



Dear Immunisation Provider,

The WA Meningococcal ACWY Paediatric Vaccination Program commenced in January this year following increased incidence of the disease. The number of meningococcal infections in WA doubled between 2016 and 2017 and last year children under 5 years of age had more than twice the number of meningococcal infections compared to any other age group.

This program provides state-funded MenACWY vaccine for all children aged 12 months to less than 5 years. Important information about the program follows.

## **UPTAKE**

Data in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) indicates that approximately 20% of children less than 5 years of age have received a dose of Men ACWY vaccine. Although this is a good start, we need to do more to ensure WA children are protected against serious illness caused by MenACWY.

Analysis of the AIR data also suggests many children who are given their routinely scheduled vaccinations at 12, 18 and 4 years of age have not been given the MenACWY vaccine. MenACWY vaccines are safe to administer at the same time as other scheduled childhood vaccines. Specifically for the WA program:

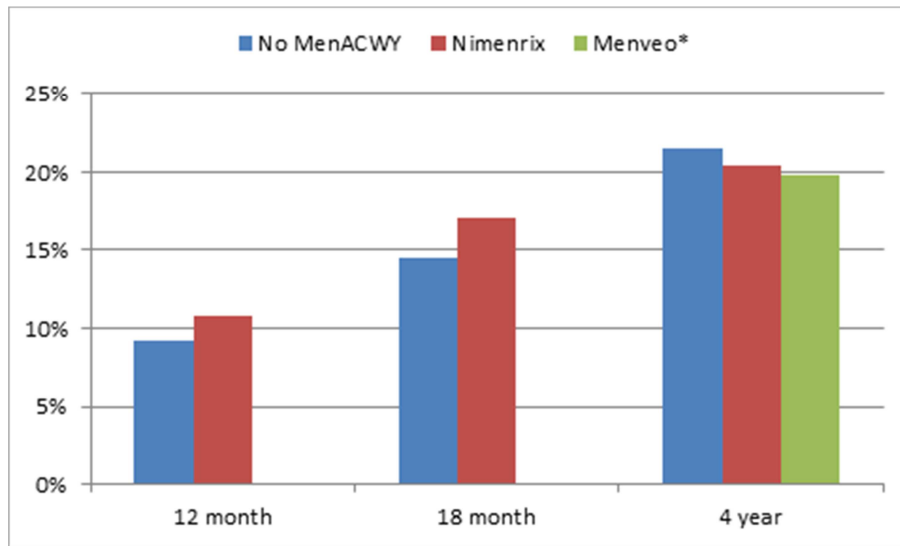
- Nimenrix® should be given a single dose to children aged 12 months to < 2 years, including when they present for their scheduled vaccinations at 12 or 18 months
- Menveo® should be given as a single dose to protect children aged 2 years to < 5 years, including when they present for scheduled vaccinations on or after 3.5 years of age
- **NOTE: There is currently no government program to provide MenACWY vaccination to children aged less than 12 months. However, as a temporary measure to respond to vaccine shortage in the private market, in cases where Menveo vaccine cannot be obtained privately, WA Health can supply Menveo for children aged less than 12 months to finish a vaccination course that has already been started.**

Please ensure that you consider offering MenACWY vaccination to **all** children aged 12 months to less than 5 years who attend your practice, even those who attend for another reason.

## **SAFETY**

WA data from SmartVax show that Nimenrix and Menveo are well tolerated in young children with no significant adverse reactions identified to date.

The available data also supports the safety of co-administration of Men ACWY with other childhood vaccines. As shown below, the proportion of parents reporting any reaction following the 12 month, 18 month and 4 year vaccination age-points is similar for those who received the routine scheduled vaccines alone compared to those who received a MenACWY vaccine concomitantly with the routinely scheduled vaccines.



**Figure1.** The number of parents reporting any reaction following vaccination at 12 and 18 months and 4 years.

Note: 'No MenACWY' -- vaccination at the age-point with no MenACWY vaccine administered. 'Nimenrix' and 'Menveo' show reported reactions at the age-point when Nimenrix or Menveo is also administered.

The most commonly reported reactions are pain or swelling at the injection site, irritability, fever and sleeplessness.

#### **ADMINISTRATION - Needle sizes**

Nimenrix® - The manufacturer has recommended using a 23 gauge needle for drawing up because small particulates from the stopper can get pushed into the vial with a larger needle. The 23 gauge needle size will prevent that from happening.

Thank you for making protecting young children in WA from MenACWY disease a priority within your practice.

Sincerely,

Dr Paul Effler

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