



2023 INFLUENZA VACCINATION

PROGRAM ADVICE FOR VACCINATION PROVIDERS

Key points

- Annual influenza vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and its complications and is recommended for all people aged 6 months and over.
- Seasonal influenza activity is expected to continue in 2023 following a resurgence of influenza in 2022.
- The National Immunisation Program (NIP) provides influenza vaccines for free for people most at risk.
- Identify your eligible patients. Consider active initiatives to improve vaccine uptake in at-risk cohorts including children under 5, pregnant women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- A consistent recommendation from a healthcare professional plays an important role in improving vaccination uptake.
- Influenza vaccines can be co-administered (given on the same day) as any COVID-19 vaccine.
- It is mandatory to record all influenza vaccinations given on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Vaccination timing

The timing of vaccination should aim to achieve the highest level of protection during the peak of the influenza season, usually from June to September in most parts of Australia.

The highest level of protection occurs in the first 3 to 4 months after vaccination. Vaccination from mid-April onwards is likely to result in peak immunity during the influenza season. However, it's never too late to vaccinate as influenza can spread all year round.

Vaccination should continue to be offered as long as influenza virus are circulating and a valid vaccine is available.

Please take note of the special needs of:

- **Pregnant women (who should receive the vaccine at any stage during pregnancy)**
- **People travelling to a destination where influenza is circulating (year-round in the tropics)**
- **Young children aged 6 months to less than 9 years who should have 2 doses of influenza vaccine (given at least 4 weeks apart) in the first year they receive the vaccine.**

If a person had a 2022 influenza vaccine in late 2022 or early 2023, they are still recommended to receive a 2023 vaccine when available.



Children 6 months to less than 5 years

Influenza vaccine is recommended and funded under the NIP for all children aged 6 months to less than 5 years.

Children aged 6 months to less than 5 years are at higher risk of complications from influenza. Even healthy children can become seriously ill from influenza.

Two doses are recommended and funded in the first year of vaccination (at least 4 weeks apart). While 2 doses in the first year are recommended, 1 dose will provide some protection and is preferable to receiving no doses. One annual dose of influenza vaccine is required in following years even if only 1 dose was given in the first year.

Parents and carers should be advised that the likelihood of fever after vaccination may increase modestly when a child receives both the influenza vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine (Prevenar 13®) at the same time.

Across Australia in 2022, only 32.4% of children aged under 5 years of age were recorded as receiving at least 1 dose of influenza vaccine on the AIR. It is important to increase uptake in 2023 to protect all young children.

Medically at-risk

Influenza vaccine is recommended and funded under the NIP for all people aged 6 months and over with certain medical conditions. Vaccination is particularly important for people with underlying medical conditions as they are at high risk of complications from influenza. Refer to the eligibility table for medical conditions covered under the NIP.

People aged 65 years and over

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded under the NIP for all people aged 65 years and over.

Vaccination is particularly important for people in this age group as they are at high risk of complications from influenza.

Fluad® Quad (an adjuvanted influenza vaccine) is funded under the NIP and is preferentially recommended over standard quadrivalent vaccine (QIV) for adults aged 65 years and over.

The adjuvant boosts the immune system's response to the vaccine and provides better protection for people aged 65 years and over.

However, if the adjuvanted QIV is not available, vaccination with another QIV is preferable to no vaccination. In this case, an adjuvanted QIV does not subsequently need to be provided.

Clinical trials show a higher rate of injection site reactions in adults aged ≥ 65 years after receiving the adjuvanted influenza vaccine, compared with standard influenza vaccines.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded under the NIP for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from 6 months of age and over.

The disease burden from influenza is significantly higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than non-Indigenous Australians in all age groups.

Take every opportunity to offer influenza vaccination to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Pregnant women

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded under the NIP for pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy. Influenza vaccination should be offered to all pregnant woman as part of routine, comprehensive, antenatal care.

