



**HeartKids**



# Immunisation

Information about immunisation and why it is important for people with childhood heart disease to get vaccinated.

## What is immunisation?

Immunisation is the process of receiving a vaccine and becoming immune to a disease as a result.

A vaccine is a type of medicine that trains your body's natural defences (immune system) to fight against a particular disease. Vaccines are given to you by health care professionals.



Immunisation protects you from harmful diseases before you come into contact with them.

In Australia, free vaccines are available for a range of diseases. This includes things like tetanus and whooping cough.



Getting immunised is a safe and simple thing you can do to help keep yourself well and healthy.

## Why is getting immunised important?

Keeping up to date with vaccinations is important for everyone. It protects you from disease. It also protects other people in the community by making it harder for diseases to spread.

When you have a heart condition, you may be more vulnerable to getting sick from an illness or infection. It is important to do the simple things that will help you stay as healthy as you can. Getting immunised is a safe way to protect yourself against serious diseases.

## What do I need to know about immunisations?

If you have a heart condition, it's important to remember:

- **You might need extra protection.** You may need to get additional vaccines so that you have extra protection against disease. This might include making sure you get the flu shot each year. Speak to your doctor about which immunisations you need and when.
- **Making sure your vaccinations are up to date.** The recommended ages for receiving different vaccines vary across different states and health conditions. If you are unsure if your immunisations are up to date, ask your doctor.
- **Checking your vaccinations before you travel.** Sometimes you will need special vaccinations when you travel to different countries. Ask your doctor if you need any extra vaccinations before you go.

This fact sheet was reviewed and updated by HeartKids in March 2021. It was endorsed by our Clinical Advisory Committee at the time of publication. Clinical information might change after this date. The information in this fact sheet is general. It is not a substitute for medical advice from your doctor. Always talk to your doctor about matters that affect your health.

## Where to find more information and support

### Department of Health

 [health.gov.au](https://health.gov.au)

Information about immunisation programs in Australia.

### HeartKids

 [heartkids.org.au](https://heartkids.org.au)

Learn more about CHD and the support HeartKids can offer you.

 1800 432 785

Call the HeartKids Helpline for support, advice and guidance.

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