

Adverse Events Following Immunisation

What is an Adverse Event Following Immunisation?

An adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) is an unwanted or unexpected event following immunisation that may be related to the vaccine itself, its handling or administration, or may occur by coincidence, that is, regardless of the vaccine.

There is no such thing as a perfect vaccine which protects everyone who receives it and is entirely safe for everyone. Vaccines may produce some unwanted side effects which are mostly mild and clear up quickly.

Common side effects after immunisation

Mild events, such as fever, pain or redness at the site of injection, commonly occur after vaccination and should be anticipated.

For more information on what's normal after vaccination, visit the [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance vaccine safety website](#).

You should see a doctor if:

- fever, particularly in babies, is not relieved by paracetamol or ibuprofen;
- baby has unusual screaming episodes with vomiting or blood in the bowel motions; and/or
- symptoms are getting worse or not improving.

Uncommon and Rare AEFI

A very small number of people may have more serious reaction. These may include anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction), seizures and severe rash.

It is not possible to identify every individual who might have a mild or serious reaction to a vaccine, although there are a few contraindications to some vaccines. By following recommendations on who and who should not receive particular vaccines, health practitioners minimise the risk of their patient's having serious adverse effects from vaccination. More information can be found in [The Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)

Surveillance of AEFI provides ongoing monitoring to detect population specific, rare or late onset adverse events not detected in in pre-licensure clinical trials.

In the ACT, suspected AEFIs should be reported to the Immunisation Unit, Health Protection Service using the [Immunisation Adverse Event Reporting Form](#), or by contacting the Health Protection Service, Immunisation Unit on (02) 5124 9800.



There is no time limit for reporting an AEFI. You do not need to be sure whether a vaccine caused the event. The Immunisation unit reports all notifications to the Australian Adverse Drug Reaction System (ADRS) at the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Australia-wide annual reports on AEFI surveillance are published by the Australian Government.

Need more information?

For more information about adverse events following immunisation, contact your doctor or call the Health Protection Service, Immunisation Information Line during business hours on (02) 5124 9800.

Acknowledgements:

1. Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#), Australian Government Department of Health, Canberra, 2018.
<https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>
2. Vaccine Safety. National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance.
<http://www.ncirs.org.au/public/vaccine-safety>
3. World Health Organization, Global Vaccine Safety
https://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/initiative/detection/AEFI/en/

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