

Catch-up vaccinations

for refugees and asylum seekers in Victoria

What are catch-up vaccinations?

Vaccinations (vaccine injections) are recommended for all people to protect them against serious infections and some types of cancer.

Refugees and asylum seekers need catch-up vaccinations when they arrive in Australia. This happens because there are different vaccines in their home countries, or people may not have had healthcare or vaccines when living outside Australia. 'Catch-up' vaccinations means giving people vaccinations so they have received all the vaccines recommended in Australia. Even though vaccines are usually given during childhood, it is important to give them to young people and adults if they have missed vaccinations when living outside Australia. Once you have finished catch-up vaccinations you do not need to have them again.

Your doctor or nurse may also suggest extra vaccines, like flu vaccine. Flu vaccine is not part of catch-up vaccinations.

Will I have to pay?

Catch up vaccinations are free for all refugees and asylum seekers.



Are vaccinations safe?

Research shows that vaccines work well and are very safe in Australia. Fever or pain after the needle is given are common, but do not cause problems and only last 1-2 days. Serious side effects are very rare. It is safe to have vaccines again even if you have had them before.

Where can I get catch-up vaccinations?

- > Your family doctor (all ages)
- > The local council (for anyone under 18 years)
- > Language schools (if vaccination programs are available)
- > The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- > Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub

Can I get an interpreter at my appointment?



Yes – it is OK (and important) to ask for an interpreter if you need help.

What will happen when I have catch-up vaccinations?

Catch-up vaccinations need 3 or 4 appointments over 4 months. Vaccines are usually given by an injection (needle), one injection may protect against several diseases. At each appointment people may receive

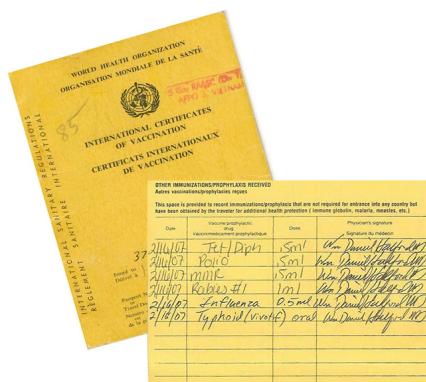
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multiple vaccines. Catch-up vaccinations are recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register. At catch-up appointments, the doctor or nurse will ask if the person having vaccines is sick, if they have had other vaccines, when they had other vaccines, and if they have ever had problems with vaccines.



What do I need to bring to appointments?

If you have a paper (written) record of vaccines that you or your child have already had, bring it to every appointment. It is OK to bring a record in your own language. The doctor or nurse can use this record to decide which vaccinations you need, and to record vaccinations you had outside Australia on the Australian Immunisation Register. It is OK to go to different places to get your vaccinations, but you need to bring your records each time.



Example of a foreign vaccination record

What happens if I don't have catch-up vaccinations?

Vaccination prevents disease and protects health – so people who don't have catch-up vaccinations might get sick.



There are new laws in Australia about vaccination and Centrelink family assistance payments. If children and young people under 20 years don't have a record on the Australian

Immunisation Register, their families will not get childcare payments and their Family Tax Benefit Part A payments will be reduced. Having catch-up vaccinations will allow families to get these payments. Parents can still decide whether to vaccinate their children, but if they choose not to vaccinate, childcare payments and their Family Tax Benefit Part A payments will be reduced.

There are also laws in Victoria that say children must have all their vaccinations to go to kindergarten or childcare (long day care, occasional care and family day care). This law does not affect school or outside school hours care. Parents need to show an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register when they enrol their child in kindergarten or childcare. You can call the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809 to ask for an Immunisation History Statement to be posted to you, or you can ask your doctor or nurse to print one from the Australian Immunisation Register for you.

