

B Part of It – Website Q&A



B Part of It

About 2017

Why was this age group selected?

South Australia currently has one of the highest rates of meningococcal disease in Australia, with a high proportion of cases occurring in adolescents. Meningococcal bacteria can be carried without causing harm in the nose and throat of around 10 per cent of the population, however this can increase to up to 25 per cent in adolescents and young adults.

Based on their higher disease risk the meningococcal B vaccine is recommended for adolescents aged 15-19 years of age and also babies and young children, particularly those aged less than two years.

This study is examining if the licensed and recommended meningococcal B vaccine reduces the spread of meningococcal bacteria in teenagers.

When will the school visits be happening?

All schools registered with the B Part of It study received their first visit from the immunisation nurses between April and June 2017.

Schools across the state were randomised into two groups (group A and B) to assist with the effective and efficient roll out of the study and to determine whether the MenB vaccine has a herd immunity effect. Group A schools have received visits for a throat swab and two doses of the vaccine in 2017, and will receive a visit for a second throat swab in 2018. Group B schools will have one visit for a throat swab in 2017, and visits for two doses of the vaccine and a throat swab in 2018.

2018 school visits will commence from April 1st.

Is it too late to return my consent form?

The last opportunity to be part of the high school study was 30 June 2017. It is no longer possible to enrol in the B Part of It study for 2018. In 2018 the study is focusing on students who had a throat swab taken in 2017.

Does my child have to be at school to receive his/her vaccination in the high school study?

Yes. To receive either the vaccinations or throat swabs in 2018, students need to be at school for the school visit. If you are unable to attend, or are no longer a continuing year 11 or 12 student in 2018, please contact the study team by sending an email through the enquiries page on this website, or contact the school immunisation provider.

If my child can't be at school on the day of vaccination, can they get it elsewhere?

If your child was enrolled in the study, had received at least one swab in 2017, and was then away from school for future school visits, please contact the school immunisation provider to make arrangements to have the vaccines/swab.

It says the study will be rolled out in stages over 2017 and 2018, how will this affect my child?

The B Part of It study commenced in 2017 and has been designed in two stages. The first wave of school visits rolled out across South Australia in 2017. The study will continue in 2018 and will follow up existing students who participated in the study in 2017. Therefore the duration of participation for each student is approximately 12-15 months since the start of the study in April 2017.

Registered schools were randomised into two groups for the study.

Group A schools have received a throat swab and two doses of the vaccine in 2017, and will receive a second throat swab in 2018. Group B schools have received one throat swab in 2017, and will receive a second throat swab and 2 doses of the vaccine in 2018. All students in the study will have received 2 doses of the vaccine by the end of the study in 2018.

What happens to the students who were in year 12 whose school is in study group B (swab only in 2017 and vaccine in 2018) who have now left school before the vaccine is provided at the school visit.

Year 12 students, whose school is in group B, are still eligible to receive the 2 free doses of meningococcal B vaccine after they have left school. Year 12 (2017) students, who participated in the study, were all sent a letter in November 2017, and an SMS text message in February 2018, to inform them where they can access the vaccine doses from immunisation providers in South Australia. Please contact the study team if you did not receive any communication regarding this, by sending a message via our enquiries page on this website.

Will my school receive vaccinations in 2018?

Registered schools were randomised into two groups (A or B). On the first school visit date, students were informed about when they would be given their vaccinations and were provided with their full meningococcal B vaccination study schedule for 2017 and 2018. Group A schools received their vaccinations in 2017 and only require a throat swab in 2018, which will take place between April and June 2018. Group B school visits will take place from the 1st April 2018 when a swab will be taken and two doses of MenB vaccine provided. Dates for school visits will be confirmed and communicated directly by South Australian schools.

Why aren't all the vaccinations happening at once?

The study process to assess the herd immunity impact of the MenB vaccine requires two groups (one vaccinated initially and one not) to compare the difference in carriage of the meningococcal bacteria between the two groups over time.

Vaccinations will be rolled out across both 2017 and 2018 to work with the availability of immunisation nurses and to fit in with the wider immunisation program at South Australian schools. This scheduling helps ensure all students can receive two doses of the vaccine, to provide protection against Meningococcal disease. The throat swabs from the students who were vaccinated in 2017 will be compared with the throat swabs from the students who are being vaccinated in 2018.

Can my child still have the vaccination if they have the flu or another illness at the time?

If the student has a high fever (more than 38 degrees Celsius) then they should not receive the vaccine until they are well. Students with minor coughs and colds, without a fever, and students receiving antibiotics and recovering from an illness, can receive the vaccine if the immunisation nurses assess them as being well enough on the day.

Do they have to have throat swabs?

