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| Immunisation for children in out-of-home care |
| Information for Immunisation Providers  |

### What you need to know

* Regardless of the age of the child or young person in out-of-home care, it is important to know if their immunisations are up to date
* A longer initial appointment should be booked so that vaccine catch-up can be undertaken if required
* Children in out-of-home care are often behind with their immunisations, putting them and others at risk of vaccine preventable disease
* It is the responsibility of the child’s carer to bring a copy of their **child specific** **instrument of authorisation** **or standard authorisation**, issued by their Community Service Organisation to medical appointments as evidence of their authority to give valid consent to immunise the child
* *Mature minor[[1]](#footnote-1) consent* may be used if the Immunisation Provider deems an adolescent can provide their own valid consent for vaccination.
* GPs should ensure the carer is aware of the immunisation catch-up plan and the dates of follow-up appointments to ensure catch-up immunisations are administered in a timely manner
* Carers of children in out-of-home care will be required to provide an up to date *Immunisation History Statement* for the child to attend kindergarten, childcare and primary school in Victoria
* If immunisations are not up to date and recorded on AIR, the carers’ access to Centrelink and Child Care Benefit payments may be restricted.

### Consent for immunisations

* A child specific instrument of authorisation specifying routine medical care or standard authorisation allows carers to consent to immunisations. Immunisations are considered routine medical care, and this is confirmed in legislation.
* Carers should bring a copy of the child specific instrument of authorisation or standard authorisation to medical appointments as evidence of their authority to provide valid consent.
* If for exceptional reasons it is assessed not appropriate to include immunisations on the child specific instrument of authorisation, and they have not been issued with a standard authorisation and child is subject to a family reunification order, care by Secretary order, or long-term care order, it becomes the responsibility of the Child Protection Practitioner (CPP) or Community Service Organisation (CSO) case manager to provide separate consent to the immunisation for the child in a timely manner.
* *Mature minor consent* may be used if the Immunisation Provider deems an adolescent can provide their own valid consent for vaccination.

Refer to the Department of Education and Training policy <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/mature-minors-and-decision-making/policy>

### Accessing a child’s immunisation records

* Access the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) through HPOS[[2]](#footnote-2) to download and print record (https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register-health-professionals)
* Contact the AIR phone 1800 653 809

### Adolescents

Every opportunity should be taken to make sure adolescents are up to date with missed childhood and adolescent vaccines.

Free vaccinations are routinely offered to students in Year 7(aged 12 to 13 years) and Year 10 (aged 15 to 16 years).

If an adolescent is not attending secondary school or is overdue vaccines, they can receive free vaccine from a GP, local council, community immunisation service or some Pharmacists (for limited vaccines from 15 years of age).

Catch-up vaccination

**Catch up immunisation for children aged less than 10 years**

For children with no vaccine history or a partial history of vaccination, to determine what is required, use the Immunisation Calculator: <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/catch-up-calculator/calculator>

All catch-up vaccines are free regardless of Medicare status and should be reported to the AIR.

**Catch up immunisation information for children aged from 10 to 19 years**

For children from 10 to 19 years of age with no vaccine history: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/factsheets/vic-immunisation-catch-up-guidelines>

For children from 10 to 19 years of age with a partial history of vaccination use the catch-up tables in the online Australian Immunisation Handbook and contact the Immunisation Section for further assistance.

All catch-up vaccines are free regardless of Medicare status and should be reported to the AIR.

**Further catch-up information:**

<http://www.mvec.vic.edu.au/immunisation-references/catch-up-immunisations>

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/health-professionals/catch-up-immunisations>

**Acceptable documentation for childcare/kindergarten and primary school entry**

From February 2018 the only acceptable documentation for childcare/kindergarten and primary school entry is an *Immunisation History Statement* from the AIR.

Homeopathic vaccines are not considered valid.

Children in out-of-home care are eligible for the ‘Grace period’ which allows the child to enrol and commence childcare or kindergarten whilst documentation is accessed or catch-up vaccines are initiated. (Link to further information regarding the ‘[Grace period eligibility](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/formsandtemplates/grace-period-eligibility-assessment-form)’).

**Further information**

* Immunisation Section – Department of Health and Human Services

Email - Immunisation@dhhs.vic.gov.au Phone - 1300 882 008 (9am to 12 md, 2pm to 3pm, M to F)

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1. young people can be deemed to be able to provide consent for their own treatment if they meet the ‘mature minor’ or ‘Gillick principle’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Health Professional Online Services  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)