

Diphtheria vaccination for Aboriginal people and travellers

Advice for Aboriginal Medical Services and General Practitioners

Travellers to diphtheria outbreak areas may require vaccination

- Travellers to outbreak-affected areas should consider a booster dose of diphtheria-containing vaccine if they have not had a dose in the last five years, particularly those visiting remote Aboriginal communities.
- Current outbreak affected areas are:
 - any location in the Northern Territory
 - the Kimberley, Goldfields and Pilbara regions in Western Australia
 - the far northwest of South Australia.
- Outbreak areas may change with time and can be found in the section titled *Current status* at: <https://www.cdc.gov.au/diseases/diphtheria>
- NSW Health is funding a dTpa (Boostrix) dose for Aboriginal people going to an outbreak area who have not had a dose of diphtheria vaccine in the last 5 years. See table 1 for full details.
- A Boostrix dose is also funded for all Aboriginal people in NSW who have not a dose of diphtheria vaccine in the last 10 years, irrespective of travel plans.
- Boostrix for non-Indigenous travellers to affected areas is not funded by NSW Health.
- Individuals going to an outbreak area for work who have not had a diphtheria vaccine in the last 5 years should make arrangements with their employer.
- Clinicians should refer to the *NSW Health Clinician Alert – Diphtheria* for further information regarding diphtheria investigation and management at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Documents/diphtheria-clinician-alert-apr26.pdf>
- For the latest report on the outbreak epidemiology follow the links from: <https://www.cdc.gov.au/resources/collections/diphtheria-australia-epidemiological-updates>

Ensure all Aboriginal patients are up-to-date with diphtheria vaccinations

- Check the diphtheria vaccination status of all Aboriginal patients.
- Offer vaccination to anyone who is eligible under the NIP or this NSW-funded outbreak program.
- The following people remain eligible for free dTpa vaccination under the NIP:
 - Children as part of the primary childhood vaccination schedule
 - Adolescents aged 12–13 years through the NSW school-based vaccination program
 - Catch-up vaccination funded to 19 years of age.
 - Pregnant women, who are eligible to receive a funded dose of dTpa between 20 and 32 weeks' gestation in every pregnancy.

Boostrix ordering

- GPs can order Boostrix for Aboriginal people from the NSW Vaccine Centre using a new Boostrix vaccine special order form.
- Aboriginal Medical Services can place a routine order using the routine order form.

Please contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055 for any queries.

Table 1 Diphtheria-containing vaccination for Aboriginal people

Vaccination status	Action	NIP/State-funded vaccine
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under 20 years who are unvaccinated or require catch up vaccination	Vaccinate in accordance with the NSW Immunisation Schedule/Australian Immunisation Handbook	NIP funded DTPa/dTpa containing vaccines
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 years and over who have not previously received 3 doses	Offer further doses to complete a primary course (3 doses) with a minimum interval of 4 weeks between doses	State-funded dTpa (Boostrix)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 years and over who have previously received at least 3 doses with the most recent dose within the last 10 years	No action	n/a
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 years and over who have previously received at least 3 doses with the most recent dose more than 10 years ago	Offer a booster dose of a diphtheria-containing vaccine	State-funded Boostrix
NEW: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people going to and Australian diphtheria outbreak-affected area classified as higher risk by the Centre for Disease Control, who have previously received at least 3 doses with the most recent dose more than 5 years ago	Offer a booster dose of a diphtheria-containing vaccine	State-funded Boostrix