



## Meningococcal B Vaccine Herd Immunity Study



“B Part of It” is a study taking place within South Australia to find out more about how Meningococcal B disease is spread and the benefits of vaccinating against it. The study will show if the Meningococcal B vaccine (Bexsero) can protect teenagers by reducing the spread of the bacteria from person to person, as well as providing protection for the community (herd immunity).

The study will be taking place in South Australian schools throughout 2017 and 2018 alongside the existing school immunisation program. Almost all South Australian schools in regional and metropolitan areas are taking part in the study. All South Australian school students enrolled in Years 10, 11 and 12 in 2017 at participating schools are eligible to participate in the study. BOTH the student and their parents need to provide consent (unless the student is 18 years or older then they can self-consent). Students who have consented must be present at the first school visit for the throat swab to be eligible for the study.

Schools are being randomised into two study groups. Group A school students will receive the 2 dose course of Men B vaccine (Bexsero) and a throat swab in 2017 and a follow up throat swab a year later. Group B school students will receive a baseline throat swab in 2017 and then a year later will receive 2 doses of vaccine and a second swab. Year 12 students in Group B schools will be followed up by the study team after they have left school and invited to receive their vaccines by designated providers in SA.

A study information pack for parents, which includes consent forms, has been sent to all the immunisation providers who are currently distributing to participating schools. The Men B study is being delivered by the School Immunisation Program (SIP) providers. The vaccine will not be available to General Practice (unless they are a SIP provider).

Students enrolled in the study can only receive free Men B (Bexsero) vaccine if it is administered by a SIP provider. Parents will need to purchase the vaccine via prescription if they want their child vaccinated by a non-SIP provider. A student who receives a dose of Men B (Bexsero) vaccine on the private market after the study has commenced, needs to inform their provider, so this can be documented - they will not be excluded as they can still have the throat swabs.

Students who have received the Men B (Bexsero) vaccine prior to the study will NOT be eligible to participate. A student however who has received the New Zealand Meningococcal B vaccine (MeNZB™) may be included in the study. This is because the MeNZB vaccine was introduced into New Zealand (2004-2008) as a short-term measure to reduce risk during a meningococcal B epidemic, it was not expected to provide life-long protection.

If a student is needle phobic or should miss the second dose of vaccine at school, parents should contact the SIP provider and discuss alternative arrangements.

Parents who are seeking more information about the study can contact:

- the SIP provider who attends their child's school
- <http://www.bpartofit.com.au/>
- the SA Health Immunisation Section on 1300 232 272
- Angela Newbound, SA PHN Immunisation Hub Coordinator on 08 8219 5900