



Vaccine Update 505 - Diphtheria outbreak response: expanded access to dTpa boosters and Public Health Update Inoculate Accolade Award Nominations

16/09/2026

Diphtheria outbreak response: expanded access to dTpa boosters

There have now been 241 cases of diphtheria reported as part of the outbreak in WA, with the majority occurring among Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields and Midwest regions.

Two recent cases identified in the Perth metropolitan area, including a case of severe respiratory diphtheria, reinforce the importance of vaccination for all eligible individuals across WA. Vaccination remains the most effective protection against severe illness and complications due to diphtheria.

Booster doses are recommended to optimise protection in eligible groups who have not received a diphtheria-containing vaccine in the past 5 years and who are not currently due a dose under the National Immunisation Program (NIP):

- all Aboriginal people residing in WA
- all people residing in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields or Midwest regions
- people with regular face-to-face contact with Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields or Midwest (e.g. patient-facing healthcare or frontline workers who work, but may not reside, in these regions).

As part of the response to the diphtheria outbreak, the WA Department of Health has expanded vaccine ordering arrangements for Boostrix (dTpa) vaccines to general practices

across WA. All immunisation providers are encouraged to review vaccine stock levels and ensure sufficient supply for eligible individuals seeking vaccination.

The Department of Health encourages all immunisation providers to take steps to ensure their patients are protected by:

- ensuring all children and adolescents are up to date with scheduled diphtheria-containing vaccines under the NIP, including school-based programs, via proactive review at healthcare encounters
- offering dTpa vaccine boosters to all Aboriginal people in WA, and patient-facing healthcare workers in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields and Midwest, who have not received a diphtheria-containing vaccine in the past 5 years
- supporting access to dTpa vaccine boosters for other eligible individuals who have not received a diphtheria-containing vaccine in the past 5 years, who may request vaccination at healthcare encounters.

Please ensure all vaccinations are recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

For more information, see the [diphtheria alert for WA](#) page or contact the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre at PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au.

Public Health Update Inoculate Accolade Award Nominations

The annual WA Department of Health Public Health Update Inoculate Accolade awards honour and recognise outstanding service in the immunisation field.

[Nominations](#) for the Inoculate Accolade awards are now open to both WA Health staff and non-WA Health staff. Nominations will be open until **Friday 25 September**.

Award categories and eligible nominees:

There are 2 award categories: Individual and team. These awards are available to staff working within WA in the field of immunisation, in both the government and non-government sectors.

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NOTE: While non-WA Health staff are eligible to receive the awards, the Public Health Update event remains open to WA Health staff via invitation only.

Award finalists will be notified via email and invited to receive the recognition in person.

This award will be presented during the CDCD Public Health Update - Immunisation Day Thursday 5 November 2026.

Nomination information:

Please provide an outline of no more than 250 words of the nominee's activities and the positive impact on the service or community. Nominations need to have specific example(s) and outcome(s).

Nominations can include but are not limited to the below criteria:

- Implementation of policies and or programs that has had an impact on immunisation coverage or awareness
- Health promotion activities relating to immunisation/vaccine preventable diseases
- Research about immunisation e.g., identification of gaps
- Application and evaluation of research results to improving the health of a population group

If you have any queries, please email immunisation.education@health.wa.gov.au

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