

3 October 2024

Tēnā koe,

World Meningitis Day October 5th 2024

World Meningitis Day helps to raise awareness about meningitis – a potentially deadly disease that can kill in a matter of hours or cause lifelong disability.

The Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora, Prevention Directorate Immunisation team would like to ask for your support to promote the meningococcal vaccines which are free for young people aged 13-25 years (inclusive) who are **entering, or in their first year of residing in certain close-living situations**. This specifically relates to boarding school hostels, tertiary education halls of residence, military barracks, or youth justice facilities.

Eligible students are funded to receive protection from two vaccines which can be given at the same time. The funded vaccine for meningococcal B is called Bexsero and requires 2 doses given 8 weeks apart. The funded vaccine for the meningococcal ACWY is called MenQuadfi and only requires 1 dose. Both vaccines are usually given into the upper arm and can be given at the same time as other vaccines e.g. HPV and measles vaccines. For the best protection, the course should be completed before moving into the facility and is free from 3 months before moving in.

Vaccines are available through GPs, Hauora Māori and Pacific providers, youth and university health services, and some community pharmacies.

How you can support:

Actively encourage young people to have their free Meningococcal immunisations as soon as possible (before moving into a close living facility) to reduce their risk of the harm caused by meningococcal disease. For schools who have students leaving at the end of the year (either heading off to university halls or boarding schools) we request you ensure these students are also given information on gaining protection prior to moving in to one of these facilities.

- Add information on these vaccines to your new student information sheets and online guidance: [Meningococcal vaccines \(info.health.nz\)](https://info.health.nz)
- Provide information on local sites where whānau can access these free vaccines: [Book My Vaccine - Vaccine Scheduling](https://www.healthpoint.co.nz)
www.healthpoint.co.nz
- Display posters in your facilities and provide new whānau with leaflets on meningococcal protection. These posters and leaflets can be ordered for free from [HealthEd](https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/HealthEd). A new poster and brochure for the rangatahi age group are also available in [Dropbox \(downloadable\)](#) and [Bluestar \(print copies\)](#). The [Dropbox](#) also includes suggested content for social media posts for World Meningitis Day. We encourage providers engaging with young people to download, use and share the available

resources to help promote the importance of immunisation for rangatahi. This content can also be used throughout the year for immunisation promotion.

- Consider offering a vaccination service on site for students who have moved in but are not yet fully vaccinated. Approach your local health service or contact us to be connected.
- Catch-up immunisations for students who are currently resident in your facility but have not yet received their free protection, remind them to do so before they move out and are no longer eligible.
- Visit the Meningitis Foundation website for more resources and support with promoting awareness and protection against meningitis.
[The Meningitis Foundation](#)

For any questions or further information please reach out to our team,

immunisation@tewhatuora.govt.nz

Ngā mihi,



Jolene Proffit

Group Manager
National Immunisation and Antenatal and Childhood Screening Programmes
Prevention | National Public Health Service