Vaccination in pregnancy protects both pregnant women and their babies from influenza and its complications. While it is best given before the influenza season, it can be given at any time during the season and it will still provide some protection to the mother and to the baby for the first few months of life.

For those who received an influenza vaccine in 2022, it is recommended to also give the 2023 vaccine if available before the end of pregnancy. For women who receive an influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant, revaccinate during pregnancy to protect the unborn infant.

The influenza vaccine can be safely given at the same time as the pertussis vaccine (between 20 and 32 weeks) and/or COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy.

Influenza vaccine safety

Contraindications: The only contraindications to influenza vaccines are:

- Anaphylaxis following a previous dose of any influenza vaccine
- Anaphylaxis following any vaccine component (excluding eggs).

Egg allergy: Is not a contraindication to influenza vaccines. If there is significant parental or health professional concern, the vaccine may be administered in a primary care setting with a longer waiting period of 30 minutes.

Latex allergy: All influenza vaccines available under the NIP in 2023 are latex free and people with a latex allergy can safely be vaccinated.

Adverse events following vaccination: Notification of all adverse events following immunisation at any age should be made through the usual reporting mechanisms in your state or territory.

Keep up to date with current information

- Subscribe to NIP updates email distribution list—search NIP updates on [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)
- The advice in this factsheet should be read in conjunction with:
 - ATAGI clinical statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines in 2023—available at [health.gov.au/influenza-resources](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-resources)
 - The Australian Immunisation Handbook available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au
 - 2023 NIP influenza resources—available at [health.gov.au/influenza-resources](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-resources)
 - 2023 NIP influenza website—available at [health.gov.au/flu](https://www.health.gov.au/flu)

Eligibility for National Immunisation Program vaccines

CHECK if your patient is eligible to receive a free influenza vaccine.

2023 NIP-funded eligibility

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant women (at any stage of pregnancy) • People aged 6 months and over with certain medical conditions (refer to medical risk factors below) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 6 months to less than 5 years • People aged 65 years and older • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over |
|---|--|

Medical conditions

Cardiac Disease	Chronic Respiratory Conditions	Chronic Neurological Conditions	Other At-Risk Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyanotic congenital heart disease • Congestive heart failure • Coronary artery disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe asthma • Cystic fibrosis • Bronchiectasis • Suppurative lung disease • Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease • Chronic emphysema 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hereditary and degenerative CNS diseases • Seizure disorders • Spinal cord injuries • Neuromuscular disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunocompromising conditions due to diseases or treatment, asplenia or splenic dysfunction, HIV infection • Diabetes and other chronic metabolic disorders • Chronic renal failure • Haemoglobinopathies • Long term aspirin therapy in children aged 6 months to 10 years

National Immunisation Program influenza vaccines by age group

CHECK you have the correct vaccine for the person's age. Age range is identified on the syringe.

2023 NIP-funded influenza vaccines

Age group	Vaxigrip Tetra® 0.50 mL (Sanofi)	Fluarix® Tetra 0.50 mL (GSK)	Afluria® Quad 0.50 mL (Seqirus)	Fluad® Quad 0.50 mL (Seqirus)
6 months to <5 years	✓	✓	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE
5 to <65 years	✓	✓	✓	DO NOT USE
65 years and over	NOT FUNDED	NOT FUNDED	NOT FUNDED	✓

Note: Other influenza vaccines (not NIP-funded) are available in the Australian market in 2023. For further information, refer to the ATAGI clinical statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines in 2023 ([available at health.gov.au/influenza-resources](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-resources)).

REPORT all influenza vaccinations to the Australian Immunisation Register.

State and territory health department contact information:

ACT 02 5124 9800	SA 1300 232 272
NSW 1300 066 055	TAS 1800 671 738
NT 08 8922 8044	VIC immunisation@health.vic.gov.au
WA 08 9321 1312	QLD Contact your local Public Health Unit



A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Initiative

All information in this fact sheet is correct as of February 2023.