Yes, students must have throat swabs to participate in the study. The throat swab is the key component of the study. The swab collects bacteria sitting at the back of the student's throat. The bacteria are identified by laboratory testing and compared across time to assess any changes in the meningococcal bacteria carriage.

Can you explain the school randomisation process and what that means for my child who has consented to be part of the study?

All participating schools have been randomised by a computer into two groups: A and B. All students in both school groups will receive the two free doses of vaccine between 2017 and 2018.

Students attending Group A schools will have received two vaccine doses and a throat swab between 1 April and 30 September 2017 and will receive a second throat swab 12 months later in 2018. Students attending Group B schools will have received a throat swab only between 1 April and 30 September 2017, and will receive two vaccine doses and the second throat swab in 2018. Year 12 students who attend Group B schools will still be able to receive the two free doses of vaccine; they will be contacted and informed where they can attend clinics to receive the vaccine in 2018.

Did I/my child receive the free vaccine on the first immunisation provider visit to the school? I have heard that only half the students received the vaccine in 2017.

All students will receive the two doses of free vaccine during 2017-2018. There are two groups in the study: one group (Group A) which has received two doses of the Bexsero vaccine and a throat swab in 2017. The other group will receive their 2 doses of vaccine (and a throat swab) between 1 April and 30 September 2018.

How do I know if my child has received the vaccine in 2017?

Students and parents were informed of the date of their immunisation provider school visit and which study Group (A or B) their school has been allocated to. The school study group determines whether the student received the two doses of meningococcal B vaccine in 2017, or whether they will receive the vaccine in 2018 instead. Students in Group A received their two vaccine doses in 2017, Group B will receive their two vaccine doses in 2018.

All students received a form to take home, following the first immunisation provider visit, which informed them which group were in and when they will be receiving their swabs and vaccines.

How will I know when the school visits will occur?

The school will communicate with parents, using the routine school communication channels (newsletter/website/email) regarding the upcoming immunisation provider school visit dates.

An SMS text message is also sent out 2 days before the school visit informing you when the immunisation team will be at the school. This will only occur if a mobile phone number has been nominated.

Year 12 students in Group B were sent a letter from the Study team letting them know when, and where, they may receive their vaccines. The letter was posted to households in November 2017 and was followed up by an SMS text message on the 1st February 2018.

Are students who have already had a Men B vaccine participating in the study?

Children who have already had 1 or 2 doses of the study vaccine (Bexsero®) were not able to enroll in the study. Children who have received the MeNZB™ **are** participating in the Study. Between 2004 and 2006 the MeNZB™ vaccine was offered in New Zealand to anyone under 20 years old and routine immunisation for babies and preschoolers continued until June 2008. The vaccine was a short-term measure to reduce risk during an epidemic of meningococcal B in New Zealand.

Are International student's participating in the study?

Yes, international students are participating in the study. Students were able to participate if they were enrolled in a participating South Australian school in years 10, 11 or 12 in 2017 for a minimum of a full school year and if they obtained consent from their parents / legal guardian, if they were less than 18 years old.

If my child/ren has moved schools during the study can they still stay in the study and receive the vaccines and the throat swabs?

Yes if your child/ren has moved schools they can remain in the study. An SMS text message was sent to parents (if they provided a mobile phone number on the consent form) in early January 2018 asking them to respond if their child had changed schools. This information enabled the study team to inform the relevant school immunisation providers. If you do not have a mobile phone number, parents should advise the school immunisation provider with details of their child's change of school, and which group they were in at the previous school.

What happens if students move schools and the new school is a different study randomisation group? For example if a student moves from a Group B school to a Group A school, will he/she miss out on the vaccine in 2018?

Students who move schools will always remain in the randomisation group of the school they were originally enrolled at. For example a student who is randomised to a Group B school and then moves to a Group A school, will remain in Group B for the duration of the study.

The immunisation providers will ensure that the students who move schools either receive/don't receive the two vaccine doses required, depending on the student's original enrolment group.

What do students need to do if they miss their immunisation provider school/ provider clinic visit for vaccine dose/s 1 or 2?

Parent/Guardians of students who miss their immunisation provider vaccine school visit will be sent a letter from their immunisation provider informing the parents that they have missed their vaccine dose. The letter will provide information regarding how/when and where students can access the missed doses.

If parents/guardians are not sure where their children should receive missed vaccine doses they will need to contact their immunisation provider. The student's school will be able to inform you who your child's immunisation provider is for the Men B study, if you do not know.

If I have only received one dose of the vaccine am I protected?

If you have only received one dose of the study vaccine Bexsero® then you are not adequately protected against invasive meningococcal B disease. Two doses are required for protection against meningococcal B disease in adolescents/adults. You will need to contact your immunisation provider to receive the second dose. If you have moved interstate or overseas we recommend that you purchase the Bexsero® vaccine dose 2 privately, so that you have completed the two dose vaccination schedule.

If a student is vaccinated privately with Men B Bexsero® vaccine during the study can they remain in the study?

Yes, students whose parents/guardians chose to purchase the vaccine privately are encouraged to remain in the study and receive the second swab and complete the questionnaire in 2018.

I have heard that the vaccine causes side effects is this true?

Following each vaccination each student is given a leaflet which documents the date and time they received the Bexsero® vaccine and information regarding possible vaccine side effects.

Vaccines are generally safe but like any medication or natural therapy they can have some side effects. These are usually short-lasting and do not require special treatment.

Common reactions to the Bexsero® vaccine include: pain, redness, hardness and swelling at the injection site, fever, generally feeling unwell, nausea, dizziness, headache, painful muscles and joints may also occur. If the reaction seems severe or persists and you are concerned, we recommend that you seek further advice from your doctor, immunisation nurse, or contact the Immunisation Section, SA Health on 1300 232 272.

Rare reactions: As with any medication, very rarely an individual may experience a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine. The nurses who deliver the immunisation program are trained to recognise and manage any immediate severe reactions. If a severe allergic reaction is going to occur it will generally be within the first 15 minutes after receiving a vaccine.

What do I do if I have side effects from the vaccine?

If you have any side effects from the vaccine we recommend that you seek further advice from your doctor, immunisation nurse, or contact the Immunisation Section on 1300 232 272.

What do students do who leave/left school in years 10 / 11 in 2017 who want to receive their throat swab and / or vaccines in 2018?

Students who leave school in years 10 or 11 are still able to continue in the study and receive the second throat swab and the study vaccines in 2018. Students are requested to contact their school study immunisation providers for further information. The vaccines and throat swab need to be completed between 01 April and 30 June 2018

Can students who move interstate/overseas still take part in the study and receive their vaccine/swab?

Individuals who move interstate or overseas are not eligible to continue in the study, unless they return to South Australia. The study is only taking place within South Australia. If a student returns to South Australia before the end of 2018 then they should contact their immunisation provider as they can receive a second throat swab (until 30th June 2018) and the two doses of study vaccine (until 31st December, or the last immunisation provider clinic in 2018).

I completed school in 2017 and received a second throat swab at University Orientation week ('O' week). Can I still receive my vaccines?

Students who received a second throat swab at one of the 'O' week clinics held in each of South Australian Universities, should still visit an immunisation provider to receive their 2 doses of vaccine (if they have not already received them in 2017). Students can visit any of the SA provider clinics (listed on the B Part of It website) to access their free vaccinations.

I was in year 12 in 2017 and wish to receive my 2 free doses of Men B vaccine and / or a second throat swab as an ex-Year 12 student. Where do I go to do this?

Students who were in year 12 in November 2017, and participated in the Study at high school, who wish to receive a second throat swab and/or their two free doses of vaccine (Group B) can locate the list of all the providers from the B Part of It website. The list is under the header tab: '2017 Year 12's'. Click on this tab and scroll down to find the link, 'Locations to receive vaccinations and/or throat swab'.

I did not participate in the Men B study at high school and I received a throat swab at a University O week. Can I receive the free Men B vaccine?

Students who did not participate in the High school study can still participate in the study school leaver project and receive a first throat swab, however they are not eligible to receive the 2 free doses of Men B vaccine.

Some students were sent a letter telling them about where to get Men B vaccine and throat swabs in 2018 - did all students get this letter?

Students who were in year 12 in 2017 and who participated in the high school study were sent this letter in November 2017. These students are called 'School Leavers'. The letter informed School Leavers of the option to receive a second throat swab (Group A students) prior to receiving their two free doses of MenB vaccine (Group B students only). The letter provided a list of provider locations and contact phone numbers in South Australia where the school leavers can access their second swab and/or vaccines. It is advised that students/parents check the website for the updated list of providers. Students need to contact a provider on this list, if they wish to receive a second throat swab and/or organise to have their Men B vaccines.

I am a year 12 school leaver student. Where can I find the list of providers and what do I need to do to have a throat swab/ vaccine?

The list of immunisation provider clinics is on the B Part of It website. To access the list: go to the website front page, click on the tab labelled: "2017 Year 12's" and then scroll down to the link, "Locations to receive vaccinations and/or throat swab".

What do I need to take with me to the School Leaver clinic?

School leavers who are attending a school leaver provider clinic should take their study letter with them (sent November/December 2017) and / or the SMS text message from the study team (sent 01 February 2018). Both the Study letter and the SMS text message contain the students Study ID number. Students should also take a form of ID with their photo on it (old school ID card or their driver's license).