

Bacillus Calmette-Guerin vaccine

Information for clinicians and health workers

About the Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccine

The BCG vaccine is available for tuberculosis (TB) but it is no longer part of the routine childhood immunisation program in Australia. The vaccine is only effective for children 5 years and younger and does not prevent TB infection. When given to infants and young children, it minimises the risk of death, meningitis and disseminated TB.

Assessment

Based on the World Health Organisation guidelines, the vaccine should be offered to children in countries and communities where the prevalence of TB disease is greater than 1%. Given the current situation, this now includes children who reside in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands.

The BCG vaccine is also recommended for children five years of age and under who:

- > have prolonged or frequent travel to high TB prevalence countries
- > are born to parents with leprosy or a family history of leprosy.

BCG is no longer routinely recommended for health workers but may be considered for those who are at high risk of exposure to multi-drug resistant TB cases.

Requesting vaccination

The BCG vaccine is only provided in South Australia through SA TB Services (and through Alice Springs hospital). All patients requiring a tuberculin skin test or BCG vaccination will need to be referred to SA TB Services.

The vaccine that is currently available in Australia is not registered by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Please read the BCG fact sheets on the [SA TB Services webpage](#).

Management

Children older than six months will usually need a tuberculin skin test (TST) prior to vaccination. The TST should be delayed until four weeks after any injected live vaccine.

BCG is a live vaccine and must be given on either the same day or four weeks before or after other injectable live vaccines.

For more information:

Royal Adelaide Hospital, SA TB Services
Telephone: (08) 7074 1089 (business hours)

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

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