

Tips to assist with improving immunisation for Aboriginal children in general practice

Note: Throughout this document, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia.

Immunisation rates for Aboriginal children

The immunisation rates for Aboriginal children in Western Australia fall well below the rates for non-Aboriginal children at one and two years of age.

The following tips will assist with providing culturally safe and accessible immunisation for Aboriginal children in general practice.

Create a welcoming environment

- Display Aboriginal artwork, posters and pamphlets.
- Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.
- Install a plaque acknowledging the Traditional Owners of your practice's local area.

Ask all parents, "Is your child of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?"

- Aboriginal children are eligible for additional vaccines, such as pneumococcal and meningococcal, due to greater risk of serious harm from vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Aboriginal children are eligible for an annual health check – MBS Item 715.
- The health check includes assessment of immunisation status and provides an opportunity to discuss and provide vaccination.
- Where a GP recommends immunisation in the health check, immunisation can then be carried out as one of 10 nurse/Aboriginal Health Practitioner follow-up services – MBS Item 10987.

Provide immunisation reminders and recalls

- Implement systems for immunisation reminders and recalls in your practice to improve timely vaccination.
- Place alerts on patient records, to prompt providers to discuss vaccination with patients.



Koorn Koorl Danjoo (Coming Together)
John Walley 2018

Provide immunisation catch-ups

- Catch-up immunisations aim to provide optimal protection against disease by completing the recommended vaccination schedule in the shortest but most effective time frame.
- Review children's vaccination histories on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).
- To prepare for and document a catch-up plan, use the Australian Immunisation Handbook and the Western Australian Immunisation Schedule. For advice, contact your local public health unit.
- Catch-up vaccines are provided free of charge to Australian residents aged <20 years.

Participate in cultural awareness education and cultural safety training

To better equip your practice to care for Aboriginal patients, ensure all staff participate in cultural awareness training. The training will also help your practice meet the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and RACGP Accreditation Standards (5th edition) C2.1, C8.1 and QI1.1.

Refer to the NACCHO RACGP Good Practice Tables for other practical activities to improve cultural safety.

Employ an Aboriginal Health Practitioner (AHP) or other Aboriginal staff

- Aboriginal Health Practitioners (AHPs) provide high quality, culturally safe clinical care and support services to Aboriginal people and communities, and can also provide care to non-Aboriginal patients within a practice.
- AHPs who are AHPRA and Medicare registered and have completed immunisation training can provide immunisation services using MBS Item 10988. They can also provide a range of other MBS services. Visit Services Australia for more details.
- Employing other Aboriginal staff (e.g. reception) improves cultural safety and helps to create a culturally welcoming environment.

Complete online training in clinical yarning

- Clinical yarning is a culturally appropriate, patient centred form of communication that creates an opportunity for relaxed conversation about immunisation and opportunistic vaccination.
- Clinical yarning improves outcomes for both patients and practitioners.
- Further information about clinical yarning is available via the clinical yarning e-learning website and the Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet website.

Further information

To find out more about improving immunisation for Aboriginal children in your practice, call Practice Assist on 1800 2 ASSIST (1800 2 277 478 or 08 6278 7900) or email practiceassist@wapha.org.au

