

Free Meningococcal Vaccines for Young People

Next week, over 1,000 consent cards for the Meningococcal Program will be sent to Year 10, 11 and 12 students across South Gippsland.

South Gippsland Shire Council's Immunisation team will be offering a single dose of the Meningococcal vaccine that contains four strains A, C, W and Y in secondary schools from July until September.

The Meningococcal vaccine is free to young people in Years 10, 11 and 12 of secondary school, as well as young people not in school but of an equivalent age (aged 15 to 19 years of age from 18 April 2017 until 31 December 2017) under the Victorian Government initiative.

Parents are encouraged to read, sign and return their child's consent card to their school as soon as possible, to provide or decline consent.

If a child misses their school immunisation day or does not attend school they can book for the vaccine at a Council public immunisation session or contact their local doctor.

Symptoms of Meningococcal include fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck or sore muscles, sometimes followed by a red or purple rash.

The disease can progress very quickly and can lead to death or permanent disability. Up to 10 percent of infected people die, even if they are treated with the right antibiotics.

South Gippsland Shire Council's Acting Immunisation Team Leader Georgina Kibble stressed the importance of immunising against communicable diseases.

"Council is always working to ensure that everyone is immunised in South Gippsland and welcome any enquiries from parents who think that their children may be overdue or have missed an immunisation.

"We are pleased to hear that over the next four years the Federal Government is funding vaccinations for all children under 20 years old who have missed scheduled vaccines.

"This is a fantastic initiative that will complement our work by ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be immunised, thus protecting themselves and the rest of the community from vaccine-preventable diseases" said Ms Kibble.

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