1 July 2017 National Immunisation Schedule Changes - Fact Sheet

To: Health Professionals and Primary Health Organisations

The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) and PHARMAC work closely together to ensure that our National Immunisation Programme is safe, effective and efficient. The National Immunisation Schedule (the Schedule) is regularly reviewed to provide the best protection for all New Zealanders.


The Ministry’s website also contains the latest immunisation updates that refer to the Schedule changes.

Immunisation Handbook 2017

The Immunisation Handbook 2017 (the Handbook) is now available as a pdf on the Ministry’s website: www.health.govt.nz/publication/immunisation-handbook-2017. The online version is the most up-to-date.

The Handbook has been updated to reflect the vaccine and eligibility changes made to the Schedule by PHARMAC from 1 January 2017 and 1 July 2017. An online version will be available from the Ministry’s website to download for use on tablets or e-readers by mid-late June. Medtech will also include a pdf with their new software release.

Hard copies will be sent out to general practices from mid-late June and extra copies can be ordered from True North via the Ministry’s website when available.

Varicella vaccine added to the Schedule

Children born on or after 1 April 2016 will be eligible for one funded varicella vaccination from 1 July 2017. The varicella vaccine will be offered at 15 months of age alongside other routine vaccinations, which means four injections will be given at this event – Hib, varicella, PCV and MMR (refer to the Schedule for more details).

It is recommended that all four vaccines are given at the same visit as children this age are likely to remember injections and associate them with attendance. Splitting the vaccines and bringing children back for another event may cause more upset than completing the vaccines in one visit.

One dose of varicella vaccine will also be funded for children who have not previously had a dose of varicella vaccine or been infected with varicella, who turn 11 years of age on or after 1 July 2017.

The funding criteria for high-risk patients remains unchanged and these patients are funded for a two-dose varicella vaccine course. Please refer to the Pharmaceutical Schedule for further information.

The Ministry has developed a resource (code HE2519) to support the varicella vaccine discussion with parents, it is available in English and Māori: www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/immunise-against-chickenpox-english-version

For more information about varicella refer to Chapter 21 in the Handbook.
To support the introduction of the varicella vaccine, the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) has produced two videos:

- "Four in a row – Best practice for multiple vaccines" – for vaccinators to observe giving four vaccines at one time: https://vimeo.com/195383691
- “Chickenpox – Disease and vaccine information” – explains chicken pox, and the vaccine used to protect against it, for parents and health professionals: https://vimeo.com/203166344

**Transitioning to the Rotarix vaccine**

Rotarix (RV1) will be replacing RotaTeq (RV5) on the Schedule and there are some important clinical considerations associated with this change:

- Rotarix is given as a two-dose regimen at 6 weeks and 3 months of age.
- **Age limits** for the administration of Rotarix:
  - The first dose must be given BEFORE the infant turns 15 weeks of age (ie, 14 weeks and 6 days old).
  - The second dose must be given BEFORE the infant turns 25 weeks of age (ie, 24 weeks and 6 days old).
- For infants born who have started a RotaTeq course they must have three rotavirus vaccine doses. They can complete with RotaTeq while it is still available (likely to be until mid-late August) or complete with Rotarix. Refer to the Table 17.3 below from the *Handbook* for the recommendations for infants transitioning.
- There are no safety concerns if the course is completed with Rotarix, but the vaccine course must be completed before 25 weeks of age.
- We suggest that providers develop a process to keep track of infants who will be due their third RotaTeq dose after 13 August to ensure they do not miss out on their third rotavirus dose.

Please remind parents and caregivers to always wash their hands thoroughly after changing an infant’s nappies as an infant’s stool can contain rotavirus for a few weeks after they have had the rotavirus vaccine. For more information about rotavirus refer to Chapter 17 in the *Handbook*.

**Transitioning to the Synflorix vaccine**

Synflorix (PCV10) will be replacing Prevenar 13 (PCV13) on the Schedule at ages 6 weeks, 3, 5 and 15 months of age. Synflorix will be distributed once existing stocks of Prevenar 13 have been used up. This is likely to be mid-late August.

Synflorix offers protection against ten pneumococcal serotypes (1, 4, 5, 6B, 7F, 9V, 14, 18C, 19F and 23F). Synflorix elicits cross-reactive antibodies against serotype 19A.

If a child is due for a pneumococcal vaccine and they have previously received Prevenar 13 they can transition to Synflorix for their remaining immunisation schedule without requiring additional doses.

From mid-August, the vaccine Prevenar 13 will only be for high risk patients who meet the funding criteria and will be available on an ‘as needed’ basis. Please refer to the Pharmaceutical Schedule for further information. Once Synflorix stock is distributed, Prevenar 13 should be used for high risk patients only.

For more information about pneumococcal disease refer to Chapter 15 in the *Handbook*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of RV5 doses previously received</th>
<th>Number of RV1 doses required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 RV5</td>
<td>Fully immunised – no RV1 required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 RV5</td>
<td>1 RV1* at least 4 weeks after the 2nd RV5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 RV5</td>
<td>2 RV1* at least 4 weeks between each of the doses</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* All doses of RV1 must be given prior to turning age 25 weeks (ie, the latest is 24 weeks and 6 days).
Other vaccine brand changes
- Measles, mumps and rubella vaccine from MMRII to Priorix.
- Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine from Act-Hib to Hiberix.

