



Program advice for health professionals

Key points and updates for 2024

- The National Immunisation Program (NIP) provides free influenza vaccines to people most at risk of complications from influenza.
- Influenza vaccines can be administered on the same day as any COVID-19 vaccine.
- For adults aged 65 years and over, the adjuvanted (Fluad® Quad) is preferentially recommended over standard influenza vaccines.
- Flucelvax Quad®, a cell-based vaccine, is now funded for people aged 5 - 64 years with medical conditions, putting them at increased risk of complications from influenza. There is no preferential recommendation between Flucelvax Quad® and standard dose of egg-based influenza vaccines.

Vaccine strains

For the 2024 season, Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (QIVs) are the only vaccines available in Australia.

Egg-based influenza vaccines	Cell-based influenza vaccines
A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus	A/Wisconsin/67/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
A/Thailand/8/2022 (H3N2)-like virus	A/Massachusetts/18/2022 (H3N2)-like virus
B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus	B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus
B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus	B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus

Cell based vaccines

Flucelvax Quad® a cell-based vaccine, is NIP funded for people aged 5 - 64 years with medical conditions, increasing their risk of complications from influenza. There is no preferential recommendation between Flucelvax Quad® and standard dose of egg-based influenza vaccines.

Vaccination timing

Annual influenza vaccination is recommended from April onwards for protection during the peak season. This is typically June to September in most parts of Australia.

Vaccination should continue as long as influenza viruses are circulating, and a valid vaccine is available.

Special considerations include:

- Young children aged 6 months to less than 9 years. Children should receive 2 doses of influenza vaccine given at least 4 weeks apart in the first year they receive the vaccine.
- Pregnant women are recommended to receive the vaccine at any stage during pregnancy.
- People travelling to destinations where influenza is circulating. This can be year-round in the tropics.

For patients who received a 2023 influenza vaccine in late 2023 or early 2024, it is still recommended they receive a 2024 vaccine when they become available.

Children aged 6 months to less than 5 years

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded under the NIP for all children aged 6 months to less than 5 years. This is due to their higher risk of complications from influenza.

Even healthy children can become seriously ill, possibly requiring hospitalisation.

Two doses are recommended and funded in the first year of vaccination, given at least 4 weeks apart. While 2 doses are recommended, receiving 1 dose provides some protection which is preferable to receiving none. Subsequent years requires an annual dose, even if only 1 dose was given in the first year.

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

Pregnant women

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded for any stage of pregnancy and is part of routine antenatal care. This protects pregnant women and their babies from influenza and its complications.

While its best to give the vaccine before the influenza season, it can be given at any time, providing protection for both the mother and baby for the first few months of life.

For women who received an influenza vaccine in 2023, it is recommended to also give the 2024 vaccine if available before the end of pregnancy. Women who received an influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant should be revaccinated during pregnancy to protect the unborn infant.

It is safe to administer the influenza vaccine at the same time as the pertussis vaccine (between 20 and 32 weeks), COVID-19 vaccine, or other vaccines indicated during pregnancy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded under the NIP for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over. This is because the disease burden from influenza is significantly higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than non-Indigenous Australians.

It is important to take every opportunity to offer influenza vaccination to your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

People aged 65 year and over

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded under the NIP for all people aged 65 years and over. This is due to their higher risk of complications from influenza.

Fluad® Quad, an adjuvanted influenza vaccine, is funded under the NIP and is preferentially recommended over standard quadrivalent vaccines (QIV) for adults aged 65 years and over. The adjuvant boosts the immune system's response to the vaccine, providing better protection. If the adjuvanted QIV is not available, vaccination with another QIV is preferable to no vaccination. In such cases, a subsequent adjuvanted QIV does not need to be provided. Clinical trials indicate a higher rate of injection site reactions in adults aged ≥65 years after receiving the adjuvanted influenza vaccine, compared to standard influenza vaccines.

Medically at-risk

Influenza vaccination is recommended and funded under the NIP for all people aged 6 months and over with:

- Cardiac disease
- Chronic respiratory condition
- Immunocompromising condition
- Haematological disorder
- Chronic metabolic disorder
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic neurological condition
- Long-term aspirin therapy in children aged 5 to 10 years

Eligibility for the National Immunisation Program vaccines

Check if your patient is eligible to receive a free influenza vaccine using the following tables:

2024 NIP-funded eligibility

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children aged 6 months to less than 5 years Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy First Nations people aged 6 months and over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People aged 65 years and over People aged 6 months and over with certain medical conditions. Refer to medical conditions below.
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Medical Conditions

Category	Example medical conditions
Cardiac disease	Congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease
Chronic respiratory condition	Suppurative lung disease, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic emphysema, severe asthma (requiring frequent medical consultations or the use of multiple medicines)
Immunocompromising condition	HIV infection, malignancy, immunocompromise due to disease or treatment, asplenia or splenic dysfunction, solid organ transplant, haematopoietic stem cell transplant, CAR T-cell therapy
Haematological disorder	Haemoglobinopathies
Chronic metabolic disorder	Type 1 or 2 diabetes, amino acid disorders, carbohydrate disorders, cholesterol biosynthesis disorders, fatty acid oxidation defects, lactic acidosis, mitochondrial disorders, organic acid disorders, urea cycle disorders, vitamin/cofactor disorders, porphyria
Chronic kidney disease	Chronic kidney disease stage 4 or 5
Chronic neurological condition	Hereditary and degenerative CNS diseases, seizure disorders, spinal cord injuries, neuromuscular disorders, conditions which increase respiratory infection risk
Long-term aspirin therapy in children aged 5 to 10 years	These children are at increased risk of Reye's syndrome following influenza infection

National Immunisation Program influenza vaccines prescription by age group

Check you have the correct vaccine for your patient's age.

2024 NIP-funded eligibility

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

Note: Other influenza vaccines that are not NIP-funded are available in the Australian market in 2024. For further information, refer to the ATAGI clinical statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines in 2024 available at health.gov.au/influenza-resources and the Australian Immunisation Handbook – [Influenza \(Flu\)](#).

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

Latex allergy

All influenza vaccines available under the NIP in 2024 are latex free and people with a latex allergy can be safely vaccinated.

Egg allergy

Allergy to eggs is not a contraindication to egg based influenza vaccines. However, in the case of significant concerns, the vaccine may be administered in a primary care setting with a longer waiting period of 30 minutes.

Adverse events following vaccination

You must notify of all adverse events following immunisation through the usual reporting mechanisms in your state or territory.

Disposal of vaccines

Some influenza vaccine brands expired in December 2023 and others will expire in February 2024. Dispose of vaccines in accordance with your local level protocols.

Australian Immunisation Register

You must report all influenza vaccinations, both NIP and privately purchased, to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Keep up to date with current information

- Subscribe to the NIP updates email distribution list. Search 'NIP updates' on [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)
- You should read the advice in this factsheet in conjunction with:
 - The ATAGI clinical statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines in 2024 available at [health.gov.au/influenza-resources](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-resources)
 - The Australian Immunisation Handbook available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au
 - 2024 NIP influenza website available at [health.gov.au/flu](https://www.health.gov.au/flu)
 - 2024 NIP influenza resources available at [health.gov.au/influenza-resources](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-resources)

State and territory health department contact numbers:

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

