



WAVSS: Western Australian Vaccine Safety Surveillance

A Factsheet for Health Providers

What is WAVSS?

WAVSS is a Western Australian Department of Health initiative to monitor vaccine safety. WAVSS will facilitate reporting of suspected adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs) and access to appropriate clinical assessment. Although significant AEFIs are rare, WAVSS was established to help health providers and the public report potential AEFIs and to ensure appropriate clinical follow-up of individuals who have experienced a significant AEFI, where required.

What will WAVSS provide?

- Clinical support to patients and immunisation providers
- Information to immunisation providers about AEFI in their patients
- Specialised immunisation clinics for individuals with a history of a significant AEFI
- Maximize immunisation coverage and therefore improve the control of vaccine-preventable diseases
- Improve knowledge of AEFI by systematic surveillance
- Improve the level of reporting of AEFI's to the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) Advisory Committee on the Safety of Medicines (ACSOM). All AEFIs will be reported to ACSOM by WAVSS staff.

What is an AEFI?

The international definition of an AEFI is “an unwanted or unexpected event following the administration of a vaccine(s)”. AEFI may be caused by a vaccine(s) or may occur by coincidence (i.e. it would have occurred regardless of vaccination). AEFIs also include conditions that may occur following the incorrect handling and/or administration of a vaccine(s).

Who may report an AEFI in WA?

- Health professionals involved in the care of a vaccinated person who experiences an AEFI. Medical Practitioners in WA have a statutory requirement to notify AEFIs to the WA Department of Health as specified in Regulation 4 of the Health (*Notification of Adverse Event After Immunisation*) Regulations 1995.
- Following any necessary medical assessment or treatment, members of the public can use the new system to report adverse reactions to immunisation that they or a child/family member may have experienced.

It is far better for an AEFI to be reported by more than one person than not at all.

How do I report an AEFI in WA?

Please report an AEFI using one of the methods below:

- Online: www.wavss.health.wa.gov.au (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Telephone: (08) 9321 1312 (between 8.30am-4.30pm)
- Complete a **WAVSS reporting form** and return by fax, post or email:
 - Fax: (08) 9426 9408 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
 - Post: Central Immunisation Clinic, PO Box 8172, Perth Business Centre, WA 6849
 - Email: wavss@health.wa.gov.au

Should all AEFIs be reported?

- Any significant event following immunisation should be reported.
- Any vaccine reaction which requires assessment by a doctor or nurse, or which has affected a family's confidence in future immunisation should be reported.
- You do not need to report **common minor reactions**.

How will the new clinical feedback system work?

Timely feedback to patients and immunisation service providers who report significant AEFI is an important part of this service. Doctors and nurses who report significant AEFI will receive feedback (by phone, email or letter) to assist in the care of these patients and to assist in deciding how to clinically manage future immunisation.

Can a patient be referred to a specialist immunisation clinic after experiencing AEFI?

Although there are some adverse events which contraindicate further vaccine doses, for many others revaccination is possible. Specialised clinical services are available for individuals following significant AEFI where further vaccinations can be discussed or administered under supervision.

WAVSS will offer individualised assessment on the suspected adverse event and outline options regarding future vaccinations. In some cases, it may be recommended that subsequent vaccinations be administered under medical supervision. Initial assessments will be carried out at the Central Immunisation Clinic, Rheola Street, West Perth.

How will AEFIs be reported to the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Medicines (ACSOM)?

Medical practitioners in WA have a statutory requirement to notify events after immunisation to the WA Department of Health as specified in Regulation 4 of the Health (*Notification of Adverse Event After Immunisation*) Regulations 1995. All AEFIs will be reported to ACSOM by WAVSS staff.

Why is it important to collect information about AEFI?

The public health aim for WAVSS is the early detection, and appropriate and quick response to AEFI, to lessen the negative impact upon the health of individuals and the immunisation program. WAVSS will enable careful monitoring of adverse events following immunisation in WA, individualised support to immunisation providers and clinical assistance for families affected by an AEFI.

The clinical follow-up provided by WAVSS will increase the confidence of patients and their immunisation providers, to continue the immunisation schedule even if they have experienced an AEFI.