Vaccine availability
The varicella vaccine (Varilrix) will be available to order from ProPharma regional stores from 14 June 2017 so that you can start vaccinating on 1 July.

Rotarix, Synflorix, Priorix and Hiberix will be distributed once the existing vaccine brands have been used up, this is likely to be mid-late August.

Vaccine ordering
Changes are being made to the ProPharma online and fax vaccine order forms at www.fundedvaccines.co.nz. The online order process is less susceptible to error, has an audit trail and is faster.

NIR and PMS changes
The National Immunisation Register (NIR), practice management systems (PMS) and Ministry payment systems are being updated for the 1 July Schedule changes. Your PMS vendor will advise you when their software has been updated, what changes they have made and how the upgrade process will be carried out. Please ensure you have the latest version of your PMS, and make sure that all clinical staff have access to and have read the release notes from your PMS provider.

Vaccinator education sessions
Vaccinator education sessions are being offered in all district health boards (DHBs) on the 2017 Schedule and we encourage you to participate in these sessions. For information on when these updates are being held in your area, please contact your local Immunisation Coordinator.

IMAC has developed a video about the Schedule changes - “National Immunisation Schedule – 2017 Changes”: https://vimeo.com/191906155

Updated health education resources
Transitional print runs of Immunise Your Child On Time and Childhood Immunisation were published earlier this year with information about varicella vaccine, but not the rotavirus, pneumococcal and other brand changes. Fully updated versions will be available shortly, suitable for children who will begin immunisation once stocks of the existing vaccine brands have run out in mid-late August.

Immunisation records and certificates in the Well Child Tamariki Ora My Health Book have been updated in a two-stage process; children born from late 2016 will have space to record varicella immunisation at age 15 months, and children born from August 2017 will only have space at 6 weeks and 3 months for their two rotavirus vaccine doses.

Due to the challenge of matching vaccine stocks with printing stocks, it is possible that some children will not have the correct information for their age in their printed resource. Please amend their immunisation record manually or use the loose leaf updated record as appropriate so that parents have the correct information.

Posters, a schedule card including photos of the vaccine boxes, and other resources are also being updated and will be available for order soon from www.healthed.govt.nz (select “Immunisation and vaccinations” and sort by revision date for the latest). Alternatively, they are listed at: www.health.govt.nz/schedule.

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) have also produced resources for health professionals to support the vaccines they supply. These resources are available to order at www.gsk.co.nz or a resource order form can be obtained by emailing NIS@gskresources.co.nz. GSK are supplying general practices with a distraction aid to use at the 15 month immunisation visit.

Cold chain management
All Schedule vaccines must be stored between +2°C to +8°C.

All immunisation providers should ensure that:
- they are familiar with the National Standards for Vaccine Storage and Transportation for Immunisation Providers 2017 which is available from the Ministry’s website at: www.health.govt.nz/coldchain
- their Cold Chain Policy and processes are up to date; and
- they adjust their Cold Chain Policy to reflect how much vaccine stock they will need for their infants, once the transition to Rotarix has occurred.

Please consider your pharmaceutical refrigerator capacity when ordering your vaccine suppliers to ensure that you do not exceed 90 percent of the available storage space.
HPV changes
The primary focus for the HPV programme remains the School Based Immunisation Programme (SBIP) in school year 8, with follow up by Primary Health Care (PHC) for those who choose to attend PHC or do not complete their course through the SBIP. The recall process at age 14 years is invaluable in offering young people the opportunity to complete their HPV course with only two HPV vaccine doses required.

For more information about the HPV vaccine changes refer to Chapter 9 in the Handbook and the Ministry’s website (including the two HPV fact sheets) at: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/immunisation/hpv-immunisation-programme.

There are also videos available on the Ministry’s website for parents and children about the HPV vaccine – these can be found at: www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/immunisation/immunisation-older-children.

Communication and implementation of the Schedule
The Ministry will continue to communicate with health professionals and members of the public through our regular channels including the monthly Immunisation Update, DHB teleconferences, working with IMAC and professional bodies to ensure that providers are aware of these changes.

The Immunisation Team appreciates the role health providers and vaccinators play in improving the health of our communities by immunisation.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Immunisation Team at: immunisation@moh.govt.nz.

Summary of National Immunisation Schedule changes from 1 July 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Scheduled Event</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>New/Replaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rotavirus vaccine (RV1)</td>
<td>Rotarix</td>
<td>6 weeks, 3 months</td>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>Replaces 3-dose regimen of RotaTeq at 6 weeks, 3 months and 5 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 10-valent pneumococcal vaccine (PCV10)</td>
<td>Synflorix</td>
<td>6 weeks, 3 months, 5 months, 15 months</td>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Replaces 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13, Prevenar 13) event at 6 weeks, 3, 5 and 15 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Varicella vaccine* (VV)</td>
<td>Varilrix</td>
<td>15 months</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>New on the Schedule for 15-month-olds born on or after 1 April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)</td>
<td>Priorix</td>
<td>15 months, 4 years</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Replaces MMR-II (note: Priorix is pink in colour and does not contain gelatine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <em>Haemophilus influenzae type b</em> (Hib)</td>
<td>Hiberix</td>
<td>15 months</td>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Replaces Act-Hib (Hiberix was previously used on the Schedule from 2006 to 2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One dose of varicella vaccine will be funded for children who have not previously had a dose of varicella vaccine or been infected with varicella who turns 11 years of age on or after 1 July 2017.