

# Starting childcare or kindergarten?

## Immunisation information for parents enrolling a child

### Enrolment requirements in Victoria

By law<sup>1</sup>, to finalise enrolment for your child in long day care, kindergarten, family day care or occasional care you must provide the service with an immunisation status certificate that shows your child is:

- o up to date with vaccinations for their age **OR**
- o on a vaccine catch-up schedule **OR**
- o has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

#### What is an immunisation status certificate?

It is a statement showing the vaccines your child has received. The most common type of immunisation status certificate is an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register<sup>2</sup>.

'Homeopathic immunisation' is not a recognised form of immunisation.

#### What is this document used for?

To finalise enrolment. To accept an offered place at a service, you must provide the service with an immunisation status certificate. This would usually be done within two months before your child is due to start at the service.

To keep children safe. If there is a disease outbreak at the service, the document is used to identify children at risk (for example, children too young to be fully immunised against a disease) who may need to stay away from the service until it is safe for them to return.

#### What if I cannot get this document?

In some circumstances a 16 week 'grace period' can be applied, so your child can start at the service while you organise the document. The service can advise if this applies to you.

1. Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, in effect from 1 January 2016

2. The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register is likely to be renamed the Australian Immunisation Register in September 2016.

## How do I get an immunisation status certificate?

### Request an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR)

- o phone 1800 653 809
- o email [acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au)
- o visit [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online)
- o visit a Medicare service centre.

### See your doctor or local council

A doctor or local council immunisation service can also provide an immunisation status certificate. To be used for enrolment, the document/s needs to contain the same details as an ACIR Immunisation History Statement and be signed by the immunisation provider.

### How do I tell if my child is 'up to date'?

Review your child's most recent ACIR Immunisation History Statement. At the bottom of the statement there is a section titled 'Next due immunisation(s)'. If the date of the next due vaccination is in the future, then your child's immunisations are up to date for their age.

If your child has completed all their childhood vaccinations there will be no vaccines listed under the 'Next due immunisation(s)' heading.

### What do I do when my child has vaccinations AFTER enrolling?

After each vaccination, you should provide an updated immunisation status certificate to the service to include in their records.

# Getting the right documentation

Scenario	Advice
<b>Lost</b> ACIR Immunisation History Statement	Contact the ACIR for a replacement statement. These can also be downloaded and printed from the Medicare website at any time.
<b>Incorrect</b> ACIR Immunisation History Statement	If vaccines are missing from a statement, contact the doctor/nurse to check if the records were sent to the ACIR. Once the updated information is received by the ACIR, a corrected Immunisation History Statement can be re-issued to you on request.
<b>Overdue</b> for a vaccination	See a doctor/immunisation nurse. The doctor/nurse will provide the vaccine and inform the ACIR. Once the updated information is received by the ACIR, an updated Immunisation History Statement can be issued to you on request.
<b>Overdue for multiple vaccinations</b>	See a doctor/immunisation nurse. The doctor/nurse will develop a 'catch-up schedule'. Your doctor can provide you with an immunisation status certificate.
<b>Medical reasons</b> can't be fully vaccinated	See a doctor. The doctor will provide information to the ACIR and, on request, the ACIR will issue you with a Statement that says 'up to date' and notes which vaccines your child cannot receive for medical reasons.
<b>Overseas</b> vaccination	See a doctor/immunisation nurse. Overseas vaccination schedules may differ from the Australian schedule and need to be checked by a doctor/nurse who will transfer the information to the ACIR. An Immunisation History Statement will then be issued to you by the ACIR at your request.
<b>Questions or concerns</b>	Seek advice from a medical doctor or immunisation nurse.

## Why immunise?

It is important that children are fully vaccinated before they start childcare or kindergarten to:

- o help protect them from diseases that can be prevented by vaccination
- o help protect others who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons from being exposed to these diseases.

Immunisation is a proven and safe way to be protected against diseases that cause serious illness and sometimes death.

## Childhood immunisation schedule

Children should be vaccinated at birth, 2 months (from as early as six weeks), 4, 6, 12 and 18 months of age and 3½-4 years of age.

To find out what immunisations your child needs:

- o see your doctor or contact your local council immunisation service
- o view the schedule of vaccinations online at [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- o receive reminders when your child's immunisations are due; download the free VaxOnTime Victoria app, available for iOS, Android and Windows devices.