Department of Health and Wellbeing

Vaccine Administration Code: Frequently Asked Questions

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Government of South Australia
SA Health

Preamble

The Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulation 2011, sub regulation 18(3) provides authorisation for a registered health practitioner determined by the Minister, to administer vaccine without a medical order. The authorisation is conditional to the administration being in accordance the Vaccine Administration Code (Code) as published by the South Australian Department for Health and Wellbeing (the Department).

To meet all requirements of sub regulation 18(3) a vaccine must be administered by:

- a class of health practitioner approved by the Minister, and
- the health practitioner must have successfully completed an approved immunisation training program, and
- the vaccine is administered by a health practitioner working for an organisation that is approved by the Minister, and
- the vaccine is administered as part of a specified immunisation program.

Who can initiate administration of a vaccine in accordance with the authorisation?

Registered nurses, midwives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners (ATSIHPs) are classes of health professionals recognised in the Code.

What training programs are approved in South Australia?

The approved immunisation training/education programs for health professionals recognised through the Code are published on the SA Health website.

Registered nurses, midwives and ATSIHPs must have completed an approved immunisation education program as listed on the SA Health website.

What ages can vaccines be administered from?

Depending on the type of health practitioner and which approved education program has been completed specific age ranges apply for vaccine administration. The age specific ranges are listed as conditions in the Vaccine Administration Code.

Why is adrenaline not listed in the Code?

Adrenaline 1:1000 solution for injection is not listed because it is an S3 poison (Pharmacist Only Medicine). The authorisation under regulation 18(3) of the Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011 applies to the administration of S4 drugs.

Can adrenaline be administered without a written or verbal instruction from a medical practitioner?

Yes. A registered health practitioner can administer adrenaline 1:1000 injection without a written or verbal instruction from a medical practitioner. The administration of adrenaline injection should be in accordance with the clinical guidelines in the current online edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Which organisations are approved to deliver immunisation services?

Local Health Networks that are a part of SA Health such as incorporated hospitals, SA Ambulance Service (SAAS), councils and council subsidiaries do not need to apply for approval under the regulations.

All other organisations employing the classes of authorised registered health practitioners to deliver immunisation programs under the Code without a medical order require approval by the Minister.

How do organisations apply to be approved?

Organisations employing authorised registered health practitioners to deliver immunisation programs without a medical order require approval from the Minister.

The Organisations delivering immunisation programs: Information guide outlines the requirements to become, or continue as, an approved organisation.

The minimum requirements, as listed in Section 2 of the information guide, must be in place to support the delivery of safe, high-quality immunisation services by authorised registered health practitioners.

Organisations must be able to demonstrate independent accreditation to an appropriate quality standard recognised by SA Health.

What are specified immunisation programs?

Vaccines are to be administered as part of specified immunisation programs. The specified immunisation programs are published on the SA Health website.

Vaccine administration for the specified immunisation programs must be in accordance with the current recommendations as published in the online Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Can vaccines listed in the Code be administered for the purpose of travel or a tetanus prone wound?

No. Vaccines such as hepatitis A may not be administered for the purpose of travel as this is not part of a specified immunisation program. The exception is measles vaccine administered as part of the SA Funded Measles Vaccination Program. This is a recognised immunisation program and is therefore within the scope of those vaccinating under the Code.

Tetanus containing vaccines cannot be administered for the treatment of a tetanus prone wound as a medical consultation is required.

Can an authorised registered nurse delegate the administration of a vaccine to an unauthorised registered nurse (RN), an enrolled nurse (EN) or an unauthorised ATSIHP?

No. A registered nurse authorised to initiate a vaccination under the Code cannot delegate the administration of vaccine to an unauthorised registered health practitioner.

Can Aboriginal Health Workers and Aboriginal Community Workers administer vaccines under the Code?

No. Aboriginal Health Workers and Aboriginal Community Workers are not registered health practitioners and cannot administer prescription medicines including vaccines.

Can students administer vaccines under the Code?

No. The Code applies to specified classes of registered health practitioners only.

Do health practitioners need to be registered with AHPRA in their profession before undertaking an approved immunisation training program, to work under the Code?

Yes.

Where can I get more information?

Clinical information and advice are available from expert immunisation nurses in the Immunisation Section, Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB). The Immunisation Section can be contacted on 1300 232 272 business days 9:00 am – 5.00 pm.

For more information

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www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons

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