



# Vaccine Update 453 – Childhood pneumococcal vaccine schedule change

## Childhood pneumococcal vaccine schedule change

As of **1 September 2025**, the childhood pneumococcal vaccine schedule will change under the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

### Key points:

- The NIP schedule has been updated based on advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).
- Pneumococcal vaccine Prevenar 20 will be introduced to replace Prevenar 13 and Pneumovax 23 on the childhood schedule.
- There is no change to the adult pneumococcal vaccines for those aged 50 years and over.
- All remaining Prevenar 13 stock from 1 September are to be used for adult cohorts only.
- The introduction of Prevenar 20 simplifies the vaccine schedule, reduces the number of doses and covers more strains of the disease.
- Children under 5 years, who have:
  - not yet started their pneumococcal schedule should receive 3 doses of Prevenar 20.
  - previously received 1 or 2 doses of Prevenar 13 should receive Prevenar 20 for all subsequent doses to complete the recommended vaccination course (where required).
  - already completed a Prevenar 13 vaccination course who are due for a Pneumovax 23 booster should receive 1 dose of Prevenar 20 instead. Do not delay vaccination. If required, Pneumovax 23 can still be used (while stock is available).

From 27 August, Australian Immunisation Record (AIR) due and overdue rules will be updated to support the childhood pneumococcal vaccine schedule changes.

# Updated resources from the Commonwealth

Please see the below updated resources from the Commonwealth for your reference:

- Pneumococcal vaccine provider advice for health professionals
- Pneumococcal vaccine consumer fact sheet
- Pneumococcal vaccine FAQ

Further advice and resources will be available on the Department of Health and Ageing's website Pneumococcal vaccine from 1 September 2025.

## Ordering and distribution of vaccines

Prevenar 20 vaccine ordering is now open to ensure Immunisation providers have stock in place for 1 September 2025 in line with the fortnightly ordering timelines. As this is a new program, ordering limits will apply to ensure that all sites have vaccine for program start.

### **After 1 September:**

- Prevenar 13 will continue to be available for the adult cohort.
- All remaining doses of Prevenar 13 that you have at your site should be used for eligible adults.
- Government funded Prevenar 20 should only be given to children; it is not funded on the NIP for adults.

### **Safety**

Evidence from clinical trials found that Prevenar 20 is safe in children and has a similar safety profile to Prevenar 13.

The most common side effect at the injection site was pain. The rates of these local side effects were similar between the two vaccines: Prevenar 20 (25%–60%) and Prevenar 13 (27%–57%).

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It is mandatory to **report all adverse events** following immunisation to SAFEVAC (WAVSS), as well as via your health service clinical incident process (e.g. Datix, CIMS, etc.).

## Enhancements to the AIR

From **27 August 2025**, AIR due and overdue rules will be updated to support the childhood pneumococcal vaccine schedule changes.

Prevenar 20 will become a standard vaccine within the AIR, and will:

- contribute towards a child's vaccination status; and
- be considered equivalent with other pneumococcal vaccines within the AIR, i.e., Prevenar 13. This means if a child receives either vaccine brand in any sequence, they will be considered up-to-date for pneumococcal (in line with the AIR due and overdue rules).
- be visible on the AIR and in clinical information software, assisting in identifying individuals who may require catch-up vaccinations
- allow providers to run due and overdue reports from the AIR

All vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). The 'vaccine type' field should be used to record specific details of the vaccine administered, e.g., National Immunisation Program (NIP) or state-funded.

A child's Immunisation History Statement (IHS) will continue to display when they are due for a pneumococcal vaccine and a reminder letter will be sent if they become overdue.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [immunisation.registers@health.gov.au](mailto:immunisation.registers@health.gov.au)

Thank you for your continued commitment to keeping Western Australians protected from vaccine preventable diseases.

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