles, and the MMR and Meningococcal ACWY vaccines in the anterolateral thighs.
- > If the child is scheduled for other vaccines, such as influenza, two injections can be given in the anterolateral thigh separated by 2.5cm.
- > If all vaccines cannot be given at the same visit, prioritise NIP vaccines at the first visit.

Refer to the *NIP schedule* and the [Principles for Vaccine Administration at 12 Month Schedule Point](#) resources. **These principles can also be used to guide the administration of vaccines for other schedule points.**

NB: The deltoid muscle is not recommended for intramuscular vaccination of infants <12 months of age.

Why is prophylactic paracetamol administration recommended for those less than 2 years of age?

Fever (>38.5°C) following Bexsero administration in children aged < 2 years is a common and expected adverse event following immunisation. For this reason **prophylactic use of paracetamol is recommended with every dose of Bexsero for those < 2 years of age.**

The **first dose** of paracetamol is recommended within the 30-minute period prior to vaccination, or as soon as practicable after vaccination, regardless of the presence of fever. This is followed by **2 more doses** of paracetamol given 6 hours apart, regardless of the presence of fever.

Doses of paracetamol should be administered as per manufacturer's guidelines.

Parents/legal guardians should be given the resource [Managing possible fever after meningococcal B vaccine \(Bexsero®\) administration](#) and be able to confidently manage fever post vaccination with the information provided and may require education on how to administer paracetamol.

Can Bexsero be given in pregnancy?

Bexsero vaccine is not routinely recommended for pregnant or breastfeeding women. Bexsero can be given where clinically indicated, such as those at particular risk of serogroup B meningococcal disease. Assessing for pregnancy should be a routine question during pre-assessment screening for the relevant age groups.

Is Bexsero included in the requirements under the Commonwealth Government's 'No Jab No Pay' or the SA Government's 'Early Childhood Services immunisation requirements' policies?

No. funded MenB vaccine is not assessed as part of the eligibility requirements for family assistance payments under the Commonwealth Government's *No Jab No Pay* policy, or the State Government's *Early Childhood Services and immunisation* policy.

If a year 10 student has received any previous doses of MenB should they repeat the course now?

All year 10 students are eligible for a course of funded MenB vaccine (Bexsero®).

There is no current recommendation to repeat a course of MenB vaccination if a previous valid course of MenB vaccination has been given.

A valid course for this age group, as listed in the Australian Immunisation Handbook, is two doses of MenB vaccine at least two months apart. If the interval between the two doses given previously was less than two months, then it is recommended one further dose is given now.

What resources are available to support the program?

Resources for immunisation providers

- > National Immunisation Program - SA schedule
- > Principles for administration of multiple vaccines at the 12 month schedule point
- > Parent poster – paracetamol administration promotion
- > Emergency department/GP poster – reminder for clinicians that vaccine related fever should be considered a possible cause of fever in infants and young children (poster to be placed in a clinical area, not the waiting room).

Resources for parents:

- > Information page for the SA Child Health and Development Record 'Blue book'
- > Managing possible fever after Bexsero® vaccine administration (to be given to the parent by immunisation provider).

All resources are published on the SA Health website. To order more resources visit <http://www.poscat.com.au/> and log in with your six-digit Vaccine Account Number.

Where can I get further information?

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/menbprogram

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisationprovider

For more information

**Immunisation Section
Communicable Disease Control Branch
Telephone: 1300 232 272
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au**

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