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STATEMENT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINES IN 2020

It is important to read this statement in conjunction with The Australian Immunisation Handbook available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au.

## Overview of key points and updates for 2020

* Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and its complications.
* Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all people ≥6 months of age.
* All vaccines available in 2020 are quadrivalent influenza vaccines (QIVs).
* All children aged 6 months to less than 5 years are now eligible to receive free annual influenza vaccines under the National Immunisation Program (NIP).
* The dose of influenza vaccines for all ages is 0.5mL. The 0.25mL dose for young children is no longer available.
* For adults aged ≥65 years the adjuvanted QIV, Fluad® Quad, is preferentially recommended over standard QIVs.

## Table 1. Seasonal influenza vaccines registered and available for use in Australia in 2020, by age

| **Registered** **Vaccine****age group** | **FluQuadri**0.50 mL(Sanofi) | **Vaxigrip Tetra**0.50 mL(Sanofi) | **Fluarix Tetra**0.50 mL(GSK) | **Afluria Quad**0.50 mL(Seqirus) | **Influvac Tetra**0.50 mL(Mylan) | **Fluad Quad**0.50 mL(Seqirus) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6 to 35 months (<3 years) | **🗸** | **✓** | **🗸\*** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| ≥3 to <5 years | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸\*** | **x** | **🗸** | **x** |
| ≥5 to <65 years | **🗸\*** | **🗸\*** | **🗸\*** | **🗸\*** | **🗸** | **x** |
| ≥65 years | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** | **✓†** |

Ticks indicate age at which a vaccine is registered and available. Shaded boxes represent funding under the NIP.

\* Funding only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pregnant women and people who have certain medical conditions.

**†** Adjuvanted QIV preferred over standard QIVs.

## Influenza virus strains included in the 2020 southern hemisphere seasonal influenza vaccines:

* A (H1N1): an A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
* A (H3N2): an A/South Australia/34/2019 (H3N2)-like virus;
* B: a B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) virus;
* B: a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus.

### Highlights for 2020 influenza vaccine formulations

* Vaxigrip Tetra® is a QIV, newly registered for use in adults and children from 6 months of age.
* Fluad® Quad is an adjuvanted QIV, newly registered for use in adults ≥65 years of age.
* FluQuadri® is a QIV, previously registered for adults and children from 3 years of age. The age indication for this vaccine has now been extended to include children from 6 months of age. The FluQuadri Junior formulation is no longer available.
* Influvac Tetra® is a QIV, previously registered for adults from 18 years of age. The age indication for this vaccine has now been extended to include children from 3 years of age.

### Timing of vaccination

* Annual vaccination should occur before the onset of each influenza season. The period of peak influenza circulation is typically June to September in most parts of Australia.
* While protection is generally expected to last for the whole season, optimal protection against influenza occurs within the first 3 to 4 months following vaccination.
* Vaccination should continue to be offered as long as influenza viruses are circulating and a valid vaccine (before expiration date) is available. Some vaccine brands now have an expiry date of February 2021.
* Revaccination later in the same year is not routinely recommended, but may benefit some individuals due to personal circumstances, such as travel or pregnancy.

### Influenza vaccination for pregnant women

* Influenza vaccine is recommended in every pregnancy and at any stage of pregnancy.
* Influenza vaccine can safely be given at the same time as pertussis vaccine.
* For women who received an influenza vaccine in 2019, revaccinate if the 2020 influenza vaccine becomes available before the end of pregnancy.
* For women who receive an influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant, revaccinate during pregnancy to protect the unborn infant.

### Eligibility for influenza vaccines funded by the National Immunisation Program (NIP)

* Annual influenza vaccination is recommended and NIP-funded for all children 6 months to <5 years and all adults ≥65 years. It is also recommended for all people 5 to <65 years of age, but only NIP-funded in specific populations in this age group due to their increased risk of complications from influenza. These populations include:
* *All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;*
* *People who have certain medical conditions which increase the risk of influenza disease complications (refer to Table 2);*
* *Pregnant women (during any stage of pregnancy).*

## Table 2. Medical conditions associated with an increased risk of influenza disease complications and for which individuals are eligible for free vaccination under the NIP\*

| Category | Vaccination strongly recommended for individuals with the following conditions |
| --- | --- |
| **Cardiac disease** | Cyanotic congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease |
| **Chronic respiratory conditions** | Severe asthma, cystic fibrosis, bronchiectasis, suppurative lung disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic emphysema |
| **Chronic neurological conditions** | Hereditary and degenerative CNS diseases, seizure disorders, spinal cord injuries, neuromuscular disorders |
| **Immunocompromising conditions** | Immunocompromised due to disease or treatment, asplenia or splenic dysfunction, HIV infection |
| **Diabetes and other metabolic disorders** | Type 1 or 2 diabetes, chronic metabolic disorders |
| **Renal disease** | Chronic renal failure |
| **Haematological disorders** | Haemoglobinopathies |
| **Long-term aspirin therapy in children aged 6 months to 10 years** | These children are at increased risk of Reye syndrome following influenza infection |

\* Please refer to The Australian Immunisation Handbook available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au for advice on persons who are strongly recommended to receive annual influenza vaccination but not eligible for NIP‑funded influenza vaccines.