

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

Victorian Local Government Community Immunisation Services

Dated: 24 March 2020.

The following recommendations have been produced by the Department of Health and Human Services to support Councils providing immunisation services to their community.

The current threat of coronavirus (COVID-19) to public health is unprecedented. We therefore must all take steps to minimise the risk of transmission to staff and clients attending community immunisation services. This document recommends procedures, based on current advice, to minimise that risk Councils will have to consider their operational processes based on staffing levels, venues and client numbers.

This situation is changing rapidly, and all information related to COVID-19 is being updated at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Scope

Local councils employ or contract immunisation nurses and other supporting staff to provide vaccination services that include but are not limited to:

Community-based services

Community-based services can include but are not limited to:

- Infant and early childhood immunisation sessions providing the National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines
- Adolescent vaccination for catch-up of NIP vaccines
- Adult vaccination for provision of NIP vaccines
- Provision of additional recommended vaccines.

School-based services

Please note that further advice for school-based immunisation services will be forthcoming further to advice from the Victorian Chief Health Officer and the Department of Education and Training.

At the current time, the Chief Health Officer has advised these services should continue. If recommendations change, councils will be advised accordingly. Details of these changes will be available at:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Recommendations for venues

It is recommended that signage be displayed at the entrances of all community sessions. Such signage should include the following information:

- Due to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Council is taking measures to protect the community. It is vital that their instructions are followed.
- Only one parent/guardian should accompany a child into the session.
- People should not attend the session if they or their child have symptoms of a respiratory infection (such as fever, or a sore throat, or a runny nose, or shortness of breath or a cough) or have returned from overseas in the past 14 days.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitiser provided at the entrance to the reception or waiting area.

Consideration should be given to the translation of all signage and messaging into other key community languages.

Social distancing

- Councils may need to consider moving vaccination services to larger spaced community venues .
- Arrange client seating and queueing for administration so that there is 1.5 metres between clients .
- Limit the vaccine process to one adult with the child being vaccinated (unless there are extenuating circumstances).
- Consider a separate room for clients to wait post vaccination dependant on numbers at each session.
- If numerous clients arrive and there is not enough seating , a staff member should be available to monitor queueing, and maintain the order and flow of clients into the administration area.
- Sit clients 1.5 metres from administration staff desk on check in and 1.5 metres from other clients at the nurse's table.
- Minimise physical contact with client record documents .

Vaccine preparation

- Do not needle or prepare large quantities of vaccine in case of low attendance .
- Provide adequate disinfection - ensure either hand sanitisers or detergent and paper towels for hand washing with running water are available between clients .
- Use alcohol-based disinfectant for cleaning surfaces regularly .
- Disinfectant product must be available at both the administration and clinical area .

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE additional to that normally used as part of your routine immunisation service is not recommended. PPE is only necessary for health care workers seeing patients with symptoms consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19), where there is a much higher risk of transmission. More advice can be found on the department's [coronavirus website](#) and in the guide for health services and GPs located on that site.

Communal toys

- Avoid providing toys that children will share.

Immunisation checklists

- Use a single page pre-immunisation checklist for each client rather than a laminated version.

Longer immunisation sessions

- Consider longer immunisation sessions to implement procedures to protect staff and the community against the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Communication

- Councils should ensure that immunisation webpages, telephone messages and venue signage is update regularly with coronavirus (COVID-19) information to ensure clients are aware of the expectations and changes that council has made to the service.

Staff absenteeism

- Local council staff must not attend an immunisation service if unwell .

- Staff with risk factors for coronavirus (COVID-19) and/or are unwell must not come to work until they have been assessed by a medical practitioner as being clear. This will involve having a medical assessment and a swab test for coronavirus (COVID-19) which must be negative.
- If a member of staff is a health care worker and is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), they must not return to work until they have been assessed by a medical practitioner as fully recovered and have returned a negative coronavirus (COVID-19) virus test
- If there are staff shortages, local council will need to determine if an immunisation session can be undertaken safely.

Cancellation of community immunisation

- Ensure signage is displayed prominently at the venue if services are cancelled
- Provide a website or phone contact for the next available vaccination session
- Councils using an appointment-based service may consider using SMS and social media to notify clients of any changes to service provision.

Further information and resources

For additional resources including translated materials and access to updated information about coronavirus (COVID-19), please go to <